



## A Rejoinder to Lawrence (2010): It Helps If You Compare the Correct Items

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## Letter to the Editor

### **A Rejoinder to Lawrence (2010): It Helps If You Compare the Correct Items**

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Lawrence (2010) criticized my Autogynephilia Scale for Women (see Moser, 2009), stating that the items did not correspond to the items on Blanchard's Autogynephilia Scales (Blanchard, 1985; 1989). She is clearly mistaken. Although she is correct that the items she cited are not analogous, she cited the wrong items (see Table 1 for the correct and complete comparison items). My scale makes much more sense when compared to the correct items.

Lawrence (2010) also compares apples to oranges in her article. Most items on Blanchard's scales ask whether the respondents have *ever* been sexually aroused by the stimulus; my scale asked participants to report the frequency of these feelings as "never," "on occasion," and "frequently." Lawrence (2010) begrudgingly admits that four of my items (1, 2, 3, and 6) were similar to Blanchard's items, but states only 7% of my sample reported frequent arousal to those items. Although technically correct, Blanchard did not account for frequency on most of his scales. The correct comparison would be to those who reported having these experiences either "on occasion" or "frequently." More than two thirds of my sample responded affirmatively to those four items. Comparing the correct items fairly makes a difference in evaluating my study.

Lawrence (2010) states that only four items from my scale had any resemblance to Blanchard's items, although she was able to find correlates for six items (see her Table 1). There were only eight items in the scale; the ninth item was experimental and not included in my statistics. I created my

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**TABLE 1** Comparison of Moser's and Blanchard's Items

Moser's Autogynephilia Scale for Women	Corresponding Blanchard Items
1. I have been erotically aroused by contemplating myself in the nude.	Have you ever become sexually aroused while picturing yourself having a <i>nude</i> female body or with certain features of the nude female form? [CAS item 1]
2. I have been erotically aroused by contemplating myself wearing lingerie, underwear, or foundation garments (e.g., corsets).	Have you ever felt sexually aroused when putting on women's underwear, stockings, or a nightgown? [CGFS item 6] . . . As a woman dressed only in underwear, sleepwear, or foundation garments (for example, a corset) [CAS item 7]
3. I have been erotically aroused by contemplating myself fully clothed in sexy attire.	Have you ever become sexually aroused while picturing yourself as a fully dressed woman being admired by another person? [AIFS item 11] . . . As a fully clothed woman? [CAS item 7]
4. I have been erotically aroused by dressing in lingerie or sexy attire for a romantic evening or when hoping to meet a sex partner.	Have you ever felt sexually aroused when putting on women's underwear, stockings, or a nightgown? [CGFS item 6]
5. I have been erotically aroused by preparing (shaving my legs, applying make-up, etc.) for a romantic evening or when hoping to meet a sex partner.	Have you ever felt sexually aroused when putting on women's perfume or makeup, or when shaving your legs? [CGFS item 5]
6. I have dressed in lingerie, sexy attire or prepared myself (shaving my legs, applying make-up, etc.) before masturbating.	Have you ever put on women's clothes or makeup for the main purpose of becoming sexually excited and masturbating? [CGFS item 11]
7. I have been erotically aroused by imagining myself with a "sexier" body.	Have you ever been sexually aroused by the thought of being a woman? [CAS 8]
8. I have been erotically aroused by imagining that others find me particularly sexy, attractive, or irresistible.	Have you ever become sexually aroused while picturing yourself as a fully dressed woman being admired by another person? [AIFS item 11] . . . As a woman admired by another person? [AIFS 12]

*Note.* CGFS = Cross-Gender Fetishism Scale (Blanchard, 1985); CAS = Core Autogynephilia Scale, AIFS = Autogynephilic Interpersonal Fantasy Scale (Blanchard, 1989).

scale after talking with a number of female colleagues and friends who indicated that they were aroused by the thought of themselves as sexier women, so I added that phrasing to some items. Also in discussion with these colleagues and friends, some felt the items needed context (e.g., preparing for a romantic evening), so I added such phrases. Overall, I believe my scale captures the sense of women aroused by the thought or image of themselves as women or as sexier women. Many male to female transsexuals (MTFs) report a similar sense of being aroused by the thought or image of themselves as sexier women.

I indicated items on my scale were adjusted to make them more relevant to natal women. I assume that Blanchard adjusted his items to make them more relevant to transsexuals. If Lawrence (2010) wants to adjust her items

to make them more irrelevant to natal women, she may get the results she wants or she just might be surprised—she will have to do the study if she wants to find out.

Lawrence (2010) suggests my scale does not measure autogynephilia as she conceives it and goes so far as to create her own scale. Of course she is entitled to her opinion, but I am not sure why she is empowered to determine if a scale measures “genuine autogynephilic arousal” or “something superficially resembling autogynephilia.” Future research will determine which approach is more useful and valid. One advantage of my approach is that it explains Lawrence’s (2005) disparate data without insinuating that the subjects are trying to mislead the researcher or just mistaken.

Lawrence’s (2010) distinction between “genuine” and “superficially resembling” erotic interests is curious. Imagine an instrument designed to distinguish between humans who do and do not find “imagining sex with men” erotically arousing; one item might be “Have you ever been aroused thinking about a muscular man penetrating you anally?” I have not performed this study, but assume significantly more homosexual men than heterosexual women endorse this item. Should we conclude that heterosexual women do not find “imagining sex with men” erotically arousing or that the sexual interests of heterosexual women and homosexual men just superficially resemble each other? I never suggested that autogynephilia was identical in MTFs and natal women; obviously there are differences in how sexuality is expressed among men, women, and transsexuals.

It should also be noted that there is another article that has shown autogynephilia in natal women. Veale, Clarke, and Lomax (2008) studied a group of biological females who scored as autogynephilic on their variation of Blanchard’s autogynephilia scales. Lawrence and Bailey (2009) conveniently calculated mean scores for nonhomosexual (autogynephilic) MTFs from Blanchard’s (1989) data; they found the Core Autogynephilia Scale mean was 6.1 (range 0 to 9) and the Autogynephilia Interpersonal Fantasy scale was 2.7 (range 0 to 4); higher scores imply more autogynephilic arousal. On Veale et al.’s versions of these scales, 52% of the biological female subjects scored 6 or higher on the Core Autogynephilia Scale *and* 3 or higher on the Autogynephilia Interpersonal Fantasy Scale (J.F. Veale, personal communication, July 7, 2009). Lawrence and Bailey concluded that Veale et al.’s transsexual subjects who scored at these levels were autogynephilic. Therefore, they should conclude that Veale et al.’s biological female sample is also autogynephilic. This is another confirmation that autogynephilia is common in natal women.

It is surprising that Lawrence is criticizing me for expanding the concept of autogynephilia: She recently did the same thing when reporting on a case of autoandrophilia in a nontranssexual man (Lawrence, 2009). He was erotically aroused by the thought of himself as a *sexier* man.

Blanchard (2005) contends that “Autogynephilia does not occur in women” (p. 445), but there is no data to support that assertion. My study

was a small, proof of concept study. It never purported to be definitive, although it does cast doubt on Blanchard's prediction about women.

Despite Lawrence's (2010) vigorous defense of Blanchard's Autogynephilia Theory, there are more papers in press and preparation that will challenge other aspects and predictions of the theory (see Moser, this issue; Nuttbrock et al., 2010). I would hope these challenges result in new research, rather than just Lawrence's flippant dismissal of the theory's critics. Lawrence (2007) once cited Mahatma Gandhi, "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win" (p. 508) to suggest that Blanchard's theory was nearing acceptance. Of course, the same quote could describe struggles of the theory's critics.

I should point out that Lawrence never asked me how I created my scale or which items corresponded to which items. We know each other well, e-mail and speak on occasion, and I consider her a friend; she might have saved us both some time by just asking. In the end, this nitpicking just seems silly.

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