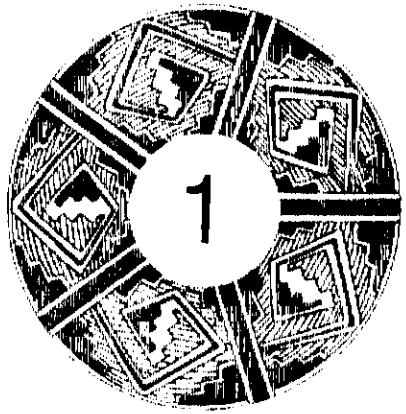

Archaeology and the Study of Gender

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INTRODUCTION

A serious challenge to the function of archaeology in contemporary society has been raised with the assertion that a largely unrecognized rationale for archaeology is the empirical substantiation of national mythology (Leone 1973:129). This use of archaeology reinforces values of which we are not always aware. As archaeologists, we "can properly be accused of being acolytes . . . to our culture," unaware of what we have been doing, and whom we serve (Leone 1973:132). Although Leone has offered a fundamental insight with respect to the relationship of archaeology to a *national* mythology, we show how archaeology similarly provides substantiation for a particular *gender* mythology. That is, the following review of archaeology and the study of gender should make it clear how archaeology has substantiated a set of culture-specific beliefs about the meaning of masculine and feminine, about the capabilities of men and women, about their power relations, and about their appropriate roles in society.

We argue that archaeology, like other traditional disciplines viewed through the lens of feminist criticism, has been neither objective nor inclusive on the subject of gender. Furthermore, because archaeologists lack an explicit frame-

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work for conceptualizing and researching gender and—more widely—social roles, we have drawn upon a framework that is implicit and rooted in our own contemporary experience. Thus, we must formulate not only an explicit theory of human social action (see Hodder 1982a, 1982b, 1982c) but also, as part of this, an explicit framework for the archaeological study of gender. This framework must begin with theories and terms that are gender inclusive, not gender specific. As Minnich cogently argues, it is more radical than it appears to develop gender inclusive theories and terms, given that our intellectual tradition is based on a fundamental conceptual error. *Man* and *mankind* are not general, but exclusive; they are partial, and so is the scholarship about *man* and *mankind* (Minnich 1982:7).

The role of archaeology in substantiating contemporary gender ideology is complicated. There is virtually no systematic work on the archaeological study of gender. There are no publications in the field with titles like "Methods for Examining Gender through the Archaeological Record"; or "Gender Arrangements and Site Formation Processes"; or "Gender Arrangements and the Emergence of Food Production"; or, more generally, "Gender Structures and Culture Change." We know of no archaeological work in which an author explicitly claims that we can *know* about gender in the past as observed through the archaeological record who then proceeds to demonstrate that knowledge, or to describe *how* we can know.

This does not mean that archaeologists have not said anything about gender structures or gender behavior in past human life. In spite of the absence of serious methodological or theoretical discourse on the subject, the archaeological literature is not silent on the subject of gender. Rather, it is permeated with assumptions, assertions, and statements of "fact" about gender. This is a serious problem.

We have two major purposes in this review of archaeology and the study of gender. First, we critically evaluate and make explicit some of the messages archaeologists convey about gender in their work. These messages exemplify how archaeology functions to provide "empirical" substantiation or justification for contemporary gender ideology. We illustrate that archaeologists, consciously or not, are propagating culturally particular ideas about gender in their interpretations and reconstructions of the past. This aspect of archaeological interpretation not only undermines the plausibility of our reconstructions of the past but also has serious political and educational implications.

Second, we discuss some of the recent literature on gender by feminist scholars within and outside anthropology. Here we suggest a variety of questions and research problems about gender that might be approached by archaeologists, even by those employing currently accepted methods of analysis. We hope that the feminist critique of archaeology will contribute new ways of thinking about what we do and what we can know about social life in the past. Most important, we hope to bring the subject of gender into the domain of archaeological discourse. In so doing, we hope to call into question the role of archaeology in supporting gender mythology.

A FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Androcentrism in Anthropology

The phenomenon of gender bias in scholarship is by no means unique to archaeology or anthropology but rather is a feature of our entire intellectual tradition (see Minnich 1982). To some extent, the male-centered or *androcentric* bias in archaeology reflects the dependence upon, if not the actual "tyranny" of, the ethnographic record in structuring archaeological work (Wobst 1978). Archaeologists draw heavily on the research of anthropologists and rely upon their ethnographic descriptions as the basis for understanding cultural diversity and regularities. Whether ethnographically derived models are formulated to be tested by archaeological data, or ethnographic interpretations are invoked as analogies or parallels to "explain" archaeological data, all the limitations—the theoretical and methodological biases and problems of the anthropology that generated the ethnographic interpretations and data—are inherited by the archaeologist. Although archaeologists are generally cautious about simplistic ethnographic analogies, this has not been true with regard to the subject of gender. Furthermore, archaeologists cannot be excused for drawing upon gender-biased ethnography and anthropology (Milton 1978) if only because there has been a substantial restructuring of the gender paradigms in ethnography that archaeologists have neither participated in nor drawn upon, either in ignorance or by choice.

In the past decade feminist scholars in sociocultural anthropology have defined and demonstrated pervasive and multifaceted gender bias in anthropological research and studies of cross-cultural life (see Milton 1978; Rogers 1978; Rohrlich-Leavitt *et al.* 1975; Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974a). There is general agreement about the basic dimensions of the problem and the educational and political ramifications of this kind of bias. Just as the scholarly use of racial stereotypes essentially perpetuates racism given the role of academic research in the enculturation process (i.e., the use of our work in the whole educational system), the uncritical use of gender stereotypes in our scholarship perpetuates and supports sexism and gender asymmetry. If our descriptions and interpretations of life in other cultures simply reiterate our own assumptions about gender, we undermine efforts toward explicating cultural diversity or commonalities (one widely accepted goal of anthropology), while at the same time justifying our own gender ideology.

Androcentrism takes several different forms in anthropology. One principal feature is the imposition of ethnocentric assumptions about the nature, roles, and social significance of males and females derived from our own culture on the analysis of other groups. Researchers presume certain "essential" or "natural" gender characteristics. Males are typically portrayed as stronger, more aggressive, dominant, more active, and in general more important than females. Females, in contrast, are presented as weak, passive, and dependent. Given this picture of universal gender dichotomies, it is not surprising to find that many anthropologists directly or indirectly assume biological determinants for gender differences and for the asymmetrical relations between males and females. Biological differences are seen as structuring and, in the case of females, limiting social roles and social position (see Sacks 1979).

A second feature of androcentrism in anthropology is, in part, derived from the first. Many researchers, both male and female, who work with the gender assumptions presented above, place more credence in the views of male informants than in those of females (see E. Ardener 1975). The male perspective is taken to be representative of the culture, whereas the female view is typically portrayed as peripheral to the norm or somehow exceptional or idiosyncratic. In the male-centered view of culture, women are often described primarily in terms of their *lack* of male characteristics. They do not do certain things that men do or they do not hold certain beliefs or participate in certain social networks that men do. Women in many ethnographies are described relative to men or primarily in terms of their relationships to men, for example, as sisters, wives, and mothers.

The emphasis on the native male view of culture is associated with the fact that until recently most ethnographers were men and had greater access to male than to female informants. This contributes to another dimension of androcentrism. Most anthropologists have been western, white, and middle- or upper-class men, and their own position within a race, class, and gender system has shaped their perspective on research, particularly in the selection of research problems. An emphasis on topics like leadership, power, warfare, exchange of women, rights of inheritance, and notions of property—to name a few—can all be cited as issues of special interest to males in particular historic contexts and sociopolitical structures (Sacks 1976; Van Allen 1972). The research problems that have been emphasized are not inherently more important than others nor are they necessarily relevant in many of the cultural contexts examined. They do reflect the perspective of the dominant gender, race, and class of the researchers. The fact that some women have learned this perspective and conduct their research from its vantage point does not deny the sources of the perspective, or that such a perspective has been perpetuated over and above the specific, dynamic contexts of social action among the peoples being studied.

Despite the intensive discussion and dissection of gender bias in sociocultural anthropology and ethnography (e.g., Friedl 1975; Schuck 1974; Slocum 1975),

this has barely surfaced as a methodological or theoretical concern in archeaology. It has been said that, in general, a "paradigm lag" characterizes the development of archaeology within the broader discipline of anthropology (Leone 1972). This view is at least partially confirmed by the striking contrast between the rising scholarly interest in gender dynamics in ethnology and the virtual absence of attention to this subject in contemporary anthropological archaeology. The point at hand, however, is that although archaeologists have not participated in the discourse about gender, they have not remained silent on the subject of gender.

Androcentrism in Archaeology: Some Illustrations

All the androcentric problems outlined above are found in archaeological work, but in archaeology the problems are in some ways even more insidious than in sociocultural anthropology. Most archaeologists would agree that "we must resist the temptation to project too much of ourselves into the past" (Isaac 1978a:104), and that we "cannot assume the same or even similar organization of adaptive behavior" among past societies (Binford 1972:288). It is precisely because of the intellectual obstacles involved in reconstructing characteristics of social life in the past that so many contemporary archaeologists seek more rigorous methods of analysis.

There has been no rigor in the archaeological analysis of gender. Although archaeologists often make assertions and suggestions about gender arrangements in the past, these are often by-products of the consideration of other archaeological topics or they are so implicit as to be excluded from the attempts of archaeologists to confirm and validate their inferences about past human life. The sources that archaeologists draw upon to derive their implicit notions about past gender arrangements are rarely made explicit. As some case studies discussed here show, it is probable that most derive from androcentric ethnographies or from the researchers' own unexamined, culture-bound assumptions about gender. That is, they do not draw upon nor create a body of theory of social life, or of gender arrangements.

When archaeologists employ a set of stereotypic assumptions about gender, how it is structured, and what it means—what might be called a gender *paradigm*—a temporal continuity of these features is implied. Even when this paradigm is "merely" a cultural backdrop for the discussion of other archaeological subjects (e.g., what an artifact was used for), there is a strongly presentist flavor to archaeological inquiry (Butterfield 1965; Stocking 1965); *presentist* in the sense that the past is viewed with the intent of elucidating features that can be linked with the present. The implicit suggestion of a cultural continuity in gender arrangements from the earliest hominids into the present has two important implications. First, it is part of and contributes to a wider research strategy that

emphasizes continuities in many aspects of hominid behavior and evolution (see Pilbeam 1981). Second, the presentist stance forcefully suggests that contemporary gender dynamics are built into the species through unspecified evolutionary processes. Although most American archeologists research human life after the establishment of modern *Homo sapiens*, these archaeologists inherit a picture of human social life and gender structures that appear to have been established for several million years.

One other important implication of the implicit, presentist gender paradigm is what can be called the *false notion of objectivity*. Archaeologists appear to be objective about what we can know about the past. They are quick to point out that "we have no idea how prehistoric human groups were socially partitioned" (Binford and Binford 1968b:70). Yet in the very same article, we read about casually made stone tools that indicate presumed occupation by women engaged in plant processing. It has been said that "as long as we do not correct for the imbalance created by the durability of bone as compared with that of plant residues, studies of human evolution will always have a male bias" (Isaac 1978a:102). Thus female roles and activities are not only distinct from but less visible than those of their male associates, despite the fact that we do not know how adaptive behavior was organized.

We argue that the archaeological "invisibility" of females is more the result of a false notion of objectivity and of the gender paradigms archaeologists employ than of an inherent invisibility of such data. The differential preservation of bones compared to plant remains is *not* the problem, only a diversion. One can claim that female-related data in the archaeological record are invisible only if one makes some clearly questionable assumptions, such as the existence of an exclusive sexual division of labor. It is ironic that a central feature of much contemporary archaeology has been that most of the past is knowable, if only we ask the right questions (Binford 1972:86). But questions that would elucidate prehistoric gender behavior or organization are rarely asked.

It is important to see how these general notions on androcentrism in archaeology can actually be substantiated in particular archaeological studies. Our review of selected archaeological literature is not meant to be exhaustive. Instead we have chosen to discuss those works that exemplify particular problems of androcentrism, that highlight the kinds of gender imagery conveyed in archaeological studies, and that illustrate some of the ways in which those images are conveyed by authors. Our survey includes literature representing archaeological approaches to the entire temporal span of human existence from the emergence of the earliest hominid populations to ethnoarchaeological research among contemporary gatherer–hunters.

Perhaps the most obvious case of androcentricism in archaeology both in conceptualization and mode of presentation occurs in the reconstructions of earliest hominid life. Feminist scholars, drawn to this literature in their search for

origins of contemporary sex roles and gender hierarchy, have critically evaluated the Man-the-Hunter model of human evolution and have found it permeated with gender bias (see Dahlberg 1981; Martin and Voorhies 1975; Morgan 1972; Slocum 1975; Tanner 1981; Tanner and Zihlman 1976; Zihlman 1978, 1981).

The Man-the-Hunter model was crystallized by Washburn and Lancaster (1968), elaborated by Laughlin (1968), and was subsequently popularized by numerous writers. This model includes a set of assumptions about males and females—their activities, their capabilities, their relations to one another, their social position and value relative to one another, and their contributions to human evolution—that epitomize the problems of androcentrism. In essence, the gender system presented in the model bears a striking resemblance to contemporary gender stereotypes. In spite of recent revisions of the Man-the-Hunter model as part of the human evolutionary scenario (e.g., Isaac 1978a; Lovejoy 1981), the revised gender arrangements are not substantively different from those first presented by Washburn and Lancaster (see Zihlman 1982 for a review). Thus, among ourselves, to students enrolled in our introductory classes, and to the lay public (e.g., Johanson and Edey 1981), we present a picture of continuity in gender arrangements and ideology from early humans to the present, a continuity that suggests an inevitability, if not the immutability of this sphere of social life.

We consider the Man-the-Hunter model here for several reasons. First, as has been noted above, the gender arrangements assumed to characterize the earliest human populations often serve as a baseline for archaeologists working with fully *sapiens* populations. Second, as a scholarly issue, the deconstruction of the model has been under consideration for a decade. We ought to be able to learn from this in our application of more critical thinking to other reconstructions of prehistory. Third, given that the Man-the-Hunter scenario is one with which most archaeologists are familiar, we can use it not merely as a particular instance of androcentrism but also as an example that, in fact, embodies most of the major issues to be considered in a review of archaeology and the study of gender.

These major issues include: (1) the prevalence of gender-specific models that result in gender-exclusive rather than gender-inclusive reconstructions of past human behavior; (2) the common assumption of a relatively rigid sexual division of labor that results in the sex linking of activities with one sex or the other, which in archaeology is often compounded by assuming sex linkages artifactually (e.g., projectile points as male, ceramics as female); and (3) the differential values placed on the different (and usually sex-linked) activities, such that there is a prevailing overemphasis on those activities or roles presumed to be male associated.

There is also another issue that is not—as are the above three issues—androcentrism or a component of male bias, and this issue is perhaps the most important archaeological issue lurking behind this review. What we find lacking in the Man-the-Hunter model is an explicit theory of human social life and, by implica-

tion, the lack of a specific paradigm for the study of gender. Without such theory it is precisely in the attempts to reconstruct prehistoric social life that culturally derived (from our own culture), implicit notions about gender serve as the basis for reconstruction. The study of early hominid social life is one of the more obvious domains of archaeological research in which the lack of archaeological theory for elucidating past human life—including, but not limited to, gender structures—is most glaring.

The gender bias in Man-the-Hunter formulations of hominid evolution is apparent on several levels of analysis. On the surface there is the frequent problem of using *man* and *human* interchangeably when, in fact, the authors are referring to males. Washburn and Lancaster state that "human hunting, if done by males, is based on a division of labor and is a social and technical adaptation quite different from that of other mammals" (Washburn and Lancaster 1968:293). Having established the gender-specific nature of human hunting, they go on to suggest that "the biology, psychology and customs that separate us from the apes—all these we owe to the hunters of time past" (1968:303). The gender-specific character of the model is even further exemplified in the discussion of the relationships between human psychology and hunting in which Washburn and Lancaster report: "the extent to which the biological bases for killing have been incorporated into human psychology may be measured by the ease with which boys can be interested in hunting, fishing, fighting and games of war" (1968:300).

All the statements quoted imply an empirical basis that masks the biases of the model. We are provided little detail on the sources for their reconstructions of early human social life, particularly the strict sexual division of labor. Washburn and Lancaster claim that "in a very real sense our intellect, interests, emotions and basic social life—all are evolutionary products of the success of the hunting adaptation" (1968:293). What accompanies that adaptation is not only a strict division of labor but also a clear asymmetry in the contributions of males and females. There is no explanation as to how the strict sexual division of labor evolved in early hominids (but cf. Lovejoy 1981), nor any supporting data for assuming differential contributions of males and females in the areas of group protection or provisioning. Females are allegedly restricted by their biological characteristics associated with pregnancy, lactation, and childbirth, and circumscribed—almost immobilized—by their presumed roles in childcare. That pregnancy, childbirth, or nursing are disabilities and that childrearing is a full-time, exclusively female activity are not universal ideas. These are culturally specific beliefs and comprise a cultural ideology that has been reflected onto our earliest ancestors.

The fact that Washburn and Lancaster emphasize presumed male activities (e.g., hunting, warfare, sexual competition over females) as critical variables to explain hominid evolution speaks more to the perspective of the researchers than to the reality of prehistoric life. There have been challenges to the argument that

hunting by males set the course for human evolution, including brain expansion and sociocultural elaboration, but these have only led to a replacement of that argument by more subtle but still androcentric versions. The "homebase," "central place foraging," and "food-sharing" hypothesis (see Lee 1980a for an early formulation of this hypothesis; Isaac 1978a, 1978b, 1982) that now replaces male hunting as central to the success and biobehavioral divergence of the hominid line remains based not only on the assumption of a strict sexual division of labor, but, to many proponents, on an accompanying set of assumptions including limited female mobility and a differential value of gender-associated activities and foodstuffs. The sexual division of labor is envisioned as the means by which food carrying and the delayed consumption of resources could develop. These behaviors in turn allowed for the food sharing that makes the human career distinctive (Isaac 1978a; Lancaster 1978).

The selective pressures for the primordial hominid sexual division of labor—and hence for the foundation adaptation of human life—are attributed to increasingly encumbered females, monogamous pair-bonding and the nuclear family, and even more rigidly to the provisioning of females and young by increasingly skillful and daring australopithecine hunters (Johanson and Edey 1981; Lovejoy 1981; Pfeiffer 1980).

Although plausible alternative behaviors that also may have led to regular food sharing have been presented by feminist anthropologists (see Tanner 1981; Tanner and Zihlman 1976; Zihlman 1978), the basic features of the Man-the-Hunter model persist in anthropology and the alternatives have been ignored or dismissed (Isaac 1978a). Although the homebase and food-sharing model of early hominid life has come under serious attack recently (Binford 1981), its promoters (e.g., Isaac 1982) continue to direct their methodological energies (e.g., Bunn 1981) toward confirmation of hunting and meat processing as central to early hominid lifeways, rather than toward restructuring the questions asked of the archaeological record (but see Potts 1982 for some modifications).

Feminist critiques of early hominid studies should raise the question of the universality of the sexual division of labor (see Cucchiari 1981). Although the division between the sexes in human life may well be an "elementary structure" (LaFontaine 1978:7–8), the degree to which a division of labor along sex lines exists in any culture is varied, dynamic, and closely interrelated with the social relations of production. A division of labor between males and females should not be assumed but rather be considered a problem or a feature of social structure to be explained (Beechy 1978; Hartman 1975; Hochschild 1973). However, with the "documentation" of a sexual division of labor back in the Plio-Pleistocene, researchers working with archaeologically more recent human groups tend to assume its existence without reflection. In fact, analysis of archaeological work focused on human groups in the more recent past shows that the gender systems presented are suspiciously like those discussed in the context of hominization.

We present here an analysis of five widely cited archaeological studies. These

were intentionally selected because there was reason to believe, given their problem orientation, that the subject of gender might be explicitly addressed (see Kennedy 1979). Studies by Winters, Hill, Longacre, and Deetz, published in the Binfords' classic collection, *New Perspectives in Archeology*, (1968a), all attempt to consider aspects of social life as reflected or manifested in the archeological record. Yellen's ethnoarchaeological study of the !Kung San, published almost a decade after the other studies (1977), also was selected for review, in part because the researcher based his report on direct observation of a living population reducing the potential for bias of the "ethnographer-as-middleman." Yellen's work was conducted in a climate of increased interest in gender and heightened awareness of the problems of androcentrism in anthropology. Finally, Yellen's study seemed likely to be more accurate and comprehensive on the subject of gender than other earlier works because of the substantial body of literature about sex roles among the !Kung San that could supplement Yellen's own observations (e.g., Draper 1975; Draper and Cashdan 1974; Howell 1977; Lee 1976, 1980b; Yellen and Harpending 1972). We thought Yellen's work might reveal new perspectives in the archaeological treatment of gender.

All these examples of anthropological archaeology suffer from serious interpretive biases. Though each study has its own particular constellation of problems, there are some general patterns of androcentrism that can be summarized. First, there is a persistent and consistent linkage of certain activities with each sex, combined with a failure on the part of investigators to provide any supporting data to justify such associations. This problem is exacerbated by the presumption of linkages between artifact types and each sex; for example, projectile points are associated with men, pots with women. This kind of reasoning implies a rigid, cross-culturally similar system of sexual division of labor in the past. It also imposes rigidity in interpretations of archaeological assemblages that produces simplistic inferences about social life in prehistoric societies. In short, researchers bring to their work preconceived notions about what each sex ought to do, and these notions serve to structure the way artifacts are interpreted. This circular reasoning surely fails to conform to the rigorous methodological standards advocated by most contemporary archaeologists.

A second general feature revealed in our examination is the differential treatment of males and females in archaeological reporting. The descriptions of male activities are more detailed, and are portrayed more actively and more frequently than female-associated activities. There is asymmetry in the visibility, energy levels, accomplishments, and contributions of the sexes. The very language used to describe or refer to males and females differs to the disadvantage of women. For example, there is a striking absence of the word *activity* used with reference to women, though the phrase *male activity* or some version of that phrase is common. Finally, passive verb forms are typically used for females in contrast to the use of active forms for males. Sex bias then is both reflected and realized by the language of archaeology.

In looking more specifically at these studies, detailed aspects of androcentrism are revealed. Howard Winters's work on mortuary materials illustrates how preconceived notions about gender arrangements can confuse, in fact contort, archaeological interpretations. Winters's approach to mortuary materials, like similar work conducted by others, has been criticized for resting on the simplistic and passive assumption that "status and role differences in life are reflected in treatment at death" (see Pader 1982; Parker-Pearson 1982). But even allowing that assumption, which is basic to Winters's inferences, it has been applied differentially to males and females.

For example, when grinding pestles are found with females in burial contexts, they are interpreted as reflecting the grinding and food-processing activities of women. When such items are found associated with males, however, they suggest to Winters that the men must have manufactured these artifacts (for their women?) or utilized them as hammerstones in pursuing other (less feminine?) tasks. The same kind of reasoning is applied in the interpretation of trade goods. When found with males, Winters infers that this indicates men controlled trading activities. But when found with women, the association suggests only that women possessed such items, not that they participated in trade.

Winters's discussion of the meaning of atlatls when found in association with male and female burials is especially problematic. Atlatl components are found rather commonly with female burials. Winters offers several possible explanations: they may have been purely ceremonial inclusions; they may have been related to the transfer of a corporate estate; the Indian Knoll culture may have included a "platoon of Amazons or a succession of Boadicceas defending the Green River" (Winters 1968:206); or, finally, the women may have hunted. "But at the moment, all that can be concluded is that the roles of females overlapped those of males in some way, leading to the . . . association with the former of a weapon that one would expect *a priori* to be a symbol of male activities" (Winters 1968:207). The androcentric problem here is precisely the a priori expectations about what males and females did; what materials they manufactured, used, or exchanged; and what the archaeological association of materials with either sex might mean.

The work of Hill, Longacre, and Deetz (all Ph.D. theses presented in summary form in Binford and Binford 1968a) present other, less blatant aspects of androcentrism in archaeology. None of these studies was explicitly concerned with sex roles, although one could say that the archaeological visibility of women was potentially enhanced, given the methodological focus on the role of potters, who were presumed to be female, as a way to document matrilocal residence patterns. The attention to women was in a sense a by-product of archaeologists' efforts to do social anthropology (see Conkey 1977) working with archaeological materials that happened to be linked with a female activity. Unfortunately, these studies do not demonstrate any serious understanding of the complexities of gender arrangements although their concerns with the archae-

ological expression of social phenomena such as postmarriage residence patterns would seem to demand such knowledge. Although Deetz, Hill, and Longacre depend on ethnographic data to formulate and test hypotheses, they underutilize these resources as a basis for understanding gender arrangements.

There have been numerous critiques of these "paradigm-setting" studies, but few have considered issues related to gender arrangements. Schiffer has shown some of the methodological weaknesses of these studies in terms of assumptions about site formation processes (1976:22–25), assumptions that include aspects of gender arrangements and how these social phenomena are expressed archaeologically. All the studies presume prior knowledge about who made and used ceramics, the transmission of ceramic design and manufacturing techniques, and about the cultural and spatial contexts of pottery use. None of the studies viewed the ceramics and their makers as active participants in the wider cultural system; rather, the patterning of ceramic variability was seen as reflecting social processes to the archaeological observer.

The work of Hill, Longacre, and Deetz has the potential to raise important issues about possible female networks, female roles as keepers or transmitters of a symbolic repertoire, or females as socializers. None of these topics is explored. Nor is any consideration given to the role and power of these female potters, given that ceramics might have significance in group boundary-maintenance processes (Washburn 1977) or in extradomestic exchange systems (Plog 1980). Instead, their studies show serious differential treatment of men and women, highlighting the contributions and activities of males while minimizing those of females. Women are portrayed as performing a very limited number of exclusively domestic tasks—they make pots, and cook and process food. Men, in contrast, carry out a broad range of activities in a variety of cultural domains: weave textiles, use clubhouses, make decisions of public concern, and perform ritual, craft, and manufacturing activities (Hill 1968:117–119).

Some of the criticisms of Longacre, Hill, and Deetz can be attributed to the time at which their work was conducted. Feminist anthropology was not a force in the field and in fact most researchers at the time could be faulted for androcentric bias. But these are some of the founding treatises of the "new archaeology" and they, like much of the research of the following decade, set the tone for the anthropological archaeology that is, at best, weak on the social theory demanded for the solution of anthropological problems (see Aberle 1968).

The analysis of Yellen's work reveals the persistence of bias well into the 1970s. The differential treatment of men and women in this study is particularly striking because the archaeologist was in the role of observer–reporter and not dependent on limited ethnographic information. Yellen had direct access to information on both male and female activity patterns but his approach parallels that of Winters, Deetz, Longacre, and Hill in peripheralizing women and emphasizing men. This practice in "living" archaeology confirms the suspicions of E. Ardener (1972, 1975) and others who suggest that researchers are more attracted to the models and behaviors of native males regardless of the particular features of the society studied.

Although Yellen acknowledges and reports (1977:62–63) the importance of female gathering among the !Kung (it constitutes 60–80% of their diet as reported by Lee 1965, 1968), he finds that "in practice it is much easier to talk to the men because each day is in some way unique and stands out in the hunter's mind. Asking women where they went produces much less detailed and reliable information" (1977:62–63). Yellen does not acknowledge that this may be a problem of the relationship between the male observer and female informant. As Kennedy suggests, "rather than think that the San women wander out of camp, gather food in the Kalahari, and find their way back home again, having no clear recollection of what they did or where they had been, it may be safer to conclude that the San women are reluctant to give detailed accounts of their activities to strange men" (Kennedy 1979:12). This argument is supported by the amount of detailed and reliable subsistence data collected by female anthropologists from !Kung women (e.g., Draper 1975), including the fact that these women often collect information while out gathering that may be critical in determining the success of male hunters with whom they share this information (Allison Brooks, personal communication, 1977; Heinz 1978).

Even when the contributions and activities of women are observable, as in the case of Yellen's research, the visibility of women is obscured by the mode of reporting. It is interesting to note, for example, that Yellen never identifies women by name in his narrative of events although he frequently does so for men. The women are referred to only in terms of their relationships to men—as someone's spouse or as a member of some specific male's family—or ambiguously and anonymously as part of the "women." Named male individuals hunt, cooperate, follow, lead, butcher, and carry, whereas unspecified women "set out to gather," "spread out" and "maintain voice contact." Unspecified by name, women appear to be mere adjuncts in group movements, leaving the impression that they have no instrumental role in decisions or actions regarding such movements. As Kennedy states, "If we are constantly presented with a picture of men who move about with nameless, faceless families in tow, we will use that picture when we evaluate the archeological record" (Kennedy 1979:14–15).

Although our review of archaeological literature is by no means exhaustive, we would argue that it does represent common themes in terms of the treatment of gender as a subject matter. In general, the contributions, activities, perceptions, and perspectives of females are trivialized, stereotyped, or simply ignored. Regardless of the temporal or cultural contexts examined, we are presented with the same imagery of males, of females, and of sexual asymmetry (male dominance and female subordination). Men are portrayed as more active, more important, and more responsible for group maintenance and protection than are wom-

en. Women are typically presented as confined to a domestic sphere where their activities and mobility patterns are allegedly restricted by their roles as mothers and wives. Archaeological research, in content and mode of presentation, has been androcentric. Fortunately, a large body of feminist literature and research on gender is now available to undermine this kind of bias and, more important, to serve as a basis for developing explicitly archaeological approaches to the study of gender.

TOWARD AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF GENDER

The past decade has witnessed the publication of literally hundreds of books and articles in the area of gender studies. Feminist scholars in sociocultural anthropology have played a major role in this discourse (see review articles by Quinn 1977; Lamphere 1977; Rapp 1979; and Atkinson 1982). Although there are no published works attempting to define archaeological approaches to gender, there are publications written by nonarchaeologists within and outside anthropology that explore the origins and evolution of sex roles and gender hierarchy (see Dahlberg 1981; Rorhlich-Leavitt 1977; Slocum 1975; Tanner 1981; Tanner and Zihlman 1976 for examples within anthropology. See Davis 1971; Diner 1973; Morgan 1972; and Reed 1975 for examples in popular literature). Martin and Voorhies's (1975) book is unique in having been authored by archaeologists. Most of the authors contributing to these volumes are unfamiliar with current approaches to archaeological data, inference, or argument, but their work does reflect the enormous interest in evolutionary perspectives on gender as well as the paucity of work by researchers with training in contemporary archaeological methods or theory.

Ethnographic studies now demonstrate complexity and cross-cultural variability in gender arrangements in living societies. These newly formulated examinations focusing on the expression and meaning of gender can serve as the basis for more detailed analysis of the possible material manifestations of various dimensions of gender arrangements, a first and crucial step toward developing methods for interpreting the archaeological record.

Assuming that we will be able to establish some meaningful correlations between the material and nonmaterial aspects of gender systems, we may then be in a methodological position to use the archaeological record to examine long-term evolutionary patterns and processes concerning gender. Ultimately, this line of research could lead to major theoretical contributions explaining the emergence and development of aspects of gender arrangements and the conditions that contribute to diversity and commonalities in those arrangements as observed through time and across space. At the same time, this kind of research will lead to better understandings of the role of gender arrangements and ideology in structuring or affecting other processes of change.

Feminist Studies of Gender

In the following pages, we provide for archaeologists some background in recent feminist studies of gender and suggest how this research can be used to formulate archaeological approaches to gender. Our intent here is to alert archaeologists to the significance—and the complexity—of the subject and to stimulate discussion among archaeologists about the possible contributions we might make to the study of gender.

The major premise of recent feminist work on gender is expressed in the following statement that introduces a collection of essays on the cultural construction of sexuality and gender:

> The natural features of gender, and natural processes of sex and reproduction, furnish only a suggestive and ambiguous backdrop to the cultural organization of gender and sexuality. What gender is, what men and women are, what sorts of relations do or should obtain between them—all of these notions do not simply reflect or elaborate upon biological "givens," but are largely products of social and cultural processes. The very emphasis on the biological factor *within* different cultural traditions is variable; some cultures claim that male–female differences are almost entirely biologically grounded, whereas others give biological differences, or supposed biological differences, very little emphasis. (Ortner and Whitehead 1981b:1)

Much feminist research in anthropology today is concerned with gender and sexuality as cultural constructs and with the sources, processes, and consequences of their construction and organization. Although researchers vary in perspective and theoretical orientation, all view gender as a multifaceted and important social phenomenon having several different dimensions, including gender role, gender identity, and gender ideology (for detailed discussion, see Kessler and McKenna 1978; Ortner and Whitehead 1981a).

Gender role refers to the differential participation of men and women in social, economic, political, and religious institutions within a specific cultural setting. Gender roles describe what people do and what activities and behaviors are deemed appropriate for the gender category. *Gender identity* refers to an individual's own feeling of whether she or he is a woman or a man. As we know from the case of transsexuals—a gender category in our culture—this aspect of gender does not necessarily coincide with the gender category others might assign to the individual. *Gender ideology* refers to the meanings in given social and cultural contexts, of *male*, *female*, *sex*, and *reproduction*. The system of meaning includes the prescriptions and proscriptions for males, females, or persons of any other culturally defined gender category (e.g., the *berdache*). Here the emphasis is on gender, sexuality, and reproduction as symbols.

In delineating the components of gender, feminist researchers have shown that these aspects vary from culture to culture and that they vary independently. For example, two cultures may resemble one another in terms of the actual activities performed by men and women but differ dramatically in terms of the meaning attached to the gender assignments or the value of the tasks. It is also important to note that sex roles and gender ideology are not necessarily congruent within a given culture (see LaFontaine 1978; Wallman 1976). Some roles are always and only performed by members of one sex. Others may be assumed by individuals of either sex although, within the group's ideology, there is an explicit conceptual or symbolic association of the role with one or the other sex. The association between actual activity patterns of males and females and symbolic linkages of the activities to males and females may vary and may change over time. This clearly argues against the simplistic and rigid notions of sexual division of labor often presented in archaeological literature.

In summary, feminist scholars conceptualize gender as a complex system of meaning—that is, as a social category that lies at the core of how people in particular cultures identify who they are, what they are capable of doing, what they should do, and how they are to relate to others similar to and different from themselves. Like the social category, *family*, gender is a system of social rather than biological classification that varies cross-culturally and changes over time in response to a constellation of conditions and factors that are as yet poorly understood. It is in this very area of cultural diversity and change through time that archaeology might make a most important contribution to the study of gender, and vice versa.

Approaches in Feminist Anthropology

Feminist anthropological studies have taken a variety of forms, each useful for archaeologists as we begin to formulate our approaches to gender. For those interested in more systematic examination of the literature now available, there are five types of sources that can be consulted: (1) *major* anthologies of articles (e.g., S. Ardener 1975, 1978; Caplan and Burja 1979; Dahlberg 1981; MacCormack and Strathern 1980; Matthiason 1974; Ortner and Whitehead 1981a; Reiter 1975; Rorhlich-Leavitt 1975; Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974a; Schlegel 1977); (2) review essays (Atkinson 1982; Lamphere 1977; Quinn 1977; Rapp 1979; Rosaldo 1980); (3) general texts (e.g., Boserup 1970; Friedl 1975; Martin and Voorhies 1975; Sacks 1979; Sanday 1981; Tanner 1981); (4) special issues of journals dealing thematically with women and gender (e.g., *American Ethnologist* 1975:2(4); *Anthropological Quarterly* 1967:40(3); *Arethusa* 1973:6(1); *Ethnology*, 1974:13(2); *Ethos*, 1973:1(4); *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 1976:6(3); and (5) ethnographies emphasizing women and/or gender systems (e.g., Bledsoe 1980; Chiñas 1973; Dwyer 1978; Goodale 1971; Hugh-Jones 1979; Murphy and Murphy 1974; Strathern 1972; Weiner 1976. Also see review articles above for additional ethnographic sources).

Approaches in feminist anthropology fall into three major categories: feminist critiques of androcentrism in the discipline; studies that can aptly be described as "the anthropology of women"; and work in feminist theory focused either on issues related to sexual asymmetry or on the relationships between gender systems and other facets of social life. In some ways, these categories reflect the chronological development of feminist anthropology from critique to theory building, although the field is still very dynamic, and all three types of studies continue to influence and strengthen the others. Each kind of study is potentially important in working toward archaeological approaches to the subject of gender and is briefly summarized here.

The earliest work in feminist anthropology identified and described male bias in the field. Stimulated by the rising interest in gender arrangements that accompanied the contemporary women's movement, anthropologists reviewed traditional studies in the discipline to learn about the lives of women in other times and places or to consider more generally the treatment of women as subject matter in anthropological work. Previous sections of this chapter discussed the findings of feminist critics in terms of androcentrism in anthropology and these need not be repeated here. The result of the early critiques was to introduce the subject of women as legitimate, interesting, and important in anthropological inquiry. Subsequent and deeper critiques of the field challenge many of the concepts and theories employed by anthropologists, arguing that attention to sex roles and cultural concepts of gender profoundly and essentially alters our analyses and will ultimately transform present understandings of human life (see Atkinson 1982:249).

In response to the feminist critiques of anthropology, numerous researchers in recent years have initiated new ethnographic studies or reanalyses of previous works in efforts to highlight the roles and contributions of women in specific cultures and to examine female participation and influence in various institutions or domains of social life (e.g., Weiner 1976). Studies in the anthropology of women seek to understand commonalities and diversity in women's lives—interculturally and intraculturally—and to examine women's spheres of power and influence. Studies in the anthropology of women essentially reinvestigate human life with females at the center of analysis (see Murphy and Murphy 1974; Rogers 1975; and Rohrlich-Leavitt 1977).

These studies have been particularly useful in revealing the enormous range of activities undertaken by women when viewed cross culturally, challenging stereotypic notions common in anthropology that suggest limitations in female roles or task performance. They further call into question basic anthropological understandings of specific cultures previously examined through the lens of male informants and male observer–analysts (see Rohrlich-Leavitt 1977; Slocum

1975; Weiner 1976; and Zihlman 1981). In all cases these female-centered studies have introduced new and appropriate variables into the analysis of human life.

The third and perhaps the most important area of feminist anthropology focuses on gender theory. Much of the theoretical discourse in the field centers on debates about the universality and expression of sexual asymmetry. The issues were initially presented in what has become a classic in feminist anthropology, *Women, Culture and Society*, edited by Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (1974a). The contributors in this volume generally take as given "that all contemporary societies are to some extent male-dominated and although the degree and expression of female subordination vary greatly, sexual asymmetry is presently a universal fact of human social life" (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974b:3).

The articles in this collection represent the first serious attempts in contemporary anthropology to consider the constellation of factors—economic, social, and ideological—that structure relations between the sexes and, more specifically, determine the social position of females in society. The working assumption of most of the authors in the volume is that there exist distinct gender-linked realms or social spheres: the public–male and the domestic–female. Although many researchers, including those who contributed to *Women, Culture and Society* have come to abandon this conceptualization, or at least its universality, Rosaldo summarized the perspective as follows (Rosaldo 1980:397):

> Our . . . argument was, in essence, that in all human societies sexual asymmetry might be seen to correspond to a rough institutional division between domestic and public spheres of activity, the one built around reproduction, affective, and familial bonds, and particularly constraining to women; the other, providing for collectivity, jural order, and social cooperation, organized primarily by men. The domestic/public division as it appeared in any given society was not a necessary, but an "intelligible" product of the mutual accommodation of human history and human biology. . . . From these observations, we argued, one could then trace the roots of a pervasive gender inequality.

Women, Culture and Society provoked a tremendous response and stimulated serious debates about the presumed universality of sexual asymmetry and the most appropriate methods and frameworks for studying female status (see Lamphere 1977 for a review of these debates). Many argued that the universality of sexual asymmetry assumed by the authors was more apparent than real and that this idea reflected the continuation of androcentric analyses despite the feminist consciousness of the authors. The critics suggested that the appearance of universal female subordination was rooted in the very categories of analysis used by ethnographers, particularly the public–domestic dichotomy. Many researchers, including Rosaldo (1980), have raised serious questions about the applicability of this dichotomy to small-scale or prestate societies.

The structural opposition inherent in the public–private notion and the gender linkages associated with it may be appropriate in describing western, industrial, suburban societies but it distorts the structure and character of gender relations in many other groups. In fact, all too often the division into public and domestic spheres merely describes presumed male and female domains regardless of the specific spatial or social context of their activities and behaviors. The analytical consequences of a *contrast* between a familial sphere and a political–jural sphere (following Fortes 1969) are not only linked to modern western ideology (Nash and Leacock 1977), but also are "incompatible with the study of [human] relationships" and of their articulation (Rosaldo 1980:407, citing O'Laughlin 1977; see also Caplan and Burja 1979). There is now systematic critique of research priorities (see Yanagisako 1979) and core concepts in the discipline of anthropology, concepts and vocabularies (see also Schuck 1974) that have been taken as givens and appear on the surface to be "neutral" and "value free:" *social structure, public–domestic, formal–informal.* The point of this criticism is to pull such concepts apart, trace them back to their origins and evaluate their utility in theory building (Spector n.d.). Archaeologists have only to gain from this kind of theory building.

Although debates continue concerning the universality of female subordination and appropriate methods for measuring the status of women cross culturally, most current feminist research in anthropology has moved away from discussion of gender universals and focuses more on variability. Whyte's overview (1978), *The Status of Women in Preindustrialized Societies*, Liebowitz's (1978) examination of the wide range of family structures in human and nonhuman primate societies, and numerous studies examining the complexities of understanding issues of power, status, and influence within one society or cross culturally (see Quinn 1977) mark a departure in feminist anthropology from "our analytical tradition [that] has preserved the 19th century division into inherently gendered spheres" (Rosaldo 1980:407). Extremely variable contexts and forms of gender-linked organization, status, and behaviors have been demonstrated.

Questions now center on examination of the factors that seem to influence the nature of relations between men and women, the circumstances in which women and men exert power and influence, and the ways that gender arrangements affect or structure group responses to various conditions in their social or natural environments.

Recent work emphasizing the relationships between gender organization and culture change are especially relevant to archaeology and in some respects the approaches taken overlap with the problem-orientation of archaeologists. Several important contributions have been made in the study of colonization and culture contact. These demonstrate the differential impact that these processes have on the roles, activities, and experiences of both men and women (e.g., Bossen 1975; Draper 1975; Etienne and Leacock 1980; Helms 1976; Klein 1976; Lea-

cock 1975; Matthiasson 1976). In certain situations of culture change, gender organization and gender-linked roles are certain not only to be affected but may well structure and set the basis for the new configuration of roles and social organization, from the extractive–productive tasks through the cosmological and ideological realms. Myers (1978) has shown how a period of population decline and demographic anxiety channeled early Israelite women into domestic and reproductive "niches" to meet the crisis, and how this limited role was elaborated and made rigid despite demographic recovery by late biblical times. Silverblatt's study (1978) shows how the very roles and rankings of females in the early Inca state became the means whereby they were later subordinated and excluded first within the Inca Empire and, more extensively, with the Spanish Conquest. Rothenberg (1976) has shown how the "conservatism" of the subsistence strategies of Seneca women after European contact is, in fact, a deliberate and adaptive response to the exigencies of the contact situation.

Other studies of special interest to archaeologists concern the formation of pristine states. These studies generally do not approach the subject through analysis of the archaeological record but are more concerned with processes of state formation as a major reorganization of human social structures, including gender relations. Reiter, for example, criticizes the archaeological systems approach to state formation, arguing that the framework has not brought enough attention to the contexts in which political formations change (Reiter 1978). She suggests that the domain of kinship deserves careful consideration, for it is probably precisely within this domain that dramatic tensions occurred; with the rise of the state, it is kinship-based societies that are being transformed (Reiter 1978:13). The suppression of the kinship base that is so powerful an organizer of social relations in prestate societies undoubtedly triggered important changes in gender status or gender relations (see Sacks 1979).

Reiter argues that "we should expect to find variations within state making (and unmaking) societies over time, and between such societies, rather than one simple pattern" (Reiter 1978:13). The examination of such variability can only be done through the analysis of the contexts of change and the formulation of specific research questions. In this kind of research approach aspects of gender will be illuminated rather than obscured, as is often the case with the broad focus and general scale of analysis typical of archaeological systems studies. Reiter suggests that those approaches that derive models from ethnographic or ethnohistoric accounts have the most potential for refining the archaeological resolution of state formation questions.

In suggesting new approaches to the study of state formation, Reiter reviews existing literature in archaeology and sociocultural anthropology that she believes can contribute to the "contextualization" of changes, studies including those that emphasize: the politics of kinship (e.g., Adams 1966; Gailey 1976; Ortner 1976; Silverblatt 1978); changing content and roles of cosmologies (e.g., Adams 1966; Eliade 1960; Flannery and Marcus 1976; Nash 1978; Willey 1971); intensification of warfare (e.g., McNamara and Wemple 1973; Muller 1977; Pomeroy 1974; but see also Harris and Divale 1976); and trade (e.g., Adams 1974; Kohl 1975; Mintz 1971; Rohrlich-Leavitt 1977). Within any of these topic areas, questions about gender can and should be formulated to enhance our understanding of state formation. Feminist researchers argue that in studying the rise of the state it is likely that one can learn a great deal about the reorganization of gender behavior (e.g., Muller 1977; Nash 1978). The converse is also true. The examination of gender relations, roles, and ideologies must be included in any comprehensive attempts to explain the rise of the state.

This last point is important in articulating the intersection of interests in feminist anthropology and archaeology. Most of the questions about culture process raised by contemporary archaeologists have a gender component or dimension: site functions; site uses; subsistence systems that are, of course, based on task-differentiation; inter- and intrasite spatial phenomena; settlement systems; the power and role of material culture; mechanisms of integration and cultural solidarity; extradomestic trade and exchange systems; and, above all, the course of culture change.

Archaeology and Building Critical Theory

The task before us in developing archaeological approaches to gender is similar to other theoretical and methodological challenges posed in the field in recent years. Most contemporary archaeologists would agree that our knowledge of the past is not necessarily limited by the fragmentary nature of our data but rather by our epistemologies (Wylie 1981) and by our methods for analyzing the archaeological record. Working from this optimistic perspective, archaeologists in recent years have initiated studies into a wide range of issues and questions to increase our understanding of social life and cultural processes in the past. Examples include renewed interest in the role of the individual (Hill and Gunn 1977); increasing concern with site-formation processes (Binford 1980; Schiffer 1976); household-level or other studies of smaller social units (Flannery and Winter 1976; Wilk and Rathje 1982); emphasis on more structural perspectives (Deetz 1977; Hodder 1982b; Lechtman 1976; Wylie 1982); and more sophisticated and explicit realization of the role and power of symbolic forms, rituals, and cosmologies in past human life (Fritz 1978; Hodder 1982c; Isbell 1976; Leone 1982). Most of these are directly related to the inquiry into prehistoric gender behavior, organization, and ideology, and we advocate the explicit addition of the subject of gender arrangements and ideology to this growing list of concerns of contemporary archaeology. However, the success of any of these

new approaches in explaining any aspect of prehistoric life or in accounting for the archaeological record is dependent upon critical theory-building and the development of appropriate epistemologies (Wylie 1981, 1982).

Critical theory-building, simplistically, involves the recognition that one generation's gain is the next generation's problem (Rapp 1982). Although the archaeology of at least the past two decades has advocated the pursuit of culture process and prehistoric social organization (Binford and Sabloff 1982; Flannery 1967; Longacre 1963; Sabloff and Willey 1980), there have been trends associated with this pursuit that have inhibited the archaeological study of gender. This pursuit of culture process is precisely one context within which we might have expected a series of questions into the transformation of cultural forms, including those associated with gender roles and organizations. However, as we have seen, these questions have not been raised. Before we turn to a more positive approach to archaeology and the study of gender it is relevant to consider, albeit briefly, why such gender-related questions have not been raised, why archaeologists have been ignorant of the bulk of feminist research of the 1970s, and why social *action* of most sorts has been absent from archaeological theory and interpretation. Only one major theme of archaeological theory is discussed, but this is clearly this generation's problem despite the significant contributions made by archaeological practitioners of the 1970s and earlier.

Few would disagree that one dominant theme of archaeology has been the systems perspective. Ever since Flannery's classic polarization of archaeology into culture history versus culture process and his advocacy of a systems perspective (Flannery 1967), many researchers have become preoccupied with the analysis of subsystems that interact to compromise the total cultural system to be studied. Binford and Sabloff (1982:139) are still advocating the replacement of the normative paradigm with the preferred systems paradigm.

The systems approach per se does not preclude attention to gender structures or dynamics but the research priorities that have resulted tend to focus on such broad processes and in such functional perspective that the sources of change or the roles of individuals, small groups, or even the role of choice have rarely been considered. Although the systems approach has produced useful analyses of resource-procurement systems, seasonality, scheduling, and other general features of subsystems, the actors who procured resources and made decisions about the allocation of their time and labor have somehow become invisible, if not irrelevant and subservient to the system of which they are a part. This preoccupation with the system(s) behind the Indian and the artifact (after Flannery 1967) is not unique to archaeology, and there are insightful critiques of how this perspective on humans as biotic components in information-processing systems has both dominated research in the social and biological sciences and structured our own concepts of ourselves (Haraway 1979, 1983).

There are a number of other problems with a systems approach in archaeology,

particularly for the study of gender. Archaeology has become characterized by fragmented studies of the various subsystems—subsistence, settlement, and so forth—and each has essentially become its own subdiscipline of archaeology with its own vocabulary, cross-cultural analyses, and studies of each across time and space. Instead of doing the culture history of different taxonomic units, many contemporary archaeologists do the culture history of different subsystems.

Another problem with the systems approach as practiced in archaeology is the methodological problem of scale. There is a disjunction between the nature of the archaeological data we have to work with and the very broad processes that are examined within the systems perspective. The archaeological remains that we have on hand are the by-products of so much sociocultural behavior that we have not even begun to find a way to read all or even most of the behavior from the data. Given "the dense load of cultural information that every artifact bears" (Kintigh 1978), we should not be surprised at the relative lack of success we have had in answering broad questions that lack requisite specificity. Furthermore, the scale of analysis of the systems approach that focuses on changes within certain subsystems tends to preclude contextualizing the study of change. Thus, the systems approach promotes an ahistoric archaeology: the *contexts* in which social and political formations change are not brought into focus.

Finally, the systems approach of the past decade has relegated the material culture of past human societies—that which comprises the bulk of the archaeological record—to a passive role in human life. Burial treatment *reflects* status, or the numbers and distributions of ovens or wells *imply* certain household sizes or residential systems.

However, both ethnographically and archaeologically the distributions of such artifacts and features as wells, ovens, or pots can be looked at as layouts or structural features that may have not only promoted or channeled interaction and information exchange among the users, whether male, female, or unknown, but also actually defined social action (Braithwaite 1982). Hodder (1983), for example, has shown how women in western Europe negotiated social positions by the use of decorated pottery during the fourth to fifth millennia B.C. Architectural features may also be viewed as potential media through which social action may be defined; there is Carpenter's study (1980) on Islamic house structures of the fifteenth century with room arrangements that are more and less sex-linked in usage, and there is the implication of how rooftop connections in an Iranian village structure patterns of information exchange and female social action (Jacobs 1979).

Just as E. Ardener (1975) has argued that there are other models of society to be obtained, models other than those deriving from the functional approaches to ethnography, there are other models of prehistoric life (e.g., Davis 1978) to be developed than those based on a systemic and functional archaeology. Ardener

suggests that these other models for ethnography may best be approached by means of studies of symbolic and ritual behaviors, and certainly these aspects of prehistoric life have been seriously neglected in the past decades. Archaeologists have yet to realize the power of the understanding that the essence of human—and, hence, cultural—life is that it is both material and symbolic simultaneously. We submit that archaeologists must rethink their slavish adoption of the systems perspective and develop a working concept of culture that includes attention to the centrality of symbolic behavior. This is particularly the case if archaeologists want to contribute to the study of gender, and, more broadly, if archaeologists are going to develop an adequate theory of human social and cultural life that must lie behind our research and interpretations. We address some of these broader issues of critical theory-building in the final section of this review, within a discussion of just one possible approach to the archaeology of gender.

An Analytical Framework for the Archaeology of Gender

One most promising general approach to the archaeology of gender is an ethnoarchaeological or ethnohistorical one. The power of the ethnoarchaeological approach in archaeological theory-building has been shown within a variety of theoretical stances (compare Kramer 1979 with Hodder 1982c). Various statements by practioners of ethnoarchaeology (e.g., Binford 1980:5; Deetz 1972:115) emphasize that this domain of research has great potential to aid in the construction of models that we need to link the material and nonmaterial world. However, employing ethnoarchaeological approaches in the case of gender is complicated by the pervasiveness and persistence of androcentrism (as shown in the case of Yellen 1977), and, as discussed above, by the theoretical and epistemological preferences that have inhibited attention to gender.

Our first task in undertaking an ethnoarchaeological approach to gender must be the reconceptualization of gender dynamics. This is one reason why we can only gain from a thorough comprehension of contemporary feminist research in anthropology. Certainly the foundation must be a theory of social life that explicitly acknowledges the parameters and variations in gender arrangements, the possible material manifestations of those arrangements, and above all the ways in which material culture (and other archaeologically accessible data, such as spatial patternings) actively structure (and restructure) not only gender arrangements but many other sociocultural phenomena.

We illustrate here how a new set of terms for some very basic subjects of archaeological inquiry can, when based on a reconceptualization of gender dynamics, yield immediate methodological implications for the archaeology of gender. Janet Spector (1981, 1982) has designed an analytical framework that can be used either to organize observations of gender behaviors and materials among living groups or to reanalyze information about gender available in existing primary or secondary written sources. This is called a *task-differentiation* framework, and it is proposed as a new way to think about and research what is usually considered "activities." This task-differentiation framework focuses on the material parameters of gender arrangements, reduces the possibility of androcentric bias, and overall is more sensitive to and allows for variable and changing configurations of human division of labor. We hope that with sufficient cross-cultural application of the framework we can gain more reliable knowledge about variations in gender arrangements, the factors explaining observed variations, and how such variability might be expressed in the archaeological record. Although the task-differentiation framework is still in the formative stages of development and has been applied only in limited cultural contexts utilizing existing written accounts (see Spector 1981, 1982), it is presented here as an illustration of one kind of approach to the archaeology of gender.

The task-differentiation framework highlights dimensions of male and female activity patterns. The assumption underlying this orientation is that what people do—how they are socially, temporally, and materially organized—is achieved by and hence directly related to the types and structure of sites and their "contents" that are the archaeological record. The framework focuses attention on four interrelated aspects of task performance: the social, temporal, spatial, and material dimensions of each task undertaken by any given group.

To use the framework, one first identifies the tasks performed by people in a given cultural setting—tasks associated with resource procurement and processing; those associated with the physical maintenance of the group, including construction and repair of buildings, facilities, and the manufacture of material goods; and tasks associated with social maintenance of the group, that is, those tasks associated with reproduction, ritual life, health, and inter- and intragroup relations. These categories are not meant to be exhaustive, but such a list should imply a far more comprehensive conception of tasks. Too often, studies of activity patterns or division of labor limit attention to tasks directly associated with subsistence or technology.

Once tasks have been identified, one describes the other parameters of task performance. The *social dimension* of task differentiation identifies the sex, age, number, and relationships (age groups, kin groups, nonkin groups) of task performers. At any one time, who performs the task? How are people organized, scheduled, and interacting in the context of the specific task being examined? Do people work in groups? individually? at the same time and place as others performing the same task? Attention to questions of this type on a task-by-task basis begins to suggest the possibilities of intra- and cross-cultural variability. There are clearly many alternative ways to organize people to perform the same task and each alternative has implications in terms of the task system as a whole, and for the social dynamics. The social dimensions of task performance should be described as precisely as possible rather than using generalizing concepts

(e.g., *communal, individual, group*) that may mask important details of task organization.

The next aspect of task differentiation to be described is the *temporal dimension*. For each task identified, one inventories the frequency and duration of task performance. It is important to consider when (seasonally, at what time of the month, day, etc.) the task is performed and how long it takes each time it is performed. These are essentially questions about scheduling and the tempo of people's lives and, again, there is clearly a considerable range of possibilities along this dimension of task differentiation.

The *spatial dimension* of task differentiation identifies where each task is performed within the context of particular site types (depending on the specific subsistence–settlement system being examined). Attention is drawn to tasks that may be spatially discrete in contrast to others that may be performed in various locations. Some tasks always take place within a dwelling or proximate to certain stationary facilities. Other tasks are less restrictive in a spatial sense. Again this dimension of task differentiation has implications in terms of understanding variability in gender systems—for example, differences in the mobility patterns and use of space by men and women within and between cultures—and in terms of understanding possible relationships between gender arrangements and archaeological site formation processes and site structure (see Kent 1980 for a cogent critique of our predetermined notions on these relationships).

Finally, the task-differentiation framework directs attention to the material dimensions of activity patterns. For each task identified, one indicates all the materials associated with task performance. Materials, facilities, and structures are produced, utilized, transformed in the course of use, and left behind as by-products of task performances. One further examines how materials are used by task performers. Are pieces of equipment shared, or individually owned or used? Are some materials that are produced during task performance consistently removed from the location of use? Are there other patternings and structures of materials? It is in this area of investigation that we might begin to learn in a systematic way about similarities and differences between males and females in terms of their use of and knowledge about certain materials, artifact types, and contexts. This is particularly the case if one assumes that the material patternings we observe are brought into existence by cultural classifications and (implicit) cultural knowledge of the makers and users. The picture is clearly more complicated and dynamic than simply identifying one set of tools with males and another with females.

The task-differentiation approach enables those archaeologists interested in gender to consider a number of related questions, some centered on furthering our general understanding of gender as a basic and fundamentally important aspect of human life and other questions more specifically related to the archaeological expression of gender arrangements. In the first case, the approach provides a detailed and quantifiable means of examining and comparing the activity

configurations of males and females. Each gender can be separated for analytical purposes to study gender-specific features of the task-differentiation system, including aspects of scheduling, mobility patterns, knowledge of the environment, and resource utilization patterns of men and women. These are all subjects referred to in traditional archaeological studies and treated androcentrically.

Because the framework is cross-culturally applicable, it also allows archaeological researchers to compare groups in different ecological, economic, or social contexts to understand better the expression and sources of variations in gender arrangements. Ultimately, with enough studies of this type, we may begin to approach the archaeological record with sufficient understanding to interpret assemblages in terms of gender. The task framework does begin to illustrate the ways that gender organization and material culture patterning are interactive; these ways are far more complex and variable than previously appreciated.

Finally, the task-differentiation framework allows us to frame research questions that should contribute to the mandatory construction of gender theory. For example, the approach specifies a range of questions to be asked in culture change studies. In cases where we can document the introduction of new elements of technology, we can "model" out the possible differential impact on men and women, given the previously existing task system. Whose labor patterns are likely to be altered? whose mobility patterns affected? whose scheduling patterns?

The task-differentiation framework obviously does not encompass all aspects of gender. Most important, the whole area of the relations between material culture and gender ideology awaits serious investigation (but look for Moore, in press). However, the relevance of such a framework for the archaeology of gender should be clear. At present, the framework involves a methodology of modeling. Certain constraints or attributes (e.g., the spatial dimension of task differentiation) are specified for the construction and testing of paramorphic models (Wylie 1981). These models are built on the basis of better-known contemporary ethnographic or historic contexts, and they are built to represent past cultural contexts, or at least to represent the generative processes that led to the material (and other) output of these contexts. The data of the archaeological record that one is investigating acquire significance as evidence (for gender arrangements or task differentiation) only in relation to the "models of context" that, in this case, the task-differentiation framework can construct (Wylie 1981).

SOME CONCLUSIONS

We are still far from being able to interpret with confidence the archaeological record in terms of gender, and the same can be said for many other features of prehistoric life. Although gender is information that has not regularly and relia-

bly been recovered by archaeologists who lack a theoretical and methodological framework to do so, statements on gender have not been absent in archaeological interpretation. As we have shown, the so-called methodological barriers (the archaeological problem of women; cf. Hayden 1977) have not kept many archaeologists from covert inclusion of assumptions about roles and relationships, nor have these barriers prompted archaeologists to draw upon an increasingly rich literature on human gender. This literature embodies theoretical reconceptualizations, new vocabularies, and a set of research questions immediately relevant to archaeologists.

We are not advocating that archaeologists abandon their currently preferred research objectives and replace them with those that elucidate gender organization, although we do believe that the methodological and theoretical restructuring that this would entail would lead to a much more compelling archaeology. We are not demanding that archaeology try to elucidate whether a male or a female made a certain tool or performed a certain task, nor that archaeologists who have attempted to do so (e.g., Winters 1968) must now empirically support or test their notions.

One thing we *are* saying is that there are certain assumptions about these behaviors that underlie archaeological research and it is these assumptions that must be evaluated and reworked in light of recent feminist research. The organization of gender behavior relates to and is intimately a part of most other aspects of past cultural systems in which archaeologists have always been interested. Archaeologists will have to understand gender dynamics at some level if we are to continue to pursue some research objectives that we have set out for ourselves: site functions and uses; subsistence systems that are, of course, based on task differentiation; inter- and intrasite spatial phenomena; the power and role of material culture; mechanisms of cultural solidarity and integration; extradomestic trade and exchange system; and, above all, the course of culture change.

We hope that our discussion of how archaeologists have perpetuated gender stereotypes stimulates further discussion among archaeologists about appropriate methods for studying gender and about the theoretical implications of including gender in our examination of other archaeological research questions. We hope that this review will stimulate more critical awareness of the role of archaeologists in employing and perpetuating gender stereotypes and androcentric perspectives. We hope also that archaeologists can realize how the roots of the barriers to elucidating past gender arrangements and ideology lie in two related domains. On the one hand, the roots lie more in the sociopolitical contexts of archaeological research than in our inherent abilities to interpret the archaeological record and the past. On the other hand, it will be difficult to do archaeology other than that elicited by contemporary sociopolitical contexts without (1) a critical theory-building that questions aspects of epistemology (e.g., empiricism) and sociocultural theory (e.g., the primacy of systems), and (2) the development of

methods appropriate to the actualization of research goals. In order to begin these latter tasks we must question the rationale and role of archaeology, and this has implications for more than the archaeology of gender.

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Too Many Types: An Overview of Sedentary Prestate Societies in the Americas

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past 40 years anthropological studies of culture change have cente on the origins of agriculture and the rise of the state. Recently, social scient have recognized that if the development of hierarchical governments, market systems, and social stratification is to be explicated, then the evolution of p state forms of social differentiation and political leadership must be understo As a consequence, there has been an increasing interest in societies that organizationally intermediate between mobile hunter–gatherers and bureaucr states.

In this chapter we focus on ethnographic and ethnohistoric information fr the New World to examine prestate sedentary societies. Preliminary conclusi concerning the range of variability in this sample of cases are presented.