

**The Changing Definition of Masculinity.** *Clyde W. Franklin, II.* New York: Plenum Press, 1984, xi + 234 pp., \$29.50 (cloth).

It is a shame that this well-written book is only issued in expensive cloth form, because if it appeared in paperback it would have widespread use as a textbook in classes on sex roles, men's studies, sociology, and psychology. Clyde Franklin, a sociology professor at the Ohio State University, has brought together the findings of a large number of recent studies on the male role, to produce a new synthesis on masculinity.

The influence of the Men's Movement is quite evident in this book: (1) it has absorbed the feminist critique of gender roles as a product of socialization rather than of inborn biological destiny, (2) it takes a more enlightened view of sexuality from the Gay Liberationist perspective, and (3) it focuses on the health and psychological disadvantages of traditional masculine models.

The book begins with an overview of traditional masculinity in the past, and then notes recent social movements' influences on current conceptions. Franklin finds traditional masculinity to be marked by dominant, aggressive, and sometimes violent behavior toward women; competitiveness and homophobia toward other men; and repressed emotions toward everyone. That this model continues to survive is due to socialization which a boy gets from his family, peers, media, school, and (especially in the 1980s) fundamentalist churches.

One of the major strengths of this book is the inclusion of a Black perspective. Franklin sees the current supermasculinity of Black men as a reaction to centuries of the denial of their manhood by a racist society. In the late 1960s, a model of confident, assertive, virile, and sexually potent Black (male) Power emerged. Yet, White society still does not permit Black males to exercise much dominance in the larger society. Black males remain in very close friendships within a male peer group, are often economically dependent on female-centered households, and take out their rage on convenient targets within the Black community rather than on Whites. Franklin sees this factor, along with poverty and unemployment, as explaining high crime and delinquency rates. Since Black males cannot internalize models of masculinity based on the work ethic, they turn to other measures such as physical strength, sexual conquest, and "coolness."

Franklin next approaches male socialization by taking a Life-cycle viewpoint. While there is change within each cycle and different males enter or leave stages at different stages, the usual pattern follows: (1) 1–16, childhood and early adolescence; (2) 17–22, creating a role for adulthood; (3) 22–28, avoidance of strong commitments and constructing a stable life structure—with incompatible demands producing anxiety; (4) 28–33, altering the life course by dealing with stress to make changes in the direction of their lives; (5) 33–40, emphasizing social rank and income by "climbing the ladder of success"; (6) 40–45, questioning their lives and establishing new priorities; (7) 45–50, experiencing a new creative fullness as they become more deeply attached to others and also more self-aware; (8) 50–55, reintegrating feminine aspects of themselves (this may be a great crisis for men who did not significantly modify their lives earlier); (9) 55–60, experiencing great fulfillment; (10) 60–65, preparing for aging and retirement.

In understanding marriage relationships, Franklin concludes that while women have made significant expansion of their roles into the work world, men have not done much of the reverse. There is a more fluid boundary to masculinity, with some men taking on more household and parenting duties, but most have not. The result is women's "double day" of career and housework/parenting. Men have not done this because of the low social status afforded to housework and parenting. The world of work remains masculine, even if women are admitted to it. Nevertheless,

feminists are having an impact in seeing career lateralness as being a respectable alternative to competitive "moving up the ladder," and seeing personal happiness as more important than power.

Franklin has important insights about male sexuality. He sees sexuality as socialization rather than as innate biology, and he questions conventional models of "heterosexual versus homosexual." Indeed, he suggests that "heterosexuality" is better defined as a masculine person (whether male or female) who is attracted to a feminine person (whether male or female). Unlike girls, boys early develop a genital focus on sexual behavior, with an emphasis on orgasm. Therefore, males have a more casual acceptance of sex partners. Males tend to start out with a generalized sexuality, which is focused on sexual release rather than the sex partner.

This casualness is later shaped by social forces into a specific sexual orientation, which assumes an important role as a male develops recreational relationships and personal bondings in a particular community. At this stage, labels of "gay," "straight," or "ambisexual" are applied. Since over one-third of American males have engaged in sexual behavior with another male, and since half of gay men have been involved in a sexual relationship with a woman, there is much ambiguity in sexual orientation.

This ambiguity is why homophobia remains so strong, as men struggle to suppress the homosexual side of themselves and as they are threatened by alterations in the male role that could mean less male dominance. They therefore assign gay men to a subordinate status along with women, thereby ensuring fewer competitors in the competitive struggle for success. Homophobia makes men conform to the masculine model, in fear that if they don't, they will be labeled "queer."

On the contrary, homosexual men who become self-accepting members of a gay community report greater emotional expressiveness with males, more satisfaction and fulfillment with males, and fewer sexual problems. Aging gay men experience less dramatic changes than their heterosexual counterparts, since the former group's major life crisis occurred at their "coming out" stage. Gay social life is more likely to be age integrated than that among heterosexuals, and older gay men more frequently have love relationships with younger gay males.

Ambisexuality is another sexual orientation. In the cases of those who identify as heterosexual, their homosexual contacts will be furtive and impersonal. They tend to be guilt ridden, but remain married because of internalized homophobia or responsibilities to wife and children. Other men become more involved in the gay world and either divorce or remain in the marriage with a clear ambisexual identity; they are more likely to experience psychological well-being. But once a male has had the experience of falling in love with a gay-identified male, the clear-cut identity and close-knit gay community offers a seductive pull.

These specific sexual orientations tend to recede in importance as a person evolves into a new orientation to a specific person (whether male or female). The implications of this interpretation are important in understanding that "gay" and "straight" committed couples may share more than noncoupled individuals of any sexual orientation. The asexual person (who is either nonsexual or self-sexual) is more distinct from other-sexual gays and straights.

In his concluding chapter, Franklin assesses future changes in masculinity. As the Women's Movement has made males see their similarities, and as more androgynous traits are absorbed from Blacks and from other cultures, more males are beginning to reject sexist and homophobic ideologies. Many men are confused about the process and goal of sex-role equality, but a growing minority of "humanist men" value both masculine and feminine traits in themselves and in society.

After all this valuable insight, the end of the book is a disappointment in that Franklin provides few guideposts for the future. Some case studies of genuinely egalitarian heterosexual and homosexual relationships would be valuable as role models. As is typical with most sociology and psychology, no consideration is given to more progressive nations who have changed their laws and norms to reflect gender equality. And no models of gender roles from egalitarian societies in the non-Western world are even referred to. Still, this is one of the best books published on masculinity.

*Walter L. Williams*  
*Department of Anthropology*  
*University of Southern California*

**The Battered Woman Syndrome.** *Lenore E. Walker*, New York: Spring Publishing Company, 1984, 237 pp., \$21.95.

This book is the result of a three-year long research project funded by NIMH and directed by Dr. Lenore E. Walker and carried out in Denver, Colorado. The book is divided into two parts. In Part I, the most important psychological issues in the domestic violence field are discussed in depth and data from the project are integrated with other research. Such psychological issues included are psychosocial characteristics of women, men, their children, difference between spouse abuse and other forms of interpersonal violence, child abuse, homicide, and the role of substance abuse. Part II includes a partial review of the literature in the field and a discussion of the