

This is the full text of Joyce's article. Key terms are linked.

Central to what we might think of as the "socialization" of archaeology since the early 1980s have been concerns with the exploration of ancient subjectivities. These concerns cannot simply be equated with earlier debates about the place of the individual in archaeology (e.g., Hill and Gunn 1978). As Ian Hodder (1992: 98-99) perceptively noted in 1982, this earlier concern with the place of the individual was limited by functionalism that allowed "little emphasis to individual creativity and intentionality. Individual human beings become little more than the means to achieve the needs of society." Adequate explanations of social systems and social change must involve the individual's assessments and aims. This is not a question of identifying individuals, but of introducing the individual into social theory" (see also Hodder 2000).

Whether or not archaeologists can identify specific, individual historical persons, as they can where rich textual records can be related to archaeological remains (e.g., Meskell 1998, 2002), their models either explicitly posit specifically situated subjects or they risk implicitly assuming an undifferentiated subject who tends to approximate the self-contained, rational, implicitly masculine individual of modern social thought. Construed as social subjects, actors in the past must be theorized as specifically situated: as men and women, children and elders, celibate and sexually active, and above all constantly in a state of transformation. Archaeologists interested in theorizing agency have realized that, in the absence of specificity about the subjectivity of the agent, it is likely that they will reproduce an emphasis on a few "hyperactive" agents. Like those that have been the subject of critiques of methodological individualism (Clark 2000), Archaeological attention to subjectivity thus raises important questions about the status of the person and of individuality in the past. It also should bring into focus consideration of the embodied subject in archaeology, particularly given the key role archaeology can play in contemporary interests in historicizing embodiment (Meskell and Joyce 2003).

Studies of embodiment are a central part of contemporary explorations of subjectivity in the social sciences. A long Western tradition privileged the mind as a nonmaterial site of identity, opposed to the body, seen as an object of cognition, separable from the thinking subject's mind (Grosz 1994: 3-10; Turner 1984: 30-59; cf. Knapp and Meskell 1997: 183-187). The body had needs or desires that stood in the way of the realization of full subjectivity and that had to be subordinated to the ends of society (Turner 1984: 10-22; see also Turner 1991; Frank 1991). Against this tradition, phenomenological approaches offer a vision of the body as "both an object for others
and a subject for myself" (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 167). For Merleau-Ponty, the body is "the instrument by which all information and knowledge is received and meaning is generated. It is through the body that the world of objects appears to me; it is in virtue of having/being a body that there are objects for me" (Grosz 1994: 87; see pp. 86-111 for a critique from a feminist perspective of the universalism of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological project). Anthropologist Thomas Csordas (1994: 7-10) considers further implications of taking embodiment as the ground of subjectivity, linking this perspective to Charles Taylor's (1985, 1989) critiques of subjectivity as the projection of internal, monological, self-representation, and to anthropologist Michael Jackson's (1989) "radical empiricism." Csordas (1994: 10-11) suggests that these approaches to embodiment converge in an emphasis on "lived experience" or "being-in-the-world" that requires a hermeneutic interpretive perspective in place of a semiotic one, and a shift from analysis of an objectified "body" to active "embodiment." At the present time, little archaeological work fully takes these currents of social theory into account. In archaeology, related concerns have a history that can be traced most readily to roots in the archaeology of gender, as discussed in greater detail below. Similar issues also arise in household archaeology (Hendon, chapter 12, this volume), social theory of materiality, and analyses of temporality. In its attention to the materiality and historicization of embodied subjectivity, archaeology is in a position to contribute substantively to wider social theory, beyond its present use as a source of exotic examples to support positions in contemporary debates. To realize that potential, archaeologists will need to consistently emphasize the distinctive aspects of our analyses while making use of the most contemporary social theory.

Where We Are Today

With the almost simultaneous publication of collections of papers devoted to sexuality (Schmidt and Voss 2000) and queer theory (World Archaeology vol. 32, 2000), and of sustained studies of specific ancient societies and historical traditions that treat questions of embodiment as open to archaeological examination (e.g., Joyce 2001 a; Meskell 1999), it would seem that sexually embodied subjects at last are an acknowledged focus of archaeological analyses. Of course, any such inference would need to be moderated by observing that mainstream archaeological writing has hardly accepted gender as a central dimension of social difference, and has not embraced the experience of embodiment as an archaeological subject. Discussion of some topics - sexuality perhaps most obviously - continues to be treated for the most part as ungrounded speculation going far beyond what we can know archaeologically.

The substantive contributions made by archaeological investigations of embodiment refute such characterizations, and demonstrate the importance of reflexive, theoretically grounded, sustained analyses. For example, a number of archaeologists have invoked the work of Judith Butler (1990, 1993) in studies of embodiment in settings ranging from the ancient Mediterranean (Alberti 2001) to the Prehispanic Southwest United
States (Perry and Joyce 2001: 66-72). At a minimum, archaeologists draw on Butler to support the argument that "there is no atemporal, fixed 'core' to a person's identity ... outside the acts and gestures that constitute it" (Alberti 2001: 190). Rather than constituting unfettered performance of idiosyncratic gender identities, the centrality of performative citation of precedents for embodiment has been critical to the integration of Butler's work in archaeology, providing grounds to explore both individual subjectivity and sociality. Thus, Alberti (2001: 194) argues that the reproduction of categorical relations of similarity among figurines produced in Knossos can best be understood as the result of citation of prior practices, rather than as the representation of predetermined universals of sex. He suggests that on these figurines, "breasts are an integral part of the costume of the figurines" that helps to produce a legible gender representation through citation of embodied sexed subjectivities (Alberti 2001: 200).

Citationality has been critical in linking Butler's work to archaeological investigations. Butler argued that an unwarranted presumption of the natural priority of the body undercut the claim that genders were culturally distinct ways of interpreting a given, prediscursively sexed body (Butler 1990: 24-25). Instead, she argued that gender performance produced, as one of its effects, an impression of the priority of sex (Butler 1990: 7). The illusion that the body is a natural given is thus a byproduct of discourse about bodily materiality within society (Butler 1993: 1-16). This does not represent an evasion of the materiality of bodies, but rather a critical realization that we always experience our body through the mediation of cultural concepts. Materiality is critical to the production and reproduction of sex, and other aspects of subjectivity, and is fundamental to Butler's (1993: 12-16, 101-119) concept of performance. For Butler, performance is not a theatrical free play unconstrained by social or material factors. Instead, performance is discussed as a repeated citation of a disciplinary norm, a largely or normally nondiscursive (not prediscursive) enactment of a mode of being shaped by culturally situated precedents, that in turn shapes new cultural performances. Rosemary Joyce (1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b) has carried out a series of analyses of Central American materials that demonstrate how Butler's theoretical perspectives transform a wide range of archaeological remains into potential evidence for embodiment. Joyce takes embodiment as the shaping of the physical person as the site of the experience of subjectivity, a shaping that is simultaneously the product of material and discursive actions. She traces connections between the manufacture of objects (such as ceramic and stone vessels and figurines) representing isolated body parts (notably the head, but also legs, feet, and hands) and of other objects used in practices of body ornamentation that marked the same sites on the body (such as ear ornaments), and identifies traces of post-mortem body-processing in burials in which the same body parts (e.g., crania) were singled out for continued attention (Joyce 1998). The recursive relationships Joyce identifies between the treatment of living bodies, bodies of the deceased, and manufactured objects foregrounds the critical role
of material objects, including but not limited to human representations, as precedents for repeated performances aimed at approximating, or in Butler's terms, citing, bodily ideals.

Joyce (2000a) extended this theoretical perspective to an analysis of actions through which children were transformed into adults with specific subject positions within late prehispanic Aztec society, identifying ear ornaments as particularly significant material media for the materialization of adult embodiment. Joyce (2000b, 2002a, 2002b) further pursues the implication that human bodies represented in artworks served as idealized precedents toward which successive generations of youths aspired in a series of articles concerned with the predominance of youthful bodies, primarily those of young men, as objects of the gaze of spectators within and outside artworks and performances in Precolumbian Maya and Aztec societies. By pursuing links between human representations, objects used to adorn bodies, and the physical alteration of bodies to approximate ideals, Joyce demonstrates that embodiment and aspects of subjectivity such as desire, central to sexuality, can be open to archaeological investigation.

Despite the relatively recent history of explicit attention to sexuality, archaeological explorations of sexual sites, practices, and desires have already been attempted for a wide range of societies. The inclusion of sexual attraction as one of the factors shaping material culture has transformed understanding of images previously analyzed primarily in terms of fertility, and has expanded the consideration of sexuality to encompass masculinity and same-sex desires and practices. Zainab Bahrani (1996) argues that nudity and explicit depiction of the body of Mesopotamian female figures referenced female sexual pleasure (Marcus, 1993, 1996). Meskell (1999: 94-103,2000,2002) shows that sexuality was integrated throughout New Kingdom Egyptian life, not segregated in a separate sphere, and demonstrates that male sexual pleasure and male-male sexuality were subject to representation without apparent stigma. Joyce (2000b) explores similar evidence for homoerotics in Classic Maya society that she demonstrates is not based on an opposition of heterosexuality and homosexuality, since the same representations of youthful male bodies are the subject of both female and male gaze (Joyce 2002a; cf. Stone 1988). Gilchrist (1994, 1997, 2000) has broadened consideration of sexual subjectivity to explicitly encompass celibate subjects usually entirely absent from archaeological interpretations, despite historical indications that celibacy was significant in a number of cultural traditions and historical moments. Multiple historical archaeological studies directly address the identification of sites of sexual practices that would have been stigmatized, such as prostitution (Costello 2000; Siefert, O'Brien, and Balicki 2000) and magical practices related to sexuality (Wilkie 2000).

An archaeology of the embodied subject is a necessary requirement for the pursuit of any of the currently valued perspectives in archaeology drawing on broader social theories of practice, structuration, and agency. There can be no such thing as a generalized
agent or actor. Each agent or actor is specifically situated within society and
history in such a way that what that agent sees as possible and valuable to attempt is
related to the agent's own subjectivity. Similarly, phenomenological approaches in
archaeology demand attention to the experience of embodied subjects, and these again
must be specifically situated.

The relatively small group of articles published to date that deal with masculinity
demonstrate the close connection between theoretical perspectives grappling with
agency and experience and the requirement for an explicit concern with embodied
subjectivities. One of the earliest explicit attempts to pursue an archaeology of masculinity
was developed by Timothy Yates (1993; see also Nordbladh and Yates 1990) in
order to address the interpretation of human figural representations in Norwegian rock
art. His survey of these images defines explicit sexual characteristics identified as
evidence of male sexual identity, but also includes delineation of prominent calf
muscles as a possible marker of a particular kind of male body (Yates 1993:35-36; cf.
depicting distinct masculinities, contrasting in their degree of phallicism and aggression.
His analysis of these images led him to consider theories of subjective formation of the
self and its relation to embodiment in order to better specify the conditions required
for theorizing an active social agent (Yates 1993:60). Yates (1993:62-64) juxtaposed his
analysis of representations of embodied difference to an analysis of difference (or the
lack thereof) in contemporary burials. While his treatment of the body as a surface
open to apparently unconstrained signification exemplifies a weakness shared with a
number of other studies of embodiment, Yates has rightly been singled out for praise
for his serious and path breaking exploration of embodiment as the ground for masculinity
(Meskell 1996: 7). Few other studies at the time even treated the male body,
leading Meskell (1996:4-5) to caution that “the body” in archaeology was unselfconsciously
being constituted as inherently feminine.

Practice theory in particular should encourage archaeologists to examine the objects
and settings that disciplined past bodies over time, contributing to creating shared,
largely uninterrogated ways of acting and the reflexive self-monitoring through which
social structures are reproduced. Sophisticated research on embodiment replaces the
identification and description of objects that signal gender status (gender attribution)
with exploration of how the experience of being gendered (and sexed, and aged) was
induced through the habitual use of specific modes of dress, of working with specific
tools, and of inhabiting specific spaces (see Perry and Joyce 2001). This alternative way
of examining artifacts in search of sexually embodied subjects is as likely to create
avenues to examine masculinity as it is to bring to light unexamined femininities. In
another early study of masculinity, Treherne (1995) argued that a material culture
devoted to body modification that developed in Bronze Age Europe was evidence of
an ideal of the beautiful body of the male warrior. His arguments can be criticized for
their broad temporal and regional sweep. More recent analysis of the material culture of a college fraternity, one of the historically recorded institutions through which upper-class masculinity was reproduced in American universities at the turn of the twentieth century (Wilkie 1998), exemplifies the great potential of such analyses when temporal and spatial control are stronger.

Theories of practice (in the broad sense) suggest that subjectivity is complex and interactive, continually in a process of being shaped and reshaped. This process of shaping, partly a project of the self and partly the regulation of the self by other social actors, has become a focus of contemporary archaeologies of embodied subjectivity, often explicitly grounded in phenomenological thought, partly displacing earlier conceptualizations of the subject in terms of static categories (e.g., Meskell and Joyce 2003). Categorical conceptualizations of identity, although thoroughly critiqued throughout their history of investigation, persist as objects of study for many archaeologists who explicitly identify with an archaeology of gender but decline to consider embodiment and sexuality as part of their explorations. To understand both why these earlier concerns persist untouched by critique and unmoved by the positive attractions of more complex approaches to embodied subjectivity, we need to take a brief look at the history of the development of the archaeology of gender and the growth of archaeologies of sexuality and embodiment from those roots.

**How We Got Here**

Many studies of the eruption of gender as an archaeological topic have stressed the diversity of research projects that were pursued by the large number of writers, the majority women, who explicitly identified gender as an object of their archaeological analyses in the 1980s. Perhaps most useful for understanding the implications of the development of gender as a topic by a diverse group of scholars simultaneously pursuing multiple different agendas is Alison Wylie’s (1991:31-32, 38-41) classic discrimination between three projects pursued under the common rubric of archaeology of gender: a critique of androcentrism; a “remedial” recovery of women; and a re-examination of naturalized assumptions in which “gender relations and gender must be treated as contextually and historically specific constructs” (p. 40) and "localized strategies by which social categories and structures are constructed" (p. 41) become central objects of analysis. As Wylie notes, these projects cannot simply be considered stages in a temporal sequence. But pursuit of the third project, re-examining naturalized assumptions, does seem to lag behind critiques of androcentrism and remedial research on women, which take place in parallel and are based on shared assumptions. The first two projects can, to a great extent, assume a female subject as a focus; the third project by definition has to critically examine the stability of the category "woman" itself. The first two projects can fit comfortably within a positivist framework while the last challenges it and demands hermeneutic approaches, consistent with Csordas’s (1994:11) linking of phenomenological approaches to embodiment and hermeneutic strategies of interpretation.
Because the first two projects developed rapidly and at the same time, gender archaeology as it initially developed was made coherent by an emphasis on women as an improperly understudied category of actors in the past. The essentialism involved in identifying women as an object of analysis transhistorically was not foregrounded, particularly because, whatever the weaknesses of specific studies, many richly detailed and highly original archaeological analyses were produced by archaeologists pursuing these two projects. In its task of identifying a second, understudied group that contrasted with the implicitly male subject of mainstream archaeology, the gender archaeology of the 1980s and early 1990s often employed an implicit or explicit structural analysis.

Women's tools, spaces, and images could be identified whenever a contrast could be drawn with tools, spaces, and images understood as those of an equally unitary male subject. Questions of embodied subjects and their experiences of sexuality and gender were subordinated to the identification of structural classes most easily perceived in terms of fixed positions in divisions of labor, social organization, and political hierarchies. But even initial structural studies raised issues of embodiment and sexuality, as when the stereotyping of weaving and spinning as "typical" female labor among the Aztecs was shown to be related to metaphors of public dancing and sexual intercourse (McCafferty and McCafferty 1991:23-25).

Embodiment, personhood, and individuality routinely cropped up as issues in figurine studies and burial analyses pursued as part of the initial projects of gender archaeology. Burials appeared to promise a specially privileged site for exploration of gender, understood variably but always in relation to sexed being. Starting in the 1960s, mortuary studies operated with an explicit theory of individual identity in which a person's categorical roles during life, including sex, were reflected in burial. Multiple critiques of the model of personhood that supported mortuary analysis were produced throughout the 1980s and 1990s, leading to an understanding of mortuary contexts as charged sites where personhood and social relations were formulated and transformed (see Gillespie 2001). Under the programmatic assumptions of mortuary studies, sex, taken as the ground of gender, could theoretically be independently assessed using culture-free biological criteria. In the continuing development of this generalizing project, skeletal remains identified as male or female are viewed as recording traces of habitual action by the individual person, which can be compared categorically as indications of gendered behavior (Cohen and Bennett 1993). But even when such traces of individual experience are abstracted as attributes of a categorical kind, they simultaneously constitute evidence of unique and irreducible biographies of specific bodies, specific persons.

Early on, the tendency of burial populations to exhibit features that resisted dichotomous classification, or to have non coincident patterns of biological sex and other dichotomous traits, served as a spur for analyses that began to examine a broader range of aspects of difference, including age and social rank. Some key studies of
sexuality, particularly work on the potential to recognize third or additional genders, also built on nondichotomous variability in burial populations.

Sandra Hollimon (1997, 2000) explicitly aimed at evaluating whether archaeological mortuary assemblages would allow identification of persons of third-gender status historically attested in numerous Native American societies (compare Schmidt 2000 for a parallel inquiry for the European Mesolithic). Hollimon documented considerable experiential diversity based on descriptions of the lives and actions of historical individuals who occupied such third-gender statuses among the California Indian groups she studied. Nonetheless, she was tentatively able to identify burials of individuals who possibly occupied such statuses (Hollimon 1997:186-188). The proportion of possible third-gender individuals identified in Hollimon's Chumash population was comparable to ethnographically reported frequencies. The criteria she found useful included both artifact patterns (although no simple binary sexual patterns of artifact use were established overall) and osteological evidence of habitual actions.

Perhaps most intriguing was Hollimon's observation that in the California groups she studied, the third gender was effectively an "undertaking gender" (ibid.: 182-183), defined by a set of practices that have no recognizable link to reproductive sexuality but were closely related in native thought to the spiritually powerful sexual status of a third-gender person. In a later study amplifying her engagement with the question of third-gender individuals in Chumash society, Hollimon (2000) pursued the links between nonprocreative sexuality and the special status required for undertaking. As Hollimon's work exemplifies, burial studies, as a methodological subset of work on gender in archaeology, required a re-engagement with gender as sexed experience, enacted through a body. Burial studies forcefully posed questions of the experiences of the person and of individuality that more categorical gender studies in archaeology did not bring into focus.

The challenges posed to an explicit archaeology of gender by figurine studies similarly led to renewed attention to the conjunction of embodiment, sexuality, and personhood. Like burial analyses, figurine studies have enjoyed a long history of explicit engagement with a practice of sexing, and of theorization, however impoverished, about relations between material traces and the actual life experiences of categories of people and of individuals. Until very recently, hand-modeled figurines from Paleolithic and Neolithic Europe, and Archaic and Formative societies of the Americas, were commonly viewed even within archaeology as evidence of "fertility cults" centered on women's bodies (e.g., Roosevelt 1988). Debate about the implications of Upper Palaeolithic images popularly labeled "Venus" figurines for understanding embodiment and sexuality charts changing approaches and continuing controversies in archaeology.

At the beginning of the 1980s, it was possible to argue that Upper Palaeolithic European figurines were regarded by most archaeologists as related to fertility (Rice
Classifying a sample of these figurines in terms of the apparent depiction of bodily features correlated with changes over the life course of reproductive females, Rice (1982:409-412) suggested that the answer to the question of why these images were created would most likely come from the specific "cultural life" of the group, rather than from a universal concern with fertility and reproduction. Rice raised the issue of the significance of theorizing the standpoint of figurine makers and users, noting the potential for differences in attitudes of women toward self-representation and men toward representation of others that could only be understood by positing the sex of figurine makers.

By the mid-1990s, the terms of engagement had changed, and debate about the rationale for production of the figurines moved to the intentions of artists. Those who argued for male figurine makers, based on the assumption that the figurines sexualized female bodies as objects for male viewers, were roundly criticized for assuming a stable, modern, heterosexist erotics (see Dobres 1992a: 10-18, 1992b). New arguments were proposed for female figurine makers, based on the assertion that the figurines realistically depict limitations of self-observation and portrayal of the artist's own body (e.g., McCoid and McDermott 1996; McDermott 1996). The argument that the makers were females observing their own bodies by looking down at them from a standing position assumed that the subjective consciousness of women figurine makers was most significantly shaped by experiences of pregnancy, ironically keeping intact an assumed transhistorical meaning of the female body.

Nonetheless, this analysis raised the issues of reflexivity, of the effects of making images on self-perception, and of self-perception on representation, that haunts all attempts to use representations as evidence for ancient personhood. McDermott (1996:247) argued that these figurines were "self-portraits centered on individual reproductive events," by and of specific pregnant women recording their self-consciousness about their changing bodies. As Whitney Davis (1996) cautioned, even if a particular visual perspective is convincingly demonstrated, such an analysis cannot imagine unmediated observation and representation, since objects like Upper Palaeolithic figurines require both a process of transcription of observed reality and of fabrication through which distance between self-consciousness and representation is introduced: "to 'represent' the 'self' is to treat it as an object. What has its origin in ... egocentricity, modulates into the experience of the alienated social person or 'subject'" (p. 252).

James Elkins (1996:255) was pressed by the same analysis to urge engagement with the work of Merleau-Ponty, arguing that his "phenomenology of the body stresses the unproportional, unoptical possibilities that follow on a more somatic, less visual awareness of the body: for example, a foot or a hand might be depicted overly large because it is experienced that way."

Other approaches to figurines as individualistic representations took these problems of representation more seriously (e.g., Bailey 1994; Knapp and Meskell 1997;
Kokkinidou 1997). Combining these approaches to personhood with categorical analyses of gender, not only identifications of gendered forms of embodiment but also of cross-cutting dimensions of bodily experience, could be identified as subjects of selfconscious reflection by the persons who created these images in the past. Embodiment itself could be seen as a topic of past concern, toward which an extraordinary array of body practices were directed, whose traces archaeologists encounter in other parts of archaeological assemblages. Everything from the provision of food, to the practice of sports, and the use of specific ornaments that engaged people in the past in the modification of their bodies, came into focus as evidence for studies of embodiment and its experience in the past (e.g., Alberti 2001; Hamilakis 1999; Hamilakis, Pluciennik, and Tarlow 2002; Joyce 2002b; Loren 2001; Meskell and Joyce 2003).

Some of the earliest forays into exploration of sexuality using archaeological materials emerged from art history, both in the ancient world (Kampen 1996; Brown 1997) and in the Americas (Miller 1988). While much of this literature involved analysis of representations, some authors made connections between representation and experience, and interpreted the use of archaeologically recovered artifacts in terms of femininities, masculinities, and sexualities (e.g., Stone 1988; Winter 1989, 1996). Although there are exceptions, most of this literature assumed a binary sex/gender model. In addition, as Meskell (1996) noted in an influential paper, archaeological writing tended to equate the body with women, or women with the body (see also Meskell 1998b). Contributions to an emerging archaeology of masculinity in the 1990s (e.g., Knapp 1998; Nordbladh and Yates 1990; Treherne 1995; Yates 1993) necessarily contested this conflation (see also Knapp and Meskell 1997).

Where Do We Go from Here?

Given this brief sketch of the trajectory of archaeological attention to embodiment, it is surprising that there still are very few studies that take up fully and forthrightly issues of embodied experience, except those experiences that can be taken as specific to women and therefore, as feminist social theorists have long noted, most easily treated as "natural" (see Meskell 1996). The number of articles treating male subjectivity and sexuality can still be individually enumerated and discussed in a short article, long after the production of work on female experience has outstripped even the most dedicated attempts at bibliographic tracking.

Some progress in broadening consideration of embodied subjectivity in archaeology has been made by analysts concerned explicitly with variation in age within what traditionally have been treated as unitary male and female categories. Thus, for example, Cyphers Guillen (1993) identified representations of distinct stages in the female life course in a sample of figurines from Formative period Central Mexico. Richard Lesure's studies of figurines from Formative period Pacific coastal Mexico explored cross-cutting dimensions of sex and age, identifying the assemblage as composed of representations of male and female elders and of young women (Lesure
Both analysts argue that what is represented is an outcome of the way that these societies differentially valued different bodies, particularly as they underwent changes over individual lives (see also Gilchrist, Chapter 6).

These and other contributions to archaeological research on aging and the life course seem unlikely to lead to a sealed-off “archaeology of children,” a fate that seems to have befallen work on archaeology of gender, which has been accepted in “normative” archaeology as an added topic of special interest to some people - primarily women - but not of general significance. Childhood, as a topic, demands consideration as part of a process, because no one thinks of the child status as one that is permanent. As a consequence, archaeological work on childhood and aging may be one way of continuing the project of examining the formation, structuration, and resignification of embodied subjectivity as a dynamic experience.

Another promising avenue for maintaining momentum in the archaeological analysis of embodiment is the current broadening of perspectives drawn from wider social theory. The unproductive tendency to divide archaeology into two camps, one materialist and the other idealist, is no longer convincing or tenable. Archaeology that might once have been seen as processualist has, with the integration of perspectives from theories of agency, structuration, and practice, introduced necessary attention to human action, motivations, and dispositions, differing between differently positioned subjects (Pauketat 2001). Archaeology explicitly grounded in the tradition labeled postprocessual has turned from the use of discourse as a metaphor for all experience to examination of materiality and experience as points of intersection of past structuration and present interpretation (e.g., Meskell 1999). But while the breaking down of this unproductive divide has revitalized archaeology rooted in each of the major contemporary traditions, it has not necessarily provided theoretical resources best suited for pursuing archaeologies of embodiment in the most thoroughgoing fashion.

Among the strands of social theory for a materially based exploration of past experiences of embodiment, phenomenological and feminist theories of subjectivity would seem to be particularly promising (Meskell and Joyce 2003). A phenomenological perspective directs our attention to the body as the grounding of the self and the subject of perception, and to the recursive experience of discovery of the world and the self through the body (Merleau-Ponty 1962). Butler’s (1990, 1993) insistence on the reproduction of embodiment as a process of citation, repetition aimed at recapitulating precedents internalized as ideals that one always falls short of reproducing, has already proved useful for a number of archaeologists (Perry and Joyce 2001; see Alberti 2001; Joyce 1998, 2000a, 2001b). Comparative analyses of the historical development of theories of embodiment (Laqueur 1990) already inform contemporary archaeology, and could be more influential in directing archaeologists to explore how experience, representation, and ideas about embodiment might have been intertwined. Feminist analyses of embodiment and the formation of subjectivity (e.g., Grosz 1994) could be applied
more broadly to sustain interpretation of past subjectivities.
The goal of continued archaeological exploration of embodied personhood should
be something more than the description of previously ignored categories of persons.
Instead, we might hope to finally disassemble some of the received systems of classification
that so consistently persist in archaeological analysis. Rather than seek ever more
extreme examples of alternative genders or queer sexualities, we might use an archaeology
of embodied personhood to consistently ask questions about how human beings
in the past may have experienced their world through the body, and experienced their
bodies through their specific cultural positions. Through an emphasis on the body as
instrument for knowledge, an archaeology of the body might engage both with discursive
forms of embodied knowledge (ohnson 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1999) and the
non-discursive experiences (Kus 1992) that we know were significant in past societies.

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