

Editorial

Cultural Construction of Gender

Although differing widely in scope and matter the majority of the papers in this issue of *Ethnologia Europaea* may be seen as contributions to the same topic: the cultural construction of gender.

Manliness is the subject of the two first articles. *Robert A. Nye* in his paper wants to analyze the way codes of honour have worked to shape and reflect male identity and ideals of masculine behaviour in modern France, by considering it in a historical perspective. By following the historical transmission of codes of honour – in the form of the point d'honneur governing the duel – from noble to bourgeois culture, he shows that this feature of masculinity played a role in France at least until World War I.

There is a certain parallel between dueling and poaching, which is the subject of *Heidi Dahles*. Poaching in the rural areas of the Netherlands has often been looked upon as an economic strategy of the poor and a phenomenon belonging to an earlier period of history. *Heidi Dahles*, however, shows that poaching has been maintained because of its expressive and communicative significance. To hunt and to be hunted is a challenge to the men involved. It is one of the scarce opportunities to perform “manliness”, a notion which in “unexciting” modern societies is becoming an anachronism.

Within the two gender categories there are certain established roles or relation sets. One of these is the traditional mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relation, which is discussed by *Liv Emma Thorsen* on the basis of a field mate-

rial from a Norwegian 20th century farming community. She indicates that the myth about the evil mother-in-law may have concealed the patriarchal structure within the rural family and served as a barrier against alliances among the female generations.

In an article with the title “Life as a *Guaglio*” *Guy Lanoue* discusses the character of a classical role set within the masculine domain: that of apprentice and master as he has found it to be in Southern and Central Italy.

Finally *Daniel Meijers* takes up the problem of the development of feminism, arguing that it was the “ethic of protestantism” which led to the “spirit of feminism”.

The last two contributions to this issue of *Ethnologia Europaea* have a more general scope, taking up some important theoretical problems in ethnology and anthropology. *Konrad Köstlin* with point of departure in the famous study by *Edith Fél* and *Tamás Hofer* on the Hungarian village of *Átány* discusses the theoretical and methodological implications of “ethnographical present” as a technique of description and the use of the concept of “Alltag” (everyday life).

The topic discussed by *Marianne Gullestad* is the question of part and whole in the analysis of modern Western societies and the relationship between contextualized ethnography and interpretations of comprehensive frameworks of implicit meanings in a modern large scale society. What we need, she says, are good models of the interrelations between specific forms of life.