

# The Construction of Masculinity – the Driving Force of History

## A New Way of Understanding Change in the Past

BY CAMILLA CAESAR

### Abstract

*Caesar, Camilla. 1999. The Construction of Masculinity – the Driving Force of History: A New Way of Understanding Change in the Past. Lund Archaeological Review 5 (1999), pp. 117–136.*

The aim of this article is twofold. Firstly, I will try to illustrate that an application of general theories does not necessarily need to exclude the active subject or the historical context. On the contrary, I will assert that a pluralistic perspective can be integrated in holistic thinking, since these levels are not only coexisting but also are interdependent. Secondly, I assert that the construction of masculinity is a very powerful process, which probably has a great impact on how and when social change appears. Through the understanding of how masculinity is constructed and maintained, new possibilities arise in the discussion of otherwise well-known archaeological phenomena such as cultural change, technical progress and material variation.

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### Introduction

This article is a result of thoughts which originated from literary studies in the initial stage of my postgraduate studies. Since there was hardly any research on masculinity within archaeology, I had to obtain a historical overview of the theoretical field from other sciences, in order to create a methodological platform from which I could begin working. My aim was to obtain as wide-ranging knowledge as possible about sex, gender and masculinity. On one hand I wanted to assimilate the main outlines of research performed in studies of men and masculinity, on the other hand I felt that it was necessary for me to become acquainted with feminist perspectives and the last decade of gender studies.

As I read, my own thoughts gradually started to force their way out, and often I had to put down my books to take notes, draw models and formulate figures of thought. Since I had not

previously been engaged in either gender or masculinity theories, everything I read was new to me. As a result, I received a comprehensive picture of disciplines that usually are separated in time and space. While this information was gathered during such a short period of time, this initial stage of living with masculinity became what afterwards could be considered an epistemological brainstorm. In my literature studies I probably made what many would consider unconventional associations and connections, which have formed the foundation for my way of thinking about and understanding masculinity. My studies, perhaps unconsciously, emanated from the question “what is masculinity?”, which during my reading resulted in my first attempts to answer it. This article is a result of this first period of seeking for knowledge. Conse-

quently, the following pages should be regarded as an account of a process of thinking rather than a final answer to my question.

## Constructivism and universalism – contradictions?

Today, facing the turn of the millennium, we can listen to a multiplicity of stories told about prehistoric reality and the science of archaeology. During the last two decades postmodernism has radically influenced our attempts to understand and explain human behaviour. Also archaeologists have realized what a significant impact the spatial and chronological context has on the individual's conception of reality, both for the prehistoric human and for the producer of archaeological knowledge (Hodder 1982, 1986; Shanks & Tilley 1992). This has not only resulted in a far more critical attitude towards the production of knowledge, but also in a fragmentation of the discipline. During the last decade we have therefore witnessed an increase in publications which have problematized the production of archaeological knowledge (Gustafsson 1996; Molyneux 1997; Olsen 1997) and how it is employed for legitimizing acts in our contemporary society (Gathercole & Lowenthal *et al.* 1994; Hylland-Eriksen 1996).

It is hardly any news that the contemporary direction towards constructionism within archaeology is a reaction against the previous positivistic research (Jensen 1988:21). The need to illuminate the human subject and the actions of the individual resulted in a dissociation from the common belief in system theories within functionalism and structuralism. Carrying out a critical evaluation of the scientific work performed by the previous generation is very likely a necessary process for creating the dynamics of new thinking that every science needs to stay vigorous. Every collective of researchers has a need to perform a construction of identity, which constitutes the normative agreements that will determine how scientific procedures will be executed in the future. The construction

of identity can be regarded as a self-presentation in which you say who you are, by making clear who you are *not*.

The problem arises when the oscillation of the paradigmatic pendulum becomes so powerful that the critical innovative thinking is transformed into a total theoretical rejection of previous production of knowledge. The renewal becomes a turnaround whereby a relational binary opposition between old and new research comes into existence. The reorientation within scientific epistemology which arose from the work of Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1979), initiated a questioning of the cumulative view of scientific research, which sees the history of science as a constantly growing capital of knowledge. Instead Kuhn asserted that science should be considered as a social phenomenon, where research is characterized by recurrent historical "break-offs" or paradigmatic shifts, when one fundamental approach is rejected in favour of another (Kuhn 1979; Miegel & Schoug 1998). Science then becomes a battlefield for antagonistic and oppositional forces, which struggles to pull research in opposite directions (Schoug 1998).

But is this struggle, or thinking in oppositions, particularly productive? Within postprocessual archaeology it is almost a theoretical matter of course that individual and collective intentions, needs and norms make every historical situation into a uniquely constructed context. This is prior knowledge which affects our way of performing science both methodologically and theoretically. What we are focusing on is the *content* of the variation, and possibly the *cause* of the rise of the variation in the specific cultural context. From this perspective we can assert that all human action is contextually restrained. But right into the very midst of this cacophony of cultural multiplicity, contextual variation and human unpredictability there is a pervasive feeling of dissatisfaction, a persistent suspicion that we are missing something, that something is passing without notice. Yet in this conglomerate of seemingly chaotic human ac-

tions there appear to be certain social similarities and resemblances. Cultural phenomena recur, human strategies resemble each other, changes in mentalities take place on different social levels at the same time and innovative periods seem to coincide over large geographical areas. This structural homogeneity, these dynamic *changes* that appear to arise during a short span of time after long periods of unchangingness, can almost be experienced as *disturbing* in our paradigmatic conviction that each prehistoric situation has to be examined as a historically specific context.

In this article I ask myself whether our concentration on variations indirectly constitutes an obstacle to the development of synthesizing perspectives and general theories. As early as 1987 the sociologist Karin Widerberg discussed what she refers to as the *institutionalization of variations* and the cessation of the search for general theories (Widerberg 1987). The focus on specific cultural contexts has resulted in a fragmentation of the production of scientific knowledge, which does not merely have to be of a positive nature. The dissociation from the positivistic perspective has almost made the application of structuralistic and functionalistic models taboo. Every scientific effort which is theoretically based on thinking in terms of structures and systems is efficiently silenced for fear of being considered as devoting oneself to orgies of universalistic essentialism.

But does a general perspective necessarily imply a rejection of the specific historical context and the active subject? Is not the opposition between variation and universalism, constructivism and positivism, subject and structure a construction in itself? The oppositional thinking is about the *relation* between the two conceptual categories. It is a dynamic relation which indeed is a construction, but most likely is one of the most significant structural principles of human culture (Ehn & Löfgren 1982; Bernstein 1987).

In this article my main purpose is to try to illustrate that an application of general theories does not necessarily need to exclude the active

subject or the historical context. On the contrary, I will assert that a pluralistic perspective can be integrated in a holistic thinking, since these levels of thoughts are not only coexisting but are also interdependent. From the question: *what is masculinity, and how can we understand the construction of masculinity?* I will try to discuss the fundamental problem within humanistic research: *how, why and when does cultural change arise?* This article is based on my conviction that the construction of masculinity is a very powerful process, which probably has had, and has, a great impact on how and when change in historical situations has appeared. Through the understanding of how masculinity is constructed and maintained, new possibilities arise in the discussion of otherwise well-known archaeological phenomena such as cultural change, technical development and material variation. On the following pages I will try to illuminate in what way theories of masculinity can supply the science of archaeology with new ways of understanding change and variation in prehistoric, historic and contemporary societies.

## Masculinity, Gender and Archaeology

During the conference "Manliness and Unmanliness" arranged by Swedish Council for Planning and Coordination of Research in 1998 in Stockholm, a question was put forward: "Is there a universal warlike ideal of manliness, independent of time and culture?" The reaction among the audience was first a startled silence, when the listeners looked deeply shocked, and then the uniform and indignant answer came: No! After that the question was not discussed any more. That a consideration of masculinity from a universal perspective is taboo (at least in scientific contexts) is strikingly illustrated by this incident. Of course, the focus on historical situations, empirical observations, cultural contexts and source material may be due to the fact that most members represented a new field of research. But it also gives us an example of what

I have already discussed above: a theoretical rejection of the production of knowledge which was performed by the previous generation of researchers. It is interesting that the question was posed by the professor of archaeology Stig Welinder, and that he differed from the majority of participants as regards his disciplinary affiliation. As archaeologists we usually consider human and cultural phenomena from a long temporal perspective, and accordingly we have a greater need for general theories in order to understand the periods of study. Besides, without written sources it is difficult to catch a sight of the individual and the normative reality of which he or she once was a part.

Contemporary research into masculinity, like other humanistic research, is strongly influenced by postmodernist and poststructuralistic thinking. In a great amount of the literature on masculinity, it is evident that manliness and masculinity are not something that is eternal, but something that changes over time and space. Manliness is a social construction that is created within a certain cultural situation (Brod & Kaufman *et al.* 1994; Connel 1995; Kimmel 1996; Clatterbaugh 1997; Sørensen 1997). What people today regard as manly is with great probability different from what humans in earlier societies perceived as masculine. Furthermore, a large number of conceptions of masculinity coexist during the same period of time, and the definition of masculinity is determined by different collective and individual situations. However, these contextual versions of what manliness consists of are always constituted in proportion to a hegemonic ideal of masculinity (by confirmation, repudiation or even resignation) expressing normative demands as to what a man should be like. Due to this pluralism, many scientists believe that we should talk about *masculinities*, to illuminate the changeability and variability (Cornwall & Lindisfarne 1994; Hadley 1999).

With the exception of certain Jungian psychoanalytical followers (Perry 1966; Bly 1990; Moore & Gillette 1990; Högberg 1992), most

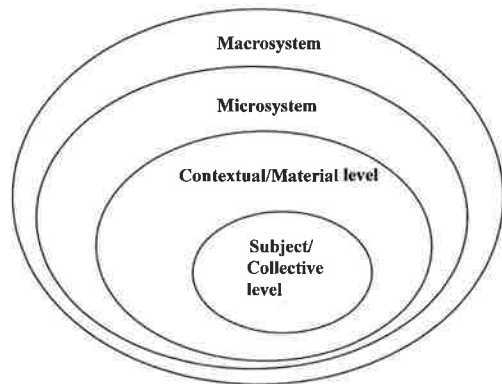


Fig. 1. Theoretical approaches.

contemporary scientists agree that there is no universal masculinity. It is highly probable that this is correct. But what I am going to suggest in this article is the possible existence of a universal *construction* of masculinity. As I pointed out above, the coexistence of a theoretical constructionism and universalism does not necessarily need to be contradictory, but should instead be considered as two perspectives of a dynamic interactive relation. Thinking in structures and systems is for me a necessary approach to be able to comprehend the complicated course of events of which human history is constituted. Hence I see no problem in the relation between subject and structure, or contextualism and structuralism. Instead a methodological interaction between the different theoretical levels would most likely result in a renewed understanding of cultural change and historical processes.

## Theoretical approach

As I see it, there are different theoretical levels which one must take into consideration when discussing human action and cultural change. Naturally, every attempt to define and classify human actions represents a fictive construction, which only serves the purpose of turning complex, elusive and complicated circumstances into manageable units. The following theoretical levels should thus be looked upon as tools of thought to enable discussion and reflection (Fig. 1).

1. *The subject/collective level.* This level emphasizes the human capacity for action and the individual's possibility to influence historical processes. Every human being has genetic, cultural and social preconditions which make every subject/agent unique. The single individual is integrated in several collective units or communities, which make different demands of the subject and call for varied types of performance. The reality of the agent is constructed of continually "entering" and "leaving" these collective units. Depending on where you are, who you are together with and what purpose the unit serves, the role of the individual will always vary. All collectives are not accessible to everybody. To obtain admittance often requires certain qualities, resources, competences or qualifications in connection with the single individual. Hence it may be said that some collective units are based upon more or less evident strategies of social closure.

2. *The contextual/material level.* This level is constituted of spatial and chronological contexts in which material is transformed by agents to fulfil their needs. Within the contextual/material level a purposeful social production of material culture, for example buildings or objects, is performed. Since the contextual/material level is built upon the social needs that dominate within the subject/collective level, the transformed material mediates certain social actions and practices, for example technological preferences, social domination, power relations, symbolic communication or ideological practices. Hence the contextual/material level is changing constantly, which affects the perception of reality, the social structure and the actions of each individual. The production of material culture is consequently both structured by, and structures, agents or collectives of subjects.

3. *The microsystem.* The microsystem is a comprehensive term for the interaction between the subject/collective and the contextual/material levels, and hence it is not actually a "level" in the sense in which I have used the term above.

Due to the flexibility and the changeability in the first two levels, the microsystem is constituted of specific historical compositions, which can be studied and analysed. It is this contextual multiplicity and variation that postmodernist analyses focus on.

4. *The macrosystem.* The macrosystem is a general structure, which consists of regulated preconditions of human actions. By preconditions I mean boundaries fixed in advance, within which individual and collective actions take place. The macrosystem has an effect on all the other levels, and creates an ideological framework for how we execute actions, value qualities and objects, structure our physical environment and construct institutions in society. It could thus be claimed that the macrosystem is a principle of organization, which laws determine how we structure and classify the world. Since the content of the three lower levels consists of an infinite number of possible combinations, this sorting mechanism remains invisible. It may therefore be asserted that the wealth of variation and the cultural multiplicity in the historical context conceal the existence of the macrosystem. The consequence is an illusionary image of universal relativity and an unstructured changeability.

When we discuss the possible existence of macrosystems, we also have to make an effort to understand why they exist. To me it is true that the macrosystem is universal, but I do not believe that it exists by itself. More likely the principle of organization in its initial stage was a human product, and it is maintained by human subjects. A system of sorting at the macrosystem level has in all probability come into existence to meet the needs of individuals, or groups of individuals with a common interest. Hence it also becomes possible in an analysis oriented to needs to seek a causal connection for the origins of the system. The discussion that follows is an attempt to make an analysis oriented to the needs of a universal macrosystem.

## The theory of the gender system

### *The dynamic dichotomy and the hierarchical order*

The early feministic research of the 1970s arose from the need to explain the fundamental universal subordination of women. The aim was to find the original cause of male dominance over women (Carlsson-Wetterberg 1992). Some scholars attempted by the use of Marxist theories to explain the subordination of women as due to the male disposition of female labour. Radical feminists instead focused on biology, and established that the oppression of women should be understood from the female ability to reproduce (Rosaldo & Lamphere 1973; Sargent 1981; Carlsson *et al.* 1983). In any case, these early feministic scientists never totally succeeded in explaining why and how the female subordination originally arose, or for that matter was reproduced and maintained. The male and the construction of masculinity were never problematized in the analyses. Perhaps that is one of the main reasons that the problem remained unsolved.

The 1980s saw a dissociation from the quest for general theoretical explanations for the oppression of women (Widerberg 1987). The search for general theories ceased. For that reason it was even more sensational when the historian Yvonne Hirdman as late as 1988 published her article on "The Gender System – Reflections about the Social Subordination of Women". Inspired by the theories of the poststructuralist historian Joan Wallach Scott (1988) she introduced *the theory of the gender system*, which is one of the few attempts at general theory within Swedish gender-historical research. The definition of the term *gender* Hirdman put like this:

... gender could be understood as variable figures of thought "men" and "women" (where the biological difference is always exploited) which causes/creates conceptions and social practices, which has the consequence that biology too can be affected/changed – in other words, it is a more symbiotic category than "role" and "social sex". (Hirdman 1988, p. 149) (my translation)

With the new term *gender system* Hirdman wanted to emphasize and problematize the systematizing feature in the term gender.

It should be comprehended as a dynamical structure (system); a term for a "network" of processes, phenomena, conceptions and expectations, which by their interrelation give rise to a certain pattern of effects and regularities. (Hirdman 1988, p. 149) (my translation)

According to Hirdman, the gender system is a comprehensive structure of regulations which is based on the oppositional relation between the sexes. It is also a fundamental order to other social orders, whether social, political or economic. The pattern of structure in the gender system is based on two fundamental logics/principles:

1. *dichotomy* – the segregation taboo: male and female should be kept apart in separate spheres.
2. *hierarchy* – it is the male that is the norm; it is men who are humans, and hence they constitute the norm for what is considered normal and generally applicable.

Hirdman asserts that the logic of the dichotomy is manifested everywhere in our physical and psychological reality, which means that it structures places, occupations and qualities. The gender system has an effect on the way we divide labour between the sexes and on our conceptions of male and female. The making of gender, the understanding of what it means to be a "man" and a "woman", constitutes one of the most profound and primordial cultural agreements in every socially integrated system. In order to emphasize the time-specific characteristics in our comprehension of male and female, Hirdman introduced the term *gender contract*.

every society and every age has a certain "contract" between the sexes, a term that is useful even if it is not to be understood as a bargaining between two equal partners, on the contrary, in most cases it is a contract

that is set up by the party that defines the other. (Hirdman 1988, p. 152) (my translation)

In other words, the theory of the gender system establishes the fact that a space between male and female is always present, while the gender contract focuses on the content of that space.

By transferring Hirdman's terms to my own theoretical levels, the gender system can be defined as a theory of a macrosystem. Accordingly it is a comprehensive structure that creates conditions for human actions. In this case the conditions are the two fundamental logics: dichotomy – male and female should not be mixed, and hierarchy – it is the male that constitutes the norm. The two principles of the gender system have an effect on individual actions (the subject/collective level), the spatial and physical construction of the reality (the contextual/material level), and how the specific historical society is organized according to the interaction between the subject and the context (the microsystem). We can also assert that the microsystem is the level from which Hirdman's term gender contract could be applied.

The theory of the gender system, as it was introduced by Hirdman, had a great impact on gender research in Scandinavia and on the continued theoretical development. Her hypothesis of an existing gender system, or a principal of organization between the sexes, proved to be very useful as a theoretical instrument in a broad spectrum of research. Nevertheless, since its publication, Hirdman's thesis has been criticized (Carlsson-Wetterberg 1992; Ljung 1998, p. 244). During the 1990s gender-theoretical research has been strongly influenced by poststructuralism, which has involved a focus *on how women and men are created* in varying historical contexts. The complex interplay between predominant norms in society and the actual course of behaviour of the individual has been problematized. The theoretical conviction that the human construction of identity is based upon a numerous variety of historically specific sociocultural relations, such as race, nationality,

ethnicity and generation, has resulted in gender identity being regarded as one among many other identities. This theoretical phase has been both essential and necessary, not least to emphasize the influence the active subject has on historical processes. But, as I have already discussed above, the concentration on cultural multiplicity, pluralism and variation has also meant that researchers dealing with general theories are increasingly regarded with suspicion and scepticism. The criticism against Hirdman's gender system is in the main based upon an apprehension, in my opinion an incorrect one, that it represents a passivization of the subject, that the reality is compressed into confined categories and that it supports an essentialistic-fatalistic view of history. In contrast, I assert that the characteristics of the gender system, as a macrosystem, provide the opportunity to connect and associate a structure perspective with a subject/agency perspective.

To me there is no opposition in regarding women and men as active subjects in complex, historical contexts, and simultaneously problematizing historical processes from a general perspective. Macrosystems, in this case the gender system, carry within themselves the preconditions for sociocultural change. Sociocultural systems are created by humans, upheld by individuals and constantly undergoing conceptual metamorphosis. The dichotomy and the hierarchy are always constituted out of, and in relation to, the needs that exist among social agents in a certain historical situation, which explains the reproductional strength of the system. It is an ongoing production of containment, a flexible structure which retains permanent variation. The power of the macrosystem is its capacity for transformation. The single subject is a part of the structure, but the existence of the structure is dependent on active agents.

In the position taken here, we have to consider the possibility that other macrosystems coexist with the gender system. Perhaps the two fundamental principals of the gender system, dichotomy and hierarchy, could work as theo-

retical instruments in the understanding of other sociocultural categories as well, for example, race, nationality or class. Drawing borders against other groups of agents and subsequently in different ways legitimizing a higher value attached to one's own collective are a part of a power structure, but also of the individual's construction of identity. Hence, it is an exciting theoretical complex of problems that gender theorists are challenged with, to find out what proportions and what strength the different sociocultural categories have in varying spatial and chronological contexts. How many, and what, systems should be included in the analysis? In what way do they coexist, and are there specific junctures when certain categories become predominant? Although power relations are not only constructed with gender as a base, gender is a primary social category that has had a fundamental significance in historical processes. This complicated network of sociocultural categories – of which the threads stretch, extend, slacken, are tied together and torn apart, is very difficult to grasp if the aim is to obtain a holistic image of the structure. If the social categories are regarded as macrosystems, which came into existence to meet the common needs of certain groups of individuals, it becomes important in an initial analytical stage to try to find the primary cause that engendered the emergence of the different systems. Then it might become possible to understand why certain sociocultural systems dominate over others in specific historical situations. For even if the structure of the system seems similar, the function or the purpose do not necessarily coincide.

However, Hirdman's article was a turning point in my studies. I now started, perhaps unconsciously, looking for what Hirdman was missing in her theoretical discussion: an explanation of *why* the gender system came into existence at all and why it continued to exist. If you want to understand the creation of a human product, you should look for the original need that once initiated its existence. Indeed, answering these questions was not Hirdman's inten-

tions. On the contrary, she proclaimed that we ought to "leave the origins at rest", and that issues of this kind were really of no interest to her (Hirdman 1988).

But for me, trying to assimilate not only gender and masculinity theories, but also early feminist research, things started to happen. At the same time that I tried to understand how masculinity was constructed, I sought to find a reason for men's power over women. The prime motivation for my theoretical work was a will to understand masculinity, instead of putting the main focus on explaining female subordination. Hence I had a somewhat different point of departure from earlier theoretical supporters of the gender-system model. It became more and more obvious that the construction of masculinity and the gender system were intimately connected with each other. But in what way? In order to understand how and why masculinity was created, it became important to make an effort to elucidate the rise of the gender system and its driving force. For that reason I began reflecting on questions such as: What purpose does it serve and for whom? Whose needs does it fulfil? Who sustains and preserves it, and in what way?

#### **The dichotomy – the rise of the separate spheres**

To be able to understand the needs that once initiated the gender system, it is necessary to problematize the two fundamental principals separated from each other. This because a difference between, or a separation of, what is considered male and female does not necessarily indicate an asymmetrical hierarchy (Thurén 1996). I begin with a discussion of what might possibly have caused the first basic principle of the gender system: the dichotomy.

#### **The object-relations theory**

In 1978 the psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow published the article "The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender". Her discussion emanates from the psychoanalytical object-relations theory, which



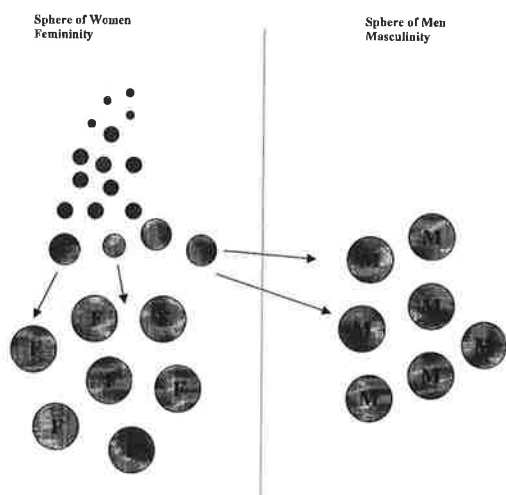


Fig. 2. The object-relations theory.

deals with the child's early development of sexual identity. The theory can generally be comprehended as follows: In most societies women are the primary caregivers in a child's earliest years. Men can actively take part in child care, but in the most cases it is the female that still has the main responsibility. The division of labour in child care means that the child and the mother develop a very close and symbiotic relation. As a result, boys and girls alike have a woman as a primary love object and object of identification. But if the child is going to be able to develop a healthy and independent identity, the boy or the girl must undergo a psychological birth. This is performed through a gradual process of socialization, for which a separation from the primary symbiosis is necessary (Fig. 2).

Since the caretaker in most cases is a woman, the process of socialization differs between girls and boys. While girls can continue identifying themselves with the mother and other women, the boy becomes increasingly aware that he is different. For that reason he must deny his early identification with his mother, and search for a new object of identification: the father and later other men. He must leave the sphere of femininity and be incorporated into the sphere of men and manliness, which of course can be achieved

in many different ways.

The disruption and separation from the sphere of femininity, or when the boy leaves the mother as a woman, perhaps becomes most obvious in the male initiation rites which are performed in most societies. This can happen gradually or very suddenly. Common features in these transitional rites, irrespective of how fast or in what way they are executed, is that the boy/man temporarily surrounds himself exclusively with other men, exposing himself to danger, enduring pain, performing physical practices and undergoing various symbolical rituals (Gilmore 1990, pp. 12 ff.; Jacobsson 1998).

Of course, there are female initiation rites, where the transitional stage between child and woman is highlighted in several ceremonial and symbolical actions. The difference between the female and the male initiation rites is that to the girl the ritual represents a transition within the female sphere, to the boy the ritual represents a transition from the female to the male sphere.

In connection with the object-relations theory it should be mentioned that a common thesis amongst both feminist and masculinity theorists is that manliness is not something you automatically receive.

A woman becomes a woman by following in her mother's footsteps, whereas there must be a break in a man's experience. For a boy to become an adult, he must prove himself – his masculinity – among his peers. And although all boys may succeed in reaching manhood, cultures treat this development as something that each individual has achieved. (Rosaldo 1974, p. 28)

Along with other psychoanalytical theories, Chodorow's object-relations theory has been much debated over the last decade (Connel 1994; Holter & Aarseth 1994, pp. 94 f.; Esseveld 1997). Firstly, the theory is based upon the assumption that women are the primary caretakers. The fact that many men actually take part in the bringing up of children is hardly problematized, even if Chodorow asserts that

sexual identity could be transformed if women no longer were the sole caretaker. Secondly, the thesis depends on the existence of a biological opposition of male and female, and that it continues to exist. Many critics assert that even if Chodorow focuses on the social reproduction of gender, her theories of how sexual identity is constructed are still based upon biological differences. In all probability this criticism rests on a misunderstanding, or a mix-up, of the relation between biological differences and the exploitation of these differences in a system which produces inequality. This problem I will return to later in this article. Thirdly, many critics points out that psychoanalysis focuses on the individual, and so it tells us little about social structure and cultural organization. Neither does it, on its own, help us in understanding large-scale dynamics, social processes or the production of gender. But, considering the four theoretical levels that I presented above, it is important to include theories that *could* illuminate how macrosystematic strategies are carried out on a subject/collective level.

Psychoanalysis consists of a wide range of hypotheses and suggestions about the individual and how the construction of gender identity could be performed. To let *one* of these theories constitute a major framework for our understanding of masculinity is of course impossible. Hypotheses as to how individuals act in relation to others, and in what way the construction of gender identity is performed, have to be integrated in social sciences.

However, apart from this debate, the neo-Freudian work of Nancy Chodorow has had a great impact on recent thinking about masculinity within different disciplines, because she offers a dynamic explanation of how the male identity is constructed (Roper & Tosh 1991; Connel 1994; Cornwall & Lindisfarne 1994). In her work manliness is not given by birth, it is something that the boy has to acquire. It becomes something that you have to struggle to get, it must be won and constantly be proved. Hence you can also lose your masculinity

(Ekenstam 1998; Kimmel 1996).

From a psychoanalytical perspective it is this dissociation, between mother and son, which is a very important part in the construction of the male identity. If the object-relations theory is considered for the purpose of understanding the gender system, the explanation becomes somewhat different. It then appears as if the boys' dissociation from the female sphere, the male process of socialization, serves an essential function in the maintenance of the separation into a male and a female sphere.

## Biological reproduction

### *The actual power balance*

The human being is today considered, by most scholars within the humanistic field, as a social and cultural creature. The individual is therefore changeable, which we have proof of in both history and prehistory. As gender analysts we are disinclined to attach any great importance to the biological difference, and we reluctantly accept that biology affects either our actions or the way we perceive reality. If we concede that biological functions have an impact on the way we act as "men" and "women", we easily end up in a blind alley of biological predisposition and essentialist models of explanation. But does it really have to be this way? My answer is no.

The biological difference I think we have to reproblematicize in our efforts to understand the construction of gender is the human ability to reproduce. When we in gender studies neglect the female ability to reproduce, it means that we ignore the one and only thing that we with certainty know distinguishes the sexes (Widerberg 1987). Men cannot give birth to babies (at least not yet). The fact that women have the *ability* to give birth to children inevitably creates a difference between man and woman, which results in social *unlikeness*. However, what it does *not* have to result in is social *inequality*. In many studies scientists have incorrectly assumed that women's ability to carry, give birth to and nourish a child is a social and physical disability.

The capacity for reproduction does not passivize the woman or prevent her from taking part in activities in society; she just does it differently from men (Graves & Brown 1996; Hawkes 1996).

When I read the article written in 1981 by the feministic philosopher Azizah Al-Hibri, "Capitalism is an Advanced Stage of Patriarchy: But Marxism is not Feminism", she actually confirmed thoughts and ideas that I already had myself. If Hirdman thought of the *origins* as uninteresting, Al-Hibri on the contrary asserts that the cause was to be found precisely there. Her analysis is founded on psychological reasoning. She asserts that a fundamental human psychological disposition is an aspiration for immortality. Women have qualities that men do not have. Not only can they bleed without dying, they also have a magical capability to produce miniatures of themselves, which men cannot. Through their ability to give birth to children, women have an existential advantage over men, since this assures them of attaining immortality. Besides, in many societies there has been an absence of knowledge about the male procreative part in reproduction, which probably emphasized men's feeling of being left outside. Accordingly the biological unlikeness gave rise to a social difference, which probably resulted in different attitudes towards the surrounding world. Through their potential to give birth to humans, women received an additional resource of production. The female who can reproduce herself, again and again, experiences herself as a part of nature. Nature flows through her, in a biological cycle. She becomes immortal. By her ability to reproduce, woman received an advantage over men (Al-Hibri 1981; Conway-Long 1994:70).

## Fictive reproduction

### *Production as a path to immortality*

The female reproductive capacity gave rise to a position of power, an existential advantage over men, which in return created a need amongst

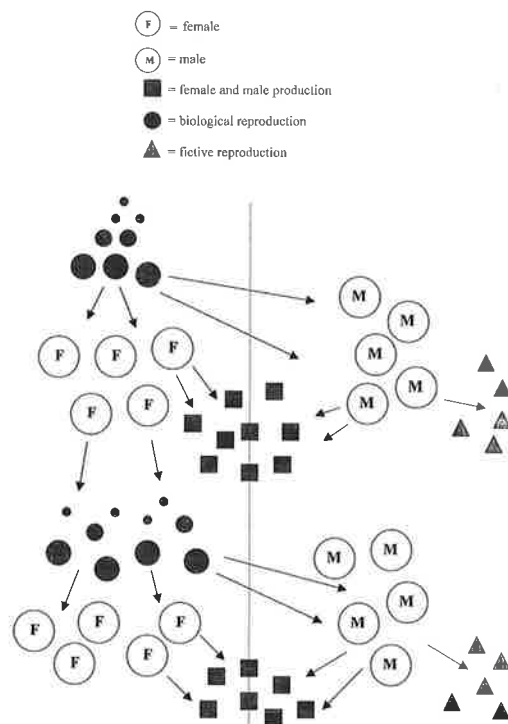


Fig. 3. Fictive reproduction.

the male population to strengthen their position against women (Al-Hibri 1981; Gilmore 1990; Conway-Long 1994). According to Al-Hibri, the men achieved this by developing an alternative resource of reproduction. In their aspiration for immortality they compensated for their inability to reproduce. By this endeavour they expressed a wish to produce offspring, to reproduce themselves by technology, artefacts and objects. This male strategy for compensation I have chosen to call *fictive reproduction* (Fig. 3).

Tools that the male produced were useful in simplifying and securing certain processes in life. Thus they were ideal as compensation for a perceived inadequacy. It also gave the male for the first time some feeling of power ... The male was no longer helpless; he was no longer stuck with his human condition. Through technology he discovered that he could improve his condition utilizing artificial means of his

own creation. (Al-Hibri 1981, p. 173)

The first fundamental principle of the gender system, to keep male and female apart, probably has its origin in this fictive reproduction. The distance is essential for men to maintain. Only when the production, which is considered as fictive reproduction, is kept isolated from the one which is performed within the female sphere is a balance of power achieved and the strategy for compensation begins to operate. To create a male sphere where fictive reproduction can be executed, and to keep it separate from the female sphere, is given highest priority. If women gain access to the male reproductive forces they obtain a double ability to reproduce, both biological and fictive.

While women reproduced, men produced (and that, the male said, was more important). This was a balance of division of labor that the male could live with. It would hardly have been acceptable for him if women reproduced and also produced, when men only produced. Hence to preserve the fragile male ego it became desirable, among other things, to exclude women from production (housework notwithstanding). (Al-Hibri 1981, pp. 175 f.)

Here it is important to keep in mind the male process of socialization, according to Chodorow's object-relations theory, which is founded on the boy having to abandon the female sphere and search for a male object of identification (Chodorow 1978). The male identity is constructed of a dissociation from women. Hence you can suspect that the child's construction of sexual identity is an active instrument in the maintenance of the separate spheres of femininity and masculinity. It may therefore be said that the process of socialization, as it is described in the object-relations theory, is an important implement in the preservation of the gender system. Already in the early years of childhood its first principle come into force: the separation of male and female.

At this stage it is important to declare what

fictive reproduction actually can consist of. As Al-Hibri clearly emphasizes, the products do not necessarily have to be physical. Of course, they can consist of artefacts, objects and technology, but they can just as well be manifested in non-physical, i.e. mental, political or ideological, products.

Production can be of words, as in poetry; or of deeds, as in society; or more generally of tools, as in technology. But the key requirement is to produce that which reflects a person's individual talent (or essence), and consequently objectify it in the outer world, giving the producer permanence. This mode of immortalization is seen as superior to that obtained through reproduction. Perhaps because it can last longer than one's immediate offspring and is not dependent on the wish or ability of others to participate. Hence it needs no mother and is not dependent on the wish or ability of the offspring to procreate. (Al-Hibri 1981, p. 169)

In other words, the primary quality in production is not what the product consists of. Instead it is why and where it is produced, along with the higher value and the greater importance attached to it (compared to other production, and to biological reproduction), which is the central matter. This, of course, also implies that not all products that are produced by men are considered as fictive reproduction.

## Hierarchy – the masculine norm

### *The inversion of power: The gradual exclusion of the female*

In what way can the second principle of the gender system be understood: the hierarchy – the male norm? No matter how you act, you cannot evade the fact that men gradually took over the control of production, the development of technology, the public sphere and the social institutions. Or you could return to the basic question of early feminism: How can we explain the fundamental universal subordination of women? Why, when and how did men

get the power to control women?

What is important to emphasize at this stage, unlike in most feminist studies, is that men's dominion did not arise because they had a need to control women, but to assure themselves that the strategy of compensation was accomplished. The aim was to achieve existential satisfaction, not to oppress women.

The male primordial experience of insufficiency, mortality and being shut out of biological reproduction gradually resulted in an *inverted balance of power*. What was originally thought of as a strategy for compensation generated into a universal exercise of power. This probably has several explanations. On one hand men attached a higher value to fictive reproduction, which made this production exclusively coveted. But the success was also due to the simple fact that women were excluded from the production that was considered most valuable, i.e. fictive reproduction. Prestigious social areas were created, to which only men were admitted (Al-Hibri 1978).

But is this not to underestimate women's intelligence, creativity and ability to have an influence on their own reality? If you accept the reasoning above, it appears as if women through history have remained a passive object, an apathetic victim of male ambition and ingenuity. Why should the female silently observe how men took over the power and the glory? The answer is: They did not! The first thing I want to emphasize at this stage is that females of course produce. They make products consisting of objects, deeds and language in speech and writing. This they have always done, and always will do. We have numerous scientific studies which provide examples of this female creativity, in both contemporary and historical societies.

The rise of the inverted balance of power can probably be explained in numerous ways, but in this article I will only suggest a few. Generally it may be asserted that the inverted balance of power came into existence because men and women have different attitudes towards the surrounding world. If you suggest that the female

in her capability of biological reproduction attains security in her existence, a naturalness in being a human, her position becomes more solid than that of man. She does not need to conquer a place in nature, since her ability to breed already gives her a stable position in the social production. Considered in this way, the female "femininity" is unthreatened. Therefore the characteristics of the female energy flow are *centripetal*, based on security, stability and safety (Al-Hibri 1978; Conway-Long 1994).

The unstable male position in reproduction results in an insecurity in manliness, which constantly drives him to prove his place in life. The consequence of the exposed position of masculinity is that fictive reproduction has developed into a very powerful male strategy, to compensate for something that man lacks. Because manliness is something that constantly has to be acquired and proved, the characteristics of the masculine energy flow are *centrifugal*. Hence the construction of masculinity can be distinguished by a dynamic, mobility and an existential quest (Gilmore 1990; Kimmel 1997).

When a humanist considers social and cultural human actions as constituted out of biology and reproduction, he or she will most certainly be accused of being an essentialist. The use of biological explanatory models may be said to minimize and undermine the possibility for humans to change and influence their situation. This is not what I am doing here. Instead I am trying to explain why a system that was originally designed to fulfil somebody's needs, and is functionally constructed so that a certain group of people can achieve their purpose, might have obtained its strength from biological predispositions. I am not saying that our biological predispositions create social inequality. Nor am I suggesting that the female ability to reproduce gives rise to our social sex roles. Then I would be an essentialist. I am saying that the female centripetal energy flow, which is a result of her ability to reproduce, has been exploited in the construction of a hierarchical and dichotomic system that produces boundaries within which

social sex roles are created. Thus it is not the biological predispositions themselves that create inequality, it is the exploitation of the same in the gender system.

Furthermore, I consider that a theoretical dissociation from biology and reproduction can lead to us actively participate in reproducing the gender system. As contemporary scientific subjects we are inevitably a part of the society we live in. According to the theoretical perspective presented in this article, the gender system (which is assumed to be a macrosystem) has a profound effect on all levels of society. As human subjects we become deeply integrated in the structures of the gender system, and by those means we assimilate the hierarchical-dichotomical thinking. When gender analysts refuse to attach any great importance to biology, and assert that biological reasoning is equivalent to essentialism, they contribute to the invisibility of the gender system. Therefore we do not see when biological unlikeness turns into inequality, or how an inverted balance of power develops out of fictive reproduction. A refusal to problematize our biological predispositions is fatal not only to gender research, but also in a social struggle for equality!

## The constant removal of the masculinity sphere

### *The driving force of history*

That brings us to perhaps the most difficult question. Why has the relation between the sexes *remained* a relation of dominance/subordination? In order to explain why the gender system is reproduced, you have to understand how it is maintained. Why have women not succeeded in their efforts to gain access to the male sphere and to fictive reproduction? The answer to this question is not only the essence of my article, but also offers a renewed approach to perhaps the most important problem within humanistic research: why, when and how does cultural change occur?

The strategy of exclusion towards women,

combined with the higher value attached to fictive reproduction, evidently fulfilled the original purpose. Hence it became important for the males to keep their new position of power. The need for the male psyche to maintain the distance between masculinity and femininity, and the fact that fictive reproduction had to remain normative, resulted in a male strategy which assured the constant reproduction of the gender system. This strategy was mainly designed to meet the females' attempts to abolish the inverted balance of power.

It seems as if women in history by no means accepted being excluded or oppressed, as a number of analyses of both prehistoric and historical situations have shown. On the contrary, one may presume that crises in, and questioning of, the principles of the gender system have been more a rule than an exception. Women have constantly struggled to gain admission to the prestige and status connected with the most valued and normative sphere of masculinity. Women have always quarrelled over boundaries and demanded their space in society. By crossing limits, transgressing into male spheres, they have challenged the male dominance. But when women finally reach their goal, just at the very moment when the violation of the dichotomic taboo takes place, it is only to discover that the sphere of masculinity is not there anymore (Hirdman 1988, pp. 159 f.). It has been moved somewhere else. The highly valued fictive reproduction, and the associated status, prestige and privilege is gone. Or as Hirdman puts it:

With certain empirical evidence as support, we can also make the hypothesis that the male norm becomes sophisticated and "moves" to a new *terra incognita*. This transgression of limits can almost be seen as the "driving force" of history, so that when women enter previously male places, do male chores and excel in male qualities, the man vanishes towards new territories. Women always find themselves three steps behind, while men constantly drive civilization forward. (Hirdman 1988, p. 159) (my translation)

The most plausible reason why women never

catch up with men is that the female energy flow is centripetal. Her unthreatened humanity, her self-evident position in production, her immortality creates a stable security that means that she does not have to run as fast as the man. The centrifugal characteristics of the male power flow instead lead to a nervous guarding of the male sphere. As soon as fictive reproduction is threatened, when women enter male property, a move to a new area in society immediately gets the highest priority.

But one may also suspect women's own contribution in maintaining the gender system. The male sphere and fictive reproduction are not only a place where highly coveted status objects are produced, but also an area where official power is exercised and political decisions are made. Most women find themselves in some kind of relation to men, as partner, sister, daughter or mother. Hence it may be asserted that through their husband, brother, father and son they unofficially had access to those advantages and the prestige connected with fictive reproduction. The unofficial female access to the greater value connected with the male sphere could be regarded as an important component in the reproduction of the gender system (Øye 190, p. 446).

I assert that men's constant search for *terra incognita* is the essence of the historical process. The removal of the male sphere to a place where women do not yet have access is performed over and over again. This creates a pattern, albeit irregular, of recurrent changes (Fig. 4). The male strategy for compensation turns into dynamic revolutions that seem to arise after long periods of static unchangingness. These motions are hard to make visible, hence complicated to envisage, since we ourselves are deeply integrated in the dichotomic and hierarchical thinking. But if we are aware of the existence of the gender system, and the way it works, then its enormous strength and massive impact become visible not only in our contemporary society, but also in history, and sometimes even in prehistory.

## Summary

In this article I have argued in favour of the gender system being a universal principle of organization at a macrosystem-level. My assumption that the gender system originally was a system to meet the needs of individuals, or a group of individuals, led to my attempts to perform a functional analysis aimed at elucidating those needs. After problematizing the two fundamental principles of the gender system separately, it became evident that dichotomy and hierarchy were two important components in a male strategy for compensation. The exclusion of women and the attachment of great importance to fictive reproduction assured the re-creation of the gender system. Consequently, human culture has devoted itself to a rather constant reproduction of gender through history, which secures the further existence and survival of the gender system. The constant removal of the sphere of masculinity has the result that the separation of male and female, and the appreciation of fictive reproduction, look different in different times and different places.

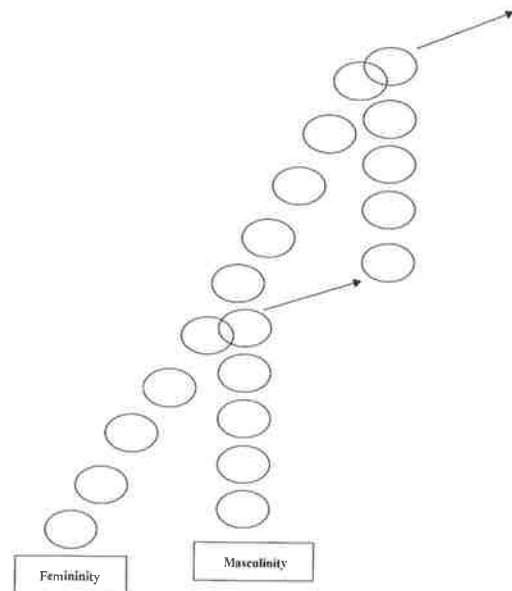


Fig. 4. The constant removal of the masculinity sphere.

## What should we look for?

### *Possibilities and opportunities*

I wish to conclude with a very brief discussion of how we can proceed practically and methodologically with this within the science of archaeology. I am aware of the difficulties of judging what is male and female in a prehistoric reality, since our interpretation of past phenomena easily reflects our own contemporary values. The risk of circular definitions, i.e., that our definition of manliness and femininity emanates from the qualities that we associate with today's men and women, is always present. Hence I emphasize that this brief survey should only be seen as suggestions as to the kind of questions that can be formulated when the purpose is to elucidate the mechanisms that make the gender system work. As the reader will notice, many of the questions are not new. But by looking at old questions from a new theoretical angle of approach, perhaps traditional problems receive untraditional conclusions.

Since the gender system is a theory at a macrosystem level, we should be able to catch sight of the dichotomy, the hierarchy and the removal of the sphere of masculinity, at both the subject/collective and contextual/material level, and in the chronological and spatial analysis of historical microsystems. The structural principles of the gender system should therefore have an impact on both individual and collective actions, how qualities and objects are valued, in what way physical surroundings are organized and how social institutions are constructed.

The gender system is based on a separation of male and female, which affects the way we organize our existence. Dichotomic thinking has an impact on how we apprehend the surrounding world, not only how we act and perform, but also what we consider normal for a man and a woman (Hirdman 1988; Vallström 1996). Material culture is a part of the social organization, in which style and design play an active role in the maintenance and reproduction

of social order and power relations (Shanks & Tilley 1992). We can therefore assume that objects, and the way they are produced, are a very powerful instrument in the production and reproduction of gender and the separation of male and female. Can we detect certain categories of objects that seem to be important in the narratives of manliness and femininity, and how they are transformed over time? Are there artefacts exclusively used by either men or women? In what way does the chronological age of the individual affect the separation of male and female? How did prehistoric humans use space, and what spatial boundaries seemed important to maintain? Are there indications in the landscape, the village or the house, which could be interpreted as a borderline between the spheres of masculinity and femininity?

The hierarchical structuring principle is achieved by attaching a higher value to fictive reproduction, together with a strategy of exclusion towards women. Are there certain areas, categories of objects, chores or rituals that seem to be distinguished, valuable, exclusive and filled with prestige? Can we detect in the archaeological material a production characterized by a high investment of capital, of time, raw material and labour, which exceeds the functional need? Is it possible at all to confirm that production merely takes place within a male sphere, and that a certain type of object is used only by men?

The fundamental condition for the male norm to prevail is that the dichotomic hierarchy is preserved. The shorter the distance between the male and female sphere, the more illegitimate the male norm seems. The weaker the separation appears to be, the stronger is the questioning of the inverted power balance. It is during these periods of renegotiation of the gender contracts, when the dichotomic taboo is violated and the definition of male and female gets blurry, that the most powerful mechanism of the gender system comes into force: the removal of the sphere of masculinity. In all probability it is also this mechanism that one can most easily elucidate in prehistory. What we



consider to be particularly expansive periods, when technical innovations and ideological reorganization result in social change, could be a concrete manifestation of a situation when fictive reproduction and the male sphere move to an area where females do not yet have access. Why is a certain category of objects abandoned in favour of another? What category of objects are suddenly transformed and changed, without any previous continuous development, and are "fired away as a stylistic projectile"? Why is greater value attached to a certain type of artefact in its innovative stage, and why does its diffusion gradually lead to a loss of the prestige and status it formerly enjoyed? In what way are the categories of objects related to each other? Is it possible to confirm that women's access to an object produced within the sphere of fictive reproduction results in a reduction in the value of that object?

But gender archaeology is not only about the construction of gender in a prehistoric context, it is also about the construction of prehistoric gender in our contemporary society. As I mentioned by way of introduction, the archaeological production of knowledge, and how it is employed for legitimizing actions in our contemporary society, has been increasingly problematized in epistemological analysis during the last decade. Sex-linked power relations have affected our way of *performing* archaeology. The scientific arguments have in a very forceful way legitimized and justified an existing gender system (Scott 1988; Hallberg 1992; Hjørungdahl 1992). By presenting a picture of the prehistoric female and male in a certain way, you create a continuity backwards in time, which emphasizes the naturalness and the unaffectedness of the sex roles (Moser & Gamble 1997). If the claim is that the female is absent or passivized in mediated prehistory, the opposite situation can be valid for the ancient male. He is everywhere, both as a prehistoric agent and as an archaeologist. In ancient history we meet him as a hunter, warrior, chief, constructor, merchant, king or protector. His quali-

ties are courage, bravery, adventurousness, ambition, strength, potency, cleverness, aggressiveness and enterprising spirit. Hence it *could* be said that the science of archaeology has been, and is, a gigantic masculinity and manliness project. The image production of the ancient male could be regarded as a presentation of how a man *should* be. It is a presentation of the ideal man.

If this discussion is translated into the theoretical perspectives that I have presented in this article, it is interesting to observe how prehistoric men, and what we consider to be male chores, not only have been kept apart from prehistoric woman, but have also constituted the norm for how we periodize, typologize and in general understand and conceptualize prehistory. Archaeological knowledge is a result of a productive human activity, and therefore could be regarded as an objectification, or a materialization, of a social system. The way in which knowledge about prehistoric reality is structured actively structures our present society (Molyneux 1997). In this perspective, we could assume that the image of prehistory has become an instrument in the reproduction of the two principles of the gender system, the dichotomy and the hierarchy, into a society where the sex-roles since the last century have become more and more blurred and women have increasingly gained access to traditionally male spheres. Is the presentation of the ancient male and female a way of creating a hierarchical difference between the sexes, a strategy in legitimizing a contemporary inverted power balance?

There are, of course, alternative approaches to this problem, but first there has to be a discussion of when, how and why occidental archaeology arose precisely at that very moment that it did, but also which social collective initiated its emergence. What influence did other sociocultural systems have, and how did they interact? When did it become important to create knowledge about prehistoric humans? In what way has archaeology changed when an increasing number of women have been admit-

ted to the archaeological profession? Is there a degradation of, or a reduction of value within, the subject fields of archaeology that are dominated by female archaeologists? Finally, if the masculinity sphere is transferred from what was once an exclusively male area, which is now entered by women, where is it today?

## Manhood – a creation among men?

Finally, these questions automatically give rise to an interesting theoretical perspective that has not yet been considered in this article. Some scientists claim that manhood is homosocial, that manliness is created among men. Men need to prove themselves to each other, not to women (Kimmel 1996). This is probably true, that men in everyday life often define their masculinity, not as much in relation to women, but in relation to each other. But how does this make sense? How can one claim that masculinity is created both in the relation between male and female, on which the theoretical perspective in this article is based, and at the same time in relations between men? A discussion of this problem is certainly not the purpose of this article, but I still want to make some personal assumptions.

In order to maintain an inverted power balance and to reproduce the gender system, men constantly had to generate innovative ways of performing fictive reproduction. Consequently, the investments put into the production of fictive reproduction gradually increased, and the products became more and more coveted. As time went on, the increase in demands of these desirable products (both physical or non-physical), along with the growth of population, led to the products produced within the sphere of fictive reproduction becoming difficult to obtain – even for men. Fictive reproduction became a limited asset which enlarged the attraction of the product and the acquisitiveness of those who wanted access to it. Eventually, men entered a competition. This raises the question: why didn't this male contest or competi-

tion disrupt and shatter the unity among men, so that they themselves caused the final breakdown of the gender system?

Probably this apparently ambivalent situation does not represent an opposition. Firstly, I would like to clarify that there is a difference between *opposition* between male and female, and *competition* between male and male. Secondly, my guess is that competition between men existed before the emergence of the gender system. From behavioural ecology and studies of non-human primates we may say that already at the early stage of human evolution males competed to displace each other from mating opportunities (Hawkes 1996). When the sociocultural competition then emerged, caused by the limited assets of the products that were produced within the sphere of fictive reproduction, it was integrated into this already existing rivalry among males. So the consequences of two completely different causes coincided, which eventually became a scene of aggravated conflicts, antagonism and violence. Thirdly, it is important to emphasize that the two competitive situations are essentially different, and are therefore *separable*. On one hand we have the primeval male rivalry, which is *not* a sociocultural system, but is instead based upon immediate satisfaction of biological and physical needs. On the other hand, the male competition which arose from the gender system is a secondary effect of a sociocultural system. Hence, this male competition is subordinate to the two fundamental principles that the gender system consists of: dichotomy and hierarchy. Whenever the distance between the male and female sphere shortened, and the male norm was threatened, men united and implemented the removal of the sphere of masculinity.

In all probability, that is why it may be claimed that masculinity is both homosocial and heterosocial. It depends on which relational perspective is being problematized, and what theoretical level is being focused on in the analysis.

## Concluding remarks

During the last twenty-five years we have acquired increasingly profound and varied knowledge about prehistoric women, their reality and living conditions. Despite this, there has been no corresponding research devoted to men, manliness and masculinity. The fact that a problematization of the male sex and the construction of masculinity is excluded in the science of archaeology is very unfortunate for many reasons.

Firstly, the prehistoric individual man remains unproblematized *as a man*, since all men are considered and interpreted as the same man, and not as individualized subjects. This leads to a conventional and stereotyped image of the prehistoric male. The man, in all his visibility, hence becomes practically invisible (Welinder 1997; Lorentzen 1998; Caesar 1999). Secondly, when masculinity is overlooked in gender research and the focus is exclusively on women, the relational perspective is lost. Without including men and manliness in the analysis, one can never hope to understand women and femininity. Since male and female are always interdependent, excluding masculinity leads to the loss of the general perspective. But the exclusion of masculinity is also a major loss to all those who are attempting to understand historical processes.

As the previous pages will hopefully have shown, a problematization of the construction of masculinity from a general theoretical perspective offers a new understanding of how and when historical change appears. A discussion of men, manliness and masculinity gives the archaeologist a new way to think about the ancient past and those who once lived within it.

## Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Elisabeth Rudebeck, Stig Welinder and Christina Carlsson-Wetterberg for invaluable comments and constructive criticism. And, of course, thanks to Elisabeth Iregren for her support, which gives me courage.

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English revised by Alan Crozier