

**Masculinity
&
Changing Men**
a broader perspective

A Symposium
presented at the
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of the
Society for the Scientific Study of Sex
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Human Outreach and Achievement Institute
Boston, Mass.

Masculinity & Changing Men: A Broader Perspective

The changing role of women in America during the past 20+ years has precipitated a closer look at the assumed stereotypes of masculinity. In the workplace men must compete with women for jobs at all levels. In the home the role of a man as a "breadwinner" and "after supper father" has modified significantly. In many households responsibility for earning income and the raising and guidance of children is shared. In their sexuality, many men have changed the way in which they relate to women and to other men. In their attitudes about previous gender role stereotypes, men have been undergoing major changes about how they view themselves and how they want others to perceive them. What are some of the major changes that have impacted the old stereotypes of masculinity? Who are some of these men who have significantly modified their lifestyles to reflect and incorporate some of these changes? What are some female views about their masculinity? Do these exist? How have some of these manifested themselves? What are some of the major conflicts that beset the American male? What resources and coping strategies are currently available to them?

These are some of the topics and issues that the proposed symposium will address. Included are:

- Analyzing Changes in Masculinity
- Men, Sex and Intimacy
- Fatherhood: A Dynamical View of Men as Parents
- A Transsexual's View of Masculinity
- National and Regional Resources for Men Experiencing Gender Conflict

Analyzing Changes in Masculinity

Wayne Plasek, Ph.D.

It is hypothesized that changes are occurring among men, albeit subtle ones. Positive changes are defined as those which promote pleasing, sustained relationships. Negative changes promote the converse. Characteristics of women and of other men must be identified and held constant when using such a definition. The focus of research on these should be *patterns of social interaction* as observed among and reported by men and those with whom they are in close association, particularly women, male peers, and socially differentiated men.

Studies of changes should be informed not only by role theory but by considerations of patriarchy or power, including spheres of responsibility. Work of von Franz (Puer Aeternus) and Huizinga (Conceptualization of Play) will be discussed.

Methods of data collection and separation of the data into positive and negative changes will also be presented with the focus on analysis and interpretation of such changes, in the context of patterns of social interaction.

Wayne Plasek is a member of the Center for Sex Research and professor of sociology at California State University, Northridge. He received his training at Rice University; the University of Texas, Austin; UCLA; and the University of Stockholm. His work in gender roles includes papers on homosexuals in science and engineering, and on homophobia. He has more recently studied developments among American men, with papers on "Fixated Adolescence: An Alternative to the Male Role."

Men, Sex and Intimacy

Steven Kessler, MFCC

This talk explores the model of intimacy that boys receive when society assigns all the child-rearing tasks to mothers and keeps fathers distant and uninvolved. Maleness becomes identified with separateness and intimacy becomes sexualized. Dependency needs come to be regarded as incompatible with masculinity and relationship becomes a threat to manhood. In addition, the desire for emotional closeness with other men is misperceived as a homosexual impulse. The end result is that men live in a climate of isolation and emotional malnourishment. The talk concludes with an exploration of the ways in which individuals and society can be healed. Fatherhood, brotherhood, and male initiation are discussed, and put in the context of male psychological development.

Steven Kessler, MFCC, is a therapist in the San Francisco Bay area and a founding member of both the Golden Gate Men's Council and the Men's Counseling Guild. He has led numerous groups and workshops for men focusing on the journey into manhood and the process of male initiation. In addition to his degree in transpersonal psychology, he is a student of mythology and anthropology, drawing on the work of Joseph Campbell, Robert Bly, Michael Meade, and Eugene Monick. Currently, he maintains a private practice, speaks on men's issues, and conducts groups and workshops for men throughout the bay area.

Fatherhood: A Dynamical View of Them as Parents

Bruce Linton, MFCC

When men become fathers they often discover a new sense of their masculinity. What are the changes men discover in this new paternal role? What are the gender issues for fathers? How does the father's sense of gender effect his children? How has the recent interest in fatherhood challenged our society/culture's view of what constitutes masculinity?

Bruce Linton is a psychotherapist in private practice and director of Father's Forum in Berkeley, Calif. He conducts workshops and support groups for expectant and new fathers. He writes the For Fathers column for Children's News in San Francisco.

A Transsexual's View of Masculinity

Louis G. Sullivan, M.A.

Society's concept of "masculinity" has been and continues to be based on media-entrenched stereotypes that stem from the heterosexual struggle between the "liberated" female and the resulting sex-role confused male. While women have defined and fought against centuries old, sexually-based oppression, men have not fully understood how they are "strangled" by the sexism of masculinity.

Inherent in this dichotomy between female liberation and male sexual ambiguity is the fear of homosexuality in the latter. This homophobia is found in many aspects of American society, including some clinics which focus on gender related issues and conflicts.

Data will be presented to support the above statements and to outline avenues to change the prevailing "heterosexist-defined" masculinity, in regard to females who want to gender shift into "enlightened new age" masculinity.

Louis Sullivan is a postoperated female-to-male transsexual who lives in San Francisco. He is a regular speaker on crossgender issues at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Human Sexuality and has written extensively about female-to-male transsexuality. He is a facilitator/organizer for a female-to-male social contact group that serves its members from the Bay Area and Northern California. He is involved and committed to educating health care professionals about the process, dynamics and attitudes of female-to-male gender shift.

Resources for Men Experiencing Conflict with their Current Gender Role and Lifestyle

Ari Kane, M.Ed.

During the past decade and a half American men have been looking at their self concepts, images, and stereotyped gender roles. Part of the impetus for serious studies about men and masculinity in this society comes from the rise of the well established and articulate women's movement. Other factors that have contributed to changing attitudes and stereotypes include: broadened outlooks regarding sex role preferences, new age alternative gender role expressions and lifestyles and self examinations of traditional men's roles as "heads of households," principal economic providers for nuclear families, warriors for preservation of a political and social system, and impregnators for continuance of the species.

All of the above has left some men in a serious state of confusion and has resulted in a loss of direction in pursuing a long range lifestyle plan. In response to this need, there has been a flowering of several distinct programs and resources that help men in flux with their current dilemma of defining a comfortable masculine lifestyle. Discussion of some of these resources and their philosophies and attendant programs will be presented.

Ari Kane is a gender specialist with Theseus Counseling Services of Greater Boston, and a sex educator. He has presented papers related to gender conflict at SSSS, AASECT and HBIQDA national meetings. He also serves as executive director of The Outreach Institute, sponsor of the Symposium. He will moderate this panel presentation.

The Human Outreach and Achievement Institute

The Human Outreach and Achievement Institute is a "not for profit" corporation whose purposes and objectives are educational and personal growth oriented. In continuous operation for more than a decade, we have developed several clinical programs and workshops for helping professionals throughout the United States. These are presented to provide clinical tools and broaden the perspective of the health care professional working in the general area of human sexuality, and are specifically focussing on issues of gender role/identity.

The Institute reaches out to the general public through invited speaking engagements to lay groups and selected video appearances on local and national talk shows (e.g., The Donahue Show). To the professional and academic community we have given many lectures, seminars and panel discussions at local and regional clinics, and university graduate programs in psychology and sociology. These have been presented at major academic and urban settings in the United States, including Boston, Chicago, New York, Washington D.C., Miami, Phoenix, San Diego, Los Angeles and the Bay Area of San Francisco. Helping professionals from the fields of education, medicine, guidance and counseling, sex therapy, law and law enforcement, and nursing and human services have attended one or more of our programs and workshops.

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*A national educational agency providing
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*an All-Day Institute
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Date: Saturday, April 8, 1989

Location: San Francisco, Calif.

*Write to The Outreach Institute for a
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