

Review of Female-to-Male Transsexualism
by Leslie Martin
Lothstein, by Routledge
Kegan Paul, 1983.

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TRANSEXUAL ARE ONE of the many sexual minorities that 'ordinary' homosexuals have, willingly or not, been confused with. We look at each other with mutual distrust, ever ready to claim the cloak of normality and accuse the other of deviancy. With equal vehemence gay men and lesbians deny they want to change sex and transsexuals refuse all homosexual contact. Yet prejudice here is as misplaced as any from straight society.

Lothstein's book is the first lengthy (over 300 pages) work to analyse the phenomenon of women who

believe that they are men trapped by a freak of nature in the wrong body. A statistically microscopic group, they are as willing, even determined, as male-to-female transsexuals to undergo all the discomfort of hormone treatment and surgery that will achieve the physical appearance they desire.

Whether or not the reader agrees with Lothstein's suggestion that surgery is not the answer for many, or even most, of the women who seek sex reassignment, presumably depends on his/her emotional involvement in the matter. No-one, however, even those who dislike clinical manner in which it is written, can deny that this is a valuable contribution to the understanding of its subject.

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