

THE ARSENAL

Augusta University's Undergraduate Research Journal

ISSN 2380-5064 | The Arsenal is published by the Augusta University Libraries | <http://guides.augusta.edu/arsenal>

Volume 5, Issue 1 (2023)
Special Edition Issue

INTERSECTIONALITY BETWEEN MALE GAZE AND INTERNALIZED VIEWS OF TRANSFEMININE PERSONS

Ashland Amerson, Anita Singh, Ryan E. Flinn, and Lara M. Stepleman

Citation

Amerson, A., Singh, A., Flinn, R. E., & Stepleman, L. M. (2023). Intersectionality between male gaze and internalized views of transfeminine persons. *The Arsenal: The Undergraduate Research Journal of Augusta University*, 5(1), 6-7.

<http://doi.org/10.21633/issn.2380.5064/s.2023.05.01.06>



© Amerson, Singh, Flinn, and Stepleman 2023. This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial-NoDeriv 2.0 Generic License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/>).

Intersectionality Between Male Gaze and Internalized Views of Transfeminine Persons

Presenter(s): Ashland Amerson and Anita Singh

Author(s): Ashland Amerson, Anita Singh, Ryan E. Flinn, and Lara M. Stepleman

Faculty Sponsor(s): Lara Stepleman, PhD

Affiliation(s): Department of Psychological Sciences

ABSTRACT

The male gaze is defined as the understanding of how one views a person through a male lens, with variables including sexual objectification and internalization of standards. The male gaze has been shown to affect women in different ways, both negative and positive. There is limited research done on how the male gaze affects those who are transgender and gender diverse (TGD). We interviewed 18 TGD individuals from the southeastern United States and had researchers code through the transcripts of said interviews and found 3 underlying themes from the male gaze and transgender persons: (1) Stating an effect (negative or positive) from the male gaze on gender expression, identity, or affirmation, (2) stating no or neutral effects from the male gaze on gender expression, identity, or affirmation, and (3) stating that trying to identify with the male gaze affected one's gender expression, identity, or affirmation. Examples of having no effect from the male gaze included statements of "not caring what others think" or not caring about gender identity within partners. Some stated they did not cater to the male gaze. Negative effects included stating the male gaze makes them uncomfortable and unsure of how to act around men (the toxic male gaze- "I see you as someone to sexually please me or as a fetish"). Others stated the male gaze as the main reason why they knew they were not men, because they did not identify with it. Some stated that the way they affirmed their identity was through the expression of a heterosexual relationship, where they focused on the male gaze. Possible factors include age, sexual orientation, and gender identity when understanding how a transfeminine person identifies with the male gaze. These findings seem to suggest that the experience of male gaze and transwoman's identities and affirmations can vary and be complex, but most agree that a supportive male gaze aids in

gender identity and expression while an unsupportive male gaze seems to worsen or delay one's transition. These themes can provide context when giving critical mental health aid to those who identify as transfeminine. Mindfulness meditation may benefit those who are affected negatively from the male gaze and this should be accounted for in future studies and literature.

Received: 02/15/2023 Accepted: 03/29/2023

Correspondence: Ashland Amerson, Augusta University, 1120 15th St. Augusta, GA 30912, asamerson@augusta.edu