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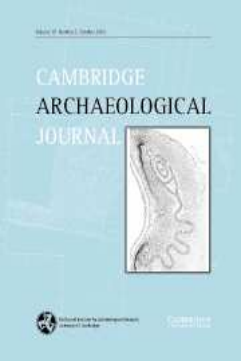

Introduction

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Special Section

Embodying Identity in Archaeology

Introduction

Genevieve Fisher & Diana DiPaolo Loren

This article provides a brief overview of recent archaeological literature about bodily constructions of identity. We introduce themes of embodiment, landscape, appearance, representation, and symbolism and discuss how presentations of the body are used to construct identities in social contexts. By focusing on the ways in which individuals create and experience themselves through their bodies, archaeologists are better able to comprehend them as culturally-specific, multiply-constituted social beings. The presentation of self can then be used to interpret the social and physical aspects (gender, race, religion, sexuality, age, etc.) that are key to the construction of identities in everyday life.

Archaeological literature has recently outlined the importance of the construction of social identity in prehistoric and historic contexts. Yet while ever present in these archaeological narratives, less attention has been given to the meaning of the term 'identity'. That is, what does 'identity' describe (is it gender, age, ethnicity, class, or other features) and, perhaps more importantly, how can we speak meaningfully about such a concept using material culture? We see the problem here as two-fold. First, a broadly-writ 'identity' seems to encompass all aspects of past life, making no distinction between multiple identities. Secondly, the categories of material culture used in interpretations of identity need to be interrogated for their appropriateness. It is in this examination of the kinds of material culture useful for understanding an 'identity' that the body, self, and bodily constructions of identity are highlighted.

We argue that while the construction of identity is constitutive in daily practices, the representation and manipulation of the body is the most visual way to construct identity (see for example, Entwistle 2000; Meskell 1996; 2000; Moore 1994). This aspect — the body being the locus of identity formation — has received increasing attention within archaeological discourse (e.g. Meskell 1999; Rautman 2000; Sørenson 1997). By means of dress, ornamentation, body modification, posture, gesture, and representation, an individual has the ability to 'put on a social skin', allowing self-identification as a member of a larger or different social or interest group. The presentation of self allows an individual to 'dress up' or 'dress down' enabling one to reveal and conceal different selves and to gain access to restricted social arenas. While the presentation of self can be understood as inherently personal, it is situated within and is in relation to the social and physical landscape. In this larger social discourse, the sentiment intended through self-presentation is open to manipulation and representation by others.

Although the physicality of the individual body is commonly assumed to imply a unity of the person (cf. Entwistle 2000, 30), the human life course moves the same body through many identities, often simultaneously. Indeed, the biological realities of the body are themselves socially-constructed, as witnessed by the malleability in twentieth-century America of the categories of race, age, and gender and even of the boundaries of the body itself. The emphasis on identity in its corporate — rather than its corporeal — manifestation, however, has hampered our understanding of the individual's experience. The symbolic or literal fragmentation and associated objectification of the body articulates transformative areas of identity construction (Sharp 2000). Embodiment must be read in context, so that

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we can assess how our interpretations are framed by our own concerns, for example, of modern gender roles or of naturalized stages of aging (Beck 2000).

Here we locate the articles included in this special section in current debates of the body of identity and outline themes of self, representation, embodiment, bodily praxis, landscape, and power. We highlight the role of material culture in this discussion and outline how examinations of the body can be used to interpret what social and physical aspects are key to the construction of identities in everyday life. Our discussion of these issues is not meant to be all-inclusive as other recent works on the body and identity (see in particular Hamilakis *et al.* 2002; Rautman 2000) consider the depth and scope of recent anthropological literature. While such works primarily engage a global audience here we seek to highlight influences upon American archaeologists. In particular, the articles included in this special section represent the different levels (from the personal through the community) of discussing the role of the body and embodiment in constructions of identities

Interpreting identity: material culture and representation

Although its roots extend back to the seventeenth-century epistomologists, the modern concept of identity is grounded in psychoanalytic theory. According to this view, identity can be defined as the internal sameness of the self and the sharing of characteristics with others in a group whose structure, circuitously, constitutes the social world within which individual identity is created (Blumer 1969; Sökefeld 1999). The post-modern emphasis on difference has fragmented this model of a unified identity into multiple, many-sided, and fluid identities (Jones 1997; Sökefeld 1999, 417–18). Constrained, however, by the need to bring intellectual rigor to a wealth of complex data and thereby denying the richness of human experience, archaeologists have traditionally tended to envision identity as a single variable — say, of race, ethnicity, or class — when, in fact, an individual must negotiate a multiplicity of divergent, sometimes conflicting, identities. Numerous studies, for example, situate gender identity in the body (e.g. German 2000; Kehoe 2000; McNiven 2000; Shaffer *et al.* 2000), but few address gender as a situational identity (e.g. Halsall 1996; Sofaer Derevenski 2000) and fewer still address how multiple identities are simultaneously played out on the body.

Moreover, the psychoanalytic emphasis on selfhood is at odds with the traditional generalizing goals of archaeological inquiry. Thus, our narratives of identity create corporate groups — religious practioners, females, élites — to whom we attribute objective, public interests at the same time as we struggle to perceive the subjective, personal histories of group members. Further obscuring our comprehension of individual identities is the tendency to question to what extent those biological variables most discernible by or of greatest interest to archaeologists today, such as age or sex, were associated with the particular identities to which we ascribe them. Thus, archaeologists frequently base their discussions of gender identity on biological observations without considering the culturally-constructed nature of these observations or the culturally-specific definitions of gender itself. By failing first to assess how we use these archaeological facts to address identity, we cannot integrate representation and reality.

Archaeologists confront the sheer physicality of bodies in skeletal remains, the productive effects of bodies through residues, and the metaphor of the body as a map of patterned activities. As outlined by Lynn Meskell (2000), there are two approaches to the body within archaeology. The first deals with the body as artefact, while the second focuses on the lived experience of the body. We address the first here, highlighting three common foci within this literature: material culture, representation, and landscape. In the body as artefact, it would appear that the relationship between the body and material culture in constructions of identity would be straightforward: what one puts on one's body would be reflective of the identity one wishes to convey at that point in time. Yet an interpretation that simply equates artefacts with identity must not consider identity as constituted by what one wears, but how one wears it, as well as one's posture, language, actions and position in social and physical landscapes. Analyses which present burials as 'portable artefacts' (Mizoguchi 1993, 224) reify artefact patterning into categories considered representative of particular identities, while they fail to consider lived experience. For example, the appearance during the Bronze Age of élite male barrow burials furnished with visually- and audibly-striking ornaments, personal grooming kits, weaponry, feasting paraphernalia, and horse gear, has been interpreted as representing the creation of a new warrior identity centred in the individual body (Treherne 1995). Yet, the construct of masculine identity and the ways in which these objects may have mediated between the self and this ideal are not examined. Lacking discus-

sion of how this identity was experienced by those buried with its accoutrements, these warriors' bodies appear strangely passive and immaterial.

Consequently, while visual representations of the past seem to offer, at first glance, a picture of the manners in which people displayed their identity, the experience of identity construction in daily life is more nuanced than these representations often suggest. Rather than interpreting these images as windows to the past, it is important to realize that representations often tell us more about discourse of identity construction and bodily appropriateness than about lived experience (see Loren 2001). Thus, as discussed by Pollock & Bernbeck (2000), figural images on cylinder seals from ancient Mesopotamia visually articulate not quite the social reality, but rather ideological constructs of gender relations and identities.

Analogous to Mary Douglas' assertion that 'What is carved in flesh is an image of society' (1966, 116), archaeologists have often interpreted the physical landscape as a living homologue to the body by which guiding principles privilege particular identities: the collective over the individual (Shanks & Tilley 1982; cf. Hays-Gilpin 2000), or gender at the expense of age. The relationship between the landscape and its inhabitants, however, is active and constitutive. As individuals, we understand the landscape and other social actors in that landscape by our experience of it. The public representation of bodies (de)constructed through physical modification, such as sculptures of severed heads or human hands, creates a collective social memory exceeding individual experience (Joyce 1998), yet simultaneously facilitates the individual's reflection on his or her own identity. Similarly, at burial, the landscape mnemonically engages the deceased in social discourse, thereby structuring social interaction among the living and, through memory, articulating an individual's personal identity (Mizoguchi 1993).

There is then no clear one-to-one relationship between the body and representation, material culture, or the landscape because the body, as Lynn Meskell (2000, 13) cautions, is not tantamount to embodiment. Reflecting or displaying identity does not constitute the experience and embodiment of identity. Rather, it is the experiences of the body in the landscape, constituted through material culture in daily praxis and situated in the discourse of bodily representation, that frame the lived experience of the body and that informs us about constructions of identity (see Meskell 2000). And it is this process that we are just coming to grips with in archaeological inquiry.

Embodying identity

More than just representation, identity is the lived experience of bodies in the social world (Moore 1994, 3–4; see also Meskell 1996). Some proponents of embodiment have drawn from Michel Foucault's analysis of the body as invested with power: 'nothing is more material, physical, corporeal than the exercise of power' (Foucault 1980, 57–8). A complete survey of Foucault's corpus of work is beyond the scope of this article, but the theme of power relations over the body follows through in much of his work, especially *Discipline and Punish* (1979), one of the more influential pieces in archaeological theory. The exercise of power and the inscription of discourse produces subjective, 'docile' bodies (Foucault 1979, 137; see also Foucault 1984, 82–3). With this focus, Foucault diverts attention from identity-making and he presents bodies statically, as 'scene[s] of display' (Meskell 2000, 15) spotlighting what they wear, how they comport themselves, what they are doing, and where they exist. While Foucault's later work gives desire and disease central attention, the role of 'power' (although defined differentially through his career) in shaping and producing bodies remains (Anderson 1995, 71, 78–9). By reducing the body to an object engaged in mechanical relationships (Meskell 2000, 16–17), Foucault disembodies the body of its agency and ignores how people, through their bodies, experience and shape the world around them.

Perhaps the concept of lived experience and embodiment emerges most clearly from the work of the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty who, in contradistinction to Foucault or Rationalists like Descartes, describes the ways that bodies are constituted through their experience in the world, rather than by their reflection on the world (Merleau-Ponty 1989; see also Loren 1998). For Merleau-Ponty, bodies give us our expression in the world; they are the 'visible form of our intentions' (Merleau-Ponty 1989, 11); thus, the ways we think about the world that surrounds our bodies are based and grounded on the experiences of our bodies in that world. This notion is the critical difference between the body as an object and the body as experienced (Langer 1989, 40), and by extension, the difference between the body as artefact and the lived body (see also Kus 1992). When the body is treated as an object, the body is the place where action occurs, it is passive and accepting of change. One's experience in the world is left out of account (which again refers us to critiques of Foucault's 'docile' bodies). When one considers the lived body, bodily praxis is situated in

a discourse of appropriate bodily action and bodily experience is given meaning through that discourse (see Moore 1994, 58–63).

Within archaeology, the theme of embodiment has found its clearest articulation in gender research. Work by Henrietta Moore (1994), Judith Butler (1990), and others highlight the body as the locus of gendered difference. It is the performance of bodies in socially-constructed gendered activities, rather than the physical attributes of those bodies, that ensures gender identity. But the lived experiences of differences are more than just gendered and can include concerns of race, class, age, etc. These concerns overlap and intersect in one's bodily experience. Archaeology has an important role to play in understanding the intersections of different embodied experiences (such as race, gender, age, class) to construct identity. The embodiment of these different identities in bodily praxis is constituted with material culture. Yet one must resist the temptation to single out just one of these factors — such as race — when investigating identity constructions (cf. Orser 2001; Delle *et al.* 2000) because bodily experience is as diverse as the material culture used to constitute these identities. Thus identity construction is about more than just gendered experience or racial experience but rather the locus of a multitude of experiences in, on, and through one's body.

Material culture

Recent critiques (Dietler & Herbich 1998) have argued that an appreciation for the social dimensions of material culture requires an integrated approach incorporating an understanding both of the social setting of production and consumption and of the options and demands operative at stages in these processes. Here, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* provides a bridging framework that mediates structure and agency to facilitate our understanding of material culture and of the associated social actors and actions (Dietler & Herbich 1998, 246). Defined as 'a system of durable, transposable dispositions' (Bourdieu 1977, 72), *habitus* is both product and agent. According to Bourdieu, *habitus* generates patterned actions that are reproduced through time and yet are transformed by changing circumstances, in turn producing naturalized perceptions and practices (e.g. tastes), which become part of an individual's sense of self at an early age (Bourdieu 1977, 72–8). *Habitus* involves a process of socialization whereby new experiences are structured in accordance with the structure of past experiences.

Although critiqued for leaving little room for agency, *habitus* does provide a link between the individual body and the social context because Bourdieu allows for the creation of social distinctions or tastes through embodied practices (Bourdieu 1984; see also Entwistle 2000, 36; Moore 1994, 77–9). Such differences that are at the heart of distinct identities. The concept of *habitus* has the advantage of overcoming the bias of considering how the body is a text to be read rather than a practice to be experienced and, thereby, contextualizes the body within the wearer's lived experience. Agency must be a factor both in individuals' choices and in individuals' attempts to orient themselves *vis-à-vis* the structuring influences of the social world (Entwistle 2000, 37). As Joanne Entwistle remarks, 'the way that we come to live in our bodies is structured by our social position in the world but these structures are reproduced only through the embodied actions of individuals' (Entwistle 2000, 36–7). It is then the articulation of embodiment that is key to understanding the lived experience of social actors and, thus, to appreciating the use of material culture in the formation of different identities.

In archaeological interpretations of identity construction and embodiment, artefacts relating to dress are often centre stage because of the intimate relationship between the body and adornment. As vehicles of identity construction, dress, the body, and the self are perceived simultaneously (Entwistle 2000, 10). The visual potential of appearance — of costume and ornament — enables multiple meanings about the wearer's individual and group identity to be expressed simultaneously (Joyce 1996, 168). Here, Bourdieu's approach acknowledges that particular artefacts, rather than representative of a particular (and ultimately arbitrary) identity, are instead infused with multiple meanings and situated within different cultural negotiations. Moreover, the 'embodied practice(s) of clothing' (Bastian 1996, 100) acknowledges dress as a medium for the construction of and commentary upon relationships and identities. Dress is an embodying activity, as costume ornamentation leads to modification of the body itself (Joyce 1998, 159). Our understanding of bodily presentation cannot be limited by corporeal boundaries since the transformation of the body through modification and ornamentation affects the individual's relationship to self and society. Paradoxically, dress simultaneously blurs and bounds the body's borders (Cavallaro & Warwick 1998).

It is under the category of dress, clothing and ornamentation that archaeologists have paid the most attention to embodiment and the body (see for ex-

ample, Rautman 2000; Sørenson 1997). But the process of identity formation can be read in other forms of material culture as well. It is not only what we wear on our bodies, but also how we experience and embody a social and physical landscape that enables the construction of different identities at different points over time.

(Ad)dressing identity

In the following articles, Bachand *et al.* and Joyce present images of the body as the source of precedents for citational performances. The former present these human figures as monumental in scale, affecting the subjective experience of communal life. The incorporation into architectural structures of depictions of idealized human figures engaged in ritual activities conditioned the living population's bodily expressions through disciplined movement. At Late Classic Maya Copán, these architectural elements created static areas in the bounded élite compounds and structured plazas. By contrast, the structure of public space during the Olmec period (1200–400 BC) was fluid. During this time, monumental figures enjoyed only temporary bodily integrity before successor rulers fragmented, moved, and re-cycled them in the service of their own political goals. Positioned in areas of mixed activity, these monumental figures subliminally fixed and reinforced popular understandings of bodily practices and ideals.

In her article, Joyce focuses on the human figure on a small scale through analysis of individualized and intimate connections with human figurines from northern Honduras. Here, the experience of embodiment is effected through the practices depicted by and the production of figurines. This linkage of embodiment and representation recursively created bodies in action. Both Bachand *et al.* and Joyce conclude with a reminder that our Western conception of the human body is limited by physical boundaries beyond which the pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican understanding, with its transgression into architectural monuments or other animal species, may have extended.

Loren also builds on the theme of embodiment on the personal level by discussing the lived experience of colonized individuals and strategies of dressing in eighteenth-century Louisiana. By providing a specific historical context for embodiment Loren argues that the experience of imposed colonial categories was not similar for people who inhabited the same categories, but rather that categories were traversed and negotiated by men and women of various classes, races, ethnicities, etc. Manipulating colonial categories, especially through different strategies of dressing, enabled individuals to constitute themselves as political bodies despite their placement in the French colonial system.

Conclusions

By focusing on the ways in which individuals created and experienced themselves through their bodies, archaeologists are better able to comprehend them as culturally-specific, multiply-constituted social beings. The presentation of self can then be used to interpret the social and physical aspects (gender, race, religion, sexuality, age) that are key to the construction of identities in everyday life. The concept of embodiment provides us with ways to interpret the uses of material culture in constructions of identity in that it locates material culture as extension of the body. Further, the concept of embodiment provides us with ways to understand how bodily identity was constituted in and through the social and physical landscape. While we have provided just a short discussion of the embodiment of identity, literature on this topic within archaeology is growing and we hope that this special section will encourage further dialogue.

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Refashioning a Body Politic in Colonial Louisiana

Diana DiPaolo Loren

This article examines the boundaries of clothing and the body in constructions of political identity in French colonial Louisiana. The study situates constructions of political identity among regulatory demands over the bodies of colonial subjects and the practices of taste and social distinction. It is argued that dress allowed colonial subjects to move into political spaces usually occupied by European colonizers. Archaeological, ethnohistoric, and visual data are used to investigate how French colonizers attempted to construct a body politic by regulating dress and the bodies of colonial subjects, while colonial 'others' attempted to constitute themselves as political bodies through self-fashioning.

Images of colonial Louisiana provide visual representations where divisions between colonizer and colonized appeared clear — Europeans were dressed properly in their finery while Native Americans and Africans were poorly dressed or naked. These images depict colonial bodies — dress, posture and mannerisms — as well as social divisions of the colonial order — race, status, and gender — that were evidenced on the body. But these images provide only part of the story since the boundaries of race, gender, and status represented in such images mirrored colonial discourses on race and difference, rather than the lived experiences of colonial subjects. It was at the intersection of discourse and experience that new, creolized identities were formulated (see Callaway 1993; Loren 1999; 2001; St George 2000; Stoler & Cooper 1997; White 1991).

Identities are inherently political. Because of the nature of the colonial enterprise, almost every daily practice was politicized and every body was, in some sense, a political body whether French, Native American, African, man or woman. While gender and racial identities have received the most attention in archaeological interpretations, here I situate political identity formation in colonial Louisiana among regulatory demands over the bodies of colonial subjects, the practices of dressing informed by taste, and the lived experience of colonial individuals. Political identity was one kind of social identity that is defined here as an individual's diplomatic, economic, and political persona. Archaeological, ethnohistorical, and visual data enables us to investigate how French colonizers attempted to construct a body politic by regulating dress and the bodies of colonial subjects, while colonial 'others' attempted to constitute themselves as political bodies through self-fashioning.

Theorizing colonial bodies

The French colony of Louisiana was established in 1699 with the settlement of Biloxi. French colonists settled among Native American tribes, including the Tunica, the Bayogoula, and the Natchitoches. French émigrés to Louisiana included French noblemen (who were often officials), Jesuit priests, soldiers from a variety of backgrounds, middle class craftsman, lower class labourers and servants (both male and female), freed prisoners (again both male and female), and some élite women (Giraud 1958, 115–16). In 1725, French colonists began bringing large numbers of Africans to Louisiana to work as slaves on plantations. Interracial sexual relations and marriages were prevalent and by the mid-eighteenth century, the inhabitants of Louisiana included a growing population of mixed bloods, such as quadroons. To rule such a diverse population, the French Crown had established ways in which people were to act according to race, gender and status. These divisions, which marked social distinction, existed on the body (as with skin colour) and served as a way visually to codify individuals and their actions (Boyer

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1997; Cohn 1996; Cope 1994; Moore 1994, 40; Stoler & Cooper 1997). Reproduced in different media and part of colonial *habitus*, these divisions conspired to outline appropriate social distinctions for each group that were reinforced by restrictions and laws on daily practices of taste, such as diet, sexual relations, and dress (Bourdieu 1984; for examples see Callaway 1993; Comaroff 1996; Cope 1994; Loren 1999; 2001; Stoler 1989). Dress and the body were key aspects in the colonial discourse on difference because the practices of dress that distinguished self and the actions of colonial bodies (together with the identities that these implied) were often politically and sexually charged (Comaroff 1996; Stoler 1989). Body and dress are inseparable. Entwistle (2000, 10) notes that dress 'is an intimate aspect of the experience and presentation of the self and is so closely linked to identity that these three — dress, the body, and the self — are not perceived separately but simultaneously, as a totality'. In this way, dress visually communicated self and social identities in colonial period contexts.

Yet the envisioning of daily practices in official discourse and the experience of daily practices by colonial subjects were often at odds. This process of colonial identity formation has been described by Richard White (1991) as the 'middle ground' and by Robert Blair St George (2000) as 'becoming colonial'. Both describe how tensions between colonizers and colonized were an inherent aspect of the process of identity formation. The inconsistencies of colonial rule and the differential experiences of colonial individuals have best been described by Ann Stoler (1989) who sees colonial communities in terms of asymmetries of race, gender, and status among colonial leaders and colonial subjects. Stoler draws out how individuals within colonial categories each experienced those categories differently from those creating them. So the official colonial definition of a particular identity was at odds with the ways in which individuals constructed their identities and how they presented their bodies. Stoler (1989, 136) defines colonial communities as 'unique colonial configurations'; highlighting how the process of identity formation played differentially in local arenas: full of contradictions, competing agendas and categories, concerns of bodily appropriateness, and the place of the body in the colonial project (see also Loren 1999; 2001). In the case presented here, for example, while the French Crown conceptualized proper colonial identities according to divisions of race, status, and gender, colonial identity was forged through contact and conflict in the daily practices of colonial subjects. Yet identities are multiple and individuals are constituted from several identities that may include gender, race, religion, and politics and that may be simultaneously contradictory (see Meskell 1999, 32–6). In colonial Louisiana, colonial subjects needed to counterbalance racial and status identities to create political ones; yet these new forged identities were often in conflict with imperial distinctions.

Martin Hall (1992; 2000) advocates the use of diverse sources — archaeological, visual, and ethnohistorical — to interpret the actions of élite and disenfranchised individuals. Hall notes that by viewing the past as a set of complex texts, different views of the past are revealed through their comparison and especially their contradictions (M. Hall 1992; 2000). Contradictions among the different sources illuminate central contradictions in everyday life or points of contention where the different views of the past disagree. Different aspects of the material world are drawn into his analysis — including architecture, food debris, artefacts and the verbal testimony of actors — and Hall sets these sources in comparison, focusing on the discontinuities to discuss the potential for multiple meanings in the past (M. Hall 1992; 2000). Here I draw on Martin Hall's methodology by juxtaposing representations of colonial bodies found in the visual, ethnohistorical and archaeological records of colonial Louisiana.

Illustrating bodies in colonial Louisiana

Alexander de Batz's well-known eighteenth-century illustrations of Native Americans and Africans in colonial Louisiana provide examples of imperial discourse on difference and the divisions that existed on the bodies of colonial subjects, especially regarding dress (Fig. 1). Produced during his tenure as Royal Engineer in Louisiana from 1730 to 1760, De Batz's on-location images offered ethnographic detail about the particular manners and customs of people in Louisiana. In particular, De Batz distinguished among the different groups that inhabited the colony from a Tunica family to chiefs, warriors, and Native American and African children. Native Americans and Africans drawn by De Batz were always depicted partially clothed or naked, even when wearing winter dress. At no point were Native Americans depicted with trade goods (such as glass beads or cloth) or were Africans depicted in European-style clothing. Rather, De Batz depicted these colonial others in presumably authentic dress, clearly distinguishing different groups by dress style. His distinctions were in line with the way the French Crown and their officials imagined people should dress according to race and status — not a conglomeration of styles but distinctly different styles.

While there are very few depictions of French colonists in Louisiana, French drawings and paintings from the eighteenth-century outline distinctions between élite and lower-status French subjects. Conspicuously absent from such images are other residents of colonial Louisiana: individuals of mixed racial ancestry — mixed bloods such as quadroons — who straddled colonial boundaries of colour, but who were still under colonial rule. Despite this, such images provide us with visual referents for the kinds of people that populated colonial Louisiana. Yet the social and power relations inferred from such images cannot be assumed. Power relations were not merely 'mapped on' the body nor was the colonial body merely a scene of display (as suggested by Foucault), rather the colonial body was formed from the lived experience of imposed categorical differences through the engagement, negotiation, and manipulation of such categories (see Moore 1994, 71–5). Thus, colonial images capture discourse, not the fluidity of colonial enterprises or the actions of colonial individuals who, rather than reproducing that strict social order, worked through imposed boundaries to create new, creolized identities.

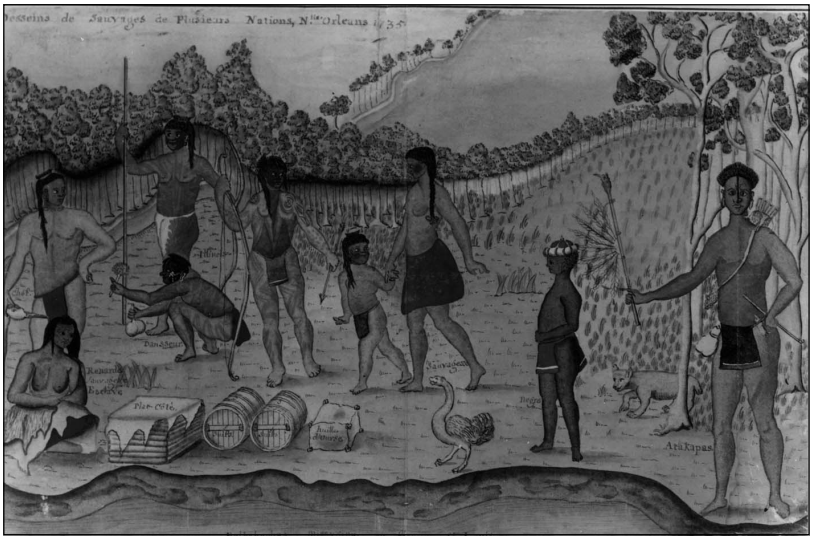

Figure 1. *Desseins de sauvages de plusieurs nations, Nouvelle Orleans, 1735. (By Alexandre de Batz. Courtesy of Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (41-72-10/20).)*

Titled French men were the policy makers in colonial Louisiana. This gentrified élite, however, was far outnumbered by a population that was predominantly African, Native American, and mixed-blood; a majority that was to be excluded from political participation (Usner 1992; G. Hall 1992). Yet during the colonial period, social interactions (especially trade and interracial sexual relations) fractured existing loyalties even among élite ruling bodies, leading to the creation of new political units and alliances along interest lines (see Allain 1988; Stoler 1989; Stoler & Cooper 1997; White 1991). The inconsistencies of colonial rule allowed for interactions not previously considered. Trade and interracial sexual relations enabled otherwise lower-status French, Native Americans, Africans, and mixed-bloods to garner wealth and political prestige, or even escape subordination (see G. Hall 1992; Usner 1992).

Yet how were colonial subjects, who were categorized by race and status, able to fashion themselves as political personages? This ability came in part through dress and the ability to carry off a costume with appropriate manner and language. But did one necessarily gain political power through French garb and mannerisms? Or was it through a combination of different styles and mannerisms? Patterns of taste did not necessarily correspond to the different kinds of clothing available to colonial subjects and the combinations in which they were worn. Historical texts provide information on this discourse of difference as well as how these differences may have been experienced.

Under the Ancien Régime clothing was a language of appearance. Status, gender, moral conduct, and education were conferred by clothing, particularly for religious, government, and high-status individuals who authored historical accounts and for whom these distinctions mattered most (Roche 1994, 6). Dress was regulated in France and visual sources (paintings and illustrations), written sources (manuals on manners), and religious sermons reinforced the message that each person must dress 'according to his rank' (Roche 1994, 55). The dress of the émigrés was diverse in practice indicating, at least to other French, not only status and gender but also occupation. French sumptuary laws dictated that noblemen wore frockcoats, female servants wore handspun skirts, soldiers wore uniforms, and Jesuit priests wore ecclesiastical garb (black gowns). Only nobility were allowed to wear certain fabrics, such as silk, and certain colours, such as purple. Native Americans and mixed-bloods were prohibited from wearing upper-class dress and enslaved Africans were to dress as lower-class servants in plain woollen shirts and trousers. Colonists were able to purchase clothing

appropriate for themselves, servants and slaves from government warehouses. Native Americans were able to complement their own ways of dressing by obtaining specifically-manufactured trade goods such as ribbon and glass beads (see Loren 2001). While Native Americans also dressed in ways they deemed appropriate, their dress was often defined as 'inappropriate' by French authors.

Excerpts from ethnohistorical texts indicate that colonial subjects, including Native Americans and Africans, were schooled by French priests in the 'proper' ways to dress. Yet their efforts were often hindered by the lack of 'proper' clothing for all subjects. The ethnohistorical record includes lists of that clothing that was available to subjects in company warehouses. For example, settlers (both French and mixed-blood) were able to choose from cotton and wool cloth, gold-edged beaver hats, scarlet ribbons, and pre-made silk stockings, linen trousers and shirts (Waselkov 1992). Settlers were able to outfit African slaves with plain gray woollen shirts and caps (Mississippi Provincial Archive, French Dominion [MPAFD] 1984b, 227–40, 281). Native Americans (and mixed-bloods who identified themselves as Native American), had but added to it trade goods such as silver braid and ribbon, glass beads, pewter buttons, and scarlet cloth. They were also supplied with clothes that mimicked French dress but without the same quality — such as dyed wool (limbourg) coats, skirts, and breeches rather than velvet and taffeta ones and linen shirts rather than silk ones — much like the French bourgeois (MPAFD 1927, 26, 41–4, 54–5; Waselkov 1992, 39). Company warehouses, however, were often poorly stocked or the clothes were prohibitively expensive (MPAFD 1929, 154–6). Thus, the clothes needed to mark distinction were often not available to those whom desired them the most. Imported clothing was often too expensive (and rare) to be worn day-to-day, which encouraged some mixing of local, imported, and handmade clothes in practice. What emerged, then, in eighteenth-century Louisiana were several different categories of dress: French dress (clothes in European style appropriate to one's rank), Native American dress (tattooing, skins, nakedness), and 'mixed' dress (a combination of Native American and European styles).

How colonial subjects mixed and matched clothing styles was a point of contention to colonial officials. Accounts by government and religious officials detailed how lower-status French individuals had 'gone native' by dressing in native, rather than French, fashions (Hackett 1934, vol. 1, 247, 255; G. Hall 1992; MPAFD 1929, 27–8, 56–8, 209; 1984a, 51, 73, 83). But that the opposite also occurred — that Native Americans or Africans dressed like Europeans — was a great offence to colonial leaders (Hackett 1934, vol. 1, 217, 253; vol. 3, 265–6; vol. 4, 54). In these situations, it was not just the costume that was inappropriate; rather the practices of subjects were problematic for colonial leaders, especially since the motivation for action on the part of the subject may have been political and a threat to colonial order.

That the ruling élite had little ability and perhaps even little compunction to rule their subjects suggests the ineffectiveness of regulatory laws along the frontier. Yet the ethnohistorical record contains accounts of élite French men who deviated from appropriate dress to move into other political worlds. An example of this is Anthanses DeMézières, commandant of Natchitoches, who had criticized French men who had 'gone native' (Bolton 1914, vol. 1, 179). Yet DeMézières was described in another light by Father Morfí, who stated that:

> Many Frenchmen . . . can scarcely be distinguished from the Indians. For they imitate them not only in their nakedness, but even in painting their faces. In testimony of this truth . . . Such was Lieutenant-Captain Don Anthanase DeMézières called Captain Pinto, because he painted his face . . . Referring to the woodsmen and Canadians scattered about Louisiana, and to the uniform which they should be obliged to wear . . . they should be obliged to wear them, because their greatest pleasure is to appear naked except for a breech-clout. Let us now see who abandon all decorum and go about unclothed. I surmise that only those of the lower class do this habitually, but it appears that some of the higher rank likewise do so (Hackett 1934, vol. 1, 249).

This account suggests that the natural assumption of colonial authors was that lower-status individuals always dressed improperly, for whatever reason. Élite individuals were distinguished from lower-status practices by the reasoning that they needed to dress in a certain way for political reasons. This suggests an important contradiction in the politics of body regulation — élite male individuals were allowed to shrug off conventional dress to gain political prestige, while lower-status individuals (who may have also done this for political reasons) were vilified by the Crown and colonial officials for their actions. Further, these accounts evidence the anxieties of those in power. Colonial bodies, so carefully defined and so closely watched, were blurring category lines in that subjects could subvert colonial order (at least in the minds of officials) by merely dressing like someone else. So while the experience of imposed categories differed according to race, status, and gender, in

practice individuals in different categories resorted to the same techniques of mixing different dress styles to constitute visual political identities. The archaeological record provides some insights into how this process took place.

Archaeology of small finds

Dress artefacts, such as buttons and buckles, are informative about the practices of dressing and the ways in which identities were constituted in relation to official dictates, local conditions, and personal beliefs. Unfortunately, small finds such as buttons and buckles are frequently assigned to functional categories of 'personal adornment'. Such categories tell us little about how people meaningfully dressed themselves and the potential of small finds as dynamic interpretive tools has been limited because dress artefacts have been given little attention in historical archaeology in the United States.

It has long been the practice of archaeologists to focus on the largest classes of material culture, such as ceramic and lithic material. Small items (e.g. buttons and buckles) are rarely found in sites often due to depositional and curation issues. And because of their scarcity, such artefacts are often an overlooked category in archaeological analysis (Loren 2001). When such items are examined, they are usually relegated to categories such as 'small finds', 'personal' or 'activities'; categories that serve to limit our interpretations. As Beaudry (2002) notes, such categorization connotes irrelevance and limits our vision about how these objects were meaningfully used in everyday life. The marginalization leads to uncritical assumptions that ignore context and meaningful use (Beaudry 2002). This tendency is particularly troublesome when one stops to consider the potential range of experiences of the colonial peoples (Native American, French, mixed-blood) who used items of dress in particularly political and consequential ways.

The items of dress considered here were recovered from domestic contexts and include clothing artefacts, such as buttons and buckles, as well as weaponry, such as guns and knives, which were worn on the body visually to constitute identity. Dress artefacts can suggest either higher-status 'European' dress, such as buttons that were worn on a coat, or lower-status 'native' dress, such as brass tinklers and glass beads that were sewn on buckskin clothing. Items of dress can be further subdivided into two categories. The first category consists of clothing artefacts, such as buttons and buckles, while the second category consists of items worn over clothing, such as guns and knives.

Ethnohistorical and visual sources have provided some information on the ways in which different social and racial groups were to dress: French individuals as well as Africans were to don European-style clothing appropriate to their status and gender while Native Americans dressed in buckskin, not in European-style clothes. Yet if individuals in colonial Louisiana were mixing European and native fashions as has been suggested, one would expect some mixture of different kinds of artefacts in domestic contexts.

Dress artefacts recovered from two early eighteenth-century sites — the multi-ethnic community of Fort St Pierre and the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians — provide some examples. Both sites are located along the Mississippi River, approximately 150 miles north of New Orleans. Fort St Pierre — excavated by Ian Brown in the 1970s — was occupied during the eighteenth century by French officers and soldiers and their families, French and mixed-blood servants, and African slaves (Brown 1979, 91). The Grand Village of the Natchez — excavated by Robert Neitzel in 1950s — was occupied by the Natchez Indians until 1729.

At Fort St Pierre a mixture of dress artefacts was recovered from house floors and middens, including buckles, buttons, cufflinks, shoe heels, brass tinklers, glass beads, gun parts and knives (Brown 1979, 939–1015). Dress artefacts recovered from domestic areas at the Grand Village of the Natchez include bone and glass beads, shoe and belt buckles, chain mail, buttons, ornamental sword parts, tinkler cones, gunparts and iron knives, including a pearl-handled knife (Neitzel 1983, 106–17). This mixture of different 'European' and 'native' dress artefacts in domestic contexts suggests that the residents of these sites mixed 'European' and 'native' dress styles in daily practice.

In Tables 1 and 2, different types of artefacts are grouped together to correspond with how those objects would be located on the body. Table 1 lists clothing artefacts, such as buttons from a shirt or coat, while Table 2 lists those items worn over clothing such as guns and knives suspended from the waist or glass beads and tinklers sewn on clothing. Clothing artefacts from the two sites (while still mixed) suggest patterns that correspond to the kinds of dress that may have been familiar to the groups that inhabited these sites. Buttons from coats or shirts were more common in the Fort St Pierre assemblage, as would be expected at a site that was occupied by soldiers, settlers, and slaves (Table 1). Buttons and European-style clothing artefacts were less common

Table 1. *Clothing artefacts.*

	Fort St Pierre	Grand Village of Natchez
Plain button	21	0
Embellished button	6	3
Cufflinks	3	0
Buckle	9	3
Knee buckle	2	0
Belt hook	0	1
Belt scabbard	0	1
Shoe buckles	0	1
Shoe parts	4	0

Table 2. *Items worn over clothing.*

	Fort St Pierre	Grand Village of Natchez
Sword quillion	0	2
Gun parts	59	22
Knives	9	10
Glass beads	189	400
Brass tinklers	12	28
Chain mail	0	1
Bone beads	0	3
Bone pendant	0	1
Earrings	1	1
Finger ring	0	1

in the Grand Village of the Natchez assemblage, again as would be expected at a site primarily occupied by Natchez Indians, who had their own manner of dressing (Table 1). Instead, objects that were suspended or worn over clothing are found in similar percentages and are mixed at both sites, suggesting that it was through these kinds of objects — objects worn over the body rather than through clothing itself — that new identities may have been constituted (Table 2). Knives, glass beads, gun parts, and brass tinklers (brass cones sewn on clothing) were the most common of these kinds of artefacts at both sites. While these items may have been plentiful in colonial Louisiana, this occurrence at both sites suggests that they may commonly have communicated one's personal and political identities to a wide audience.

The power of wearing these kinds of combinations of clothing and objects lay in performance; the social, public presentation of the body and self. With the dress codes that existed in colonial Louisiana, a Native American or an African dressed in a European frock coat or a French man dressed in a breechcloth may have been viewed as a *poseur*. Even mixed-bloods, who by virtue of their birth were lower status, may also have had little success in trying to dress like French élites. A Native American in a breechcloth or skirt, with a European shirt wearing guns, knives, and finger rings, however, may have had more access to any number of political situations than a Native American wearing the frock coat, who would be seen as dressing in a wholly foreign way. Thus, individuals within or between different categories did not dress in the same manner, but rather used the same strategies of dressing by wearing clothing that was familiar (and according to tastes), while incorporating other aspects of different dress styles by wearing different kinds of objects over clothing. In this way, individuals within different categories were able to negotiate imposed differences and visually to constitute political identities.

Conclusion

Since the Louisiana colonial project was riddled with contradictions and a fractured ruling body, colonial subjects had some ability to create political identities through dress, and manipulate their bodily appearance to obtain wealth, power, alliances, or even escape subordination. The body was central to the process of becoming colonial: colonial officials wished to control the bodies of colonial subjects who in turn manipulated their bodies to create new identities at the intersection of discourse and lived experience. This strategy of dressing was important to all sides of colonial society, European and non-European, upper class and lower class. It was a way to survive and gain power in a frontier world, yet colonial authors referred back to imposed hierarchies when discussing these practices. The discrepancies point to tensions inherent in the process of becoming colonial, particularly as regards control of the body. Colonial subjects experienced imposed categories differently, yet similarly constituted new identities through new combinations of dress, allowing Native Americans, Africans, French and mixed-bloods to refashion new, creolized identities and new political presences at the intersection of discourse and lived experience.

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Bodies Moving in Space: Ancient Mesoamerican Human Sculpture and Embodiment

Holly Bachand, Rosemary A. Joyce & Julia A. Hendon

Judith Butler's proposal that embodiment is a process of repeated citation of precedents leads us to consider the experiential effects of Mesoamerican practices of ornamenting space with images of the human body. At Late Classic Maya Copán, life-size human sculptures were attached to residences, intimate settings in which body knowledge was produced and body practices institutionalized. Moving through the space of these house compounds, persons would have been insistently presented with measures of their bodily decorum. These insights are used to consider the possible effects on people of movement around Formative period Olmec human sculptures, which are not routinely recovered in such well-defined contexts as those of the much later Maya sites.

In previous publications, the authors of this article have explored the intersection of embodiment, materiality, and subjectivity in prehispanic Mesoamerica, drawing on a range of anthropological and gender theory (Joyce 1993; 1998; 2000a,b,c; 2001; 2002; Joyce & Hendon 2000). Central to this work on embodiment — the materialization of the physical person as the site of the experience of subjectivity — has been an understanding of the writing of Judith Butler and its applicability to archaeological inquiry (see Perry & Joyce 2001). Butler noted that a starting point for many analyses of gender was the argument that genders were 'ways of culturally interpreting the sexed body', means by which particular symbolic value was given (within specific cultural circumstances) to human bodies with distinct sexual characteristics (Butler 1990, 24–5, 112, 134–41). Butler convincingly argues that such a presumption of the priority of the body, and the dichotomy between nature (sex) and culture (gender), are insupportable. As Butler put it, the 'production of sex as the prediscursive ought to be understood as the *effect* of the apparatus of cultural construction designated by gender' (Butler 1990; emphasis added). The illusory transparent existence of the 'natural' body is itself a by-product of discourse *about* bodily materiality (Butler 1993, 1–16, 101–19). *Materiality* is consequently a critical part of the apparatus through which sex, and other aspects of subjectivity, are produced and reproduced.

From this perspective, materiality cannot simply be subsumed as a kind of inarticulate discourse. We argue that materiality is better considered in terms of Butler's (1993, 12–16, 101–19) concept of performance. She defines performance as a form of repeated *citation* of a disciplinary norm, a largely or normally nondiscursive (*not* prediscursive) enactment of a mode of being that is shaped by culturally-situated precedents, and in turn shapes new cultural performances. We thus view materiality as a mechanism through which social actors transform fleeting identities into historical facts (Joyce & Hendon 2000).

We draw on the terminology of Paul Connerton (1989, 72–3) in our discussion of processes through which social memory is concretized and generalized (Joyce 1998; Joyce & Hendon 2000). Connerton identified a tension between what he called 'practices of bodily incorporation' and 'practices of inscription' that is central to the two archaeological cases we consider in this article. Bodily practices — intimate, internalized, and fleeting — take place in what Michael Herzfeld (1991, 10) calls social time, 'the grist of everyday experience . . . the kind of time in which events cannot be predicted but in which every

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effort can be made to influence them . . . the time that gives events their reality, because it encounters each as one of a kind'. In contrast, inscriptional practices make permanent more ephemeral actions and appearances, and separate them from their locally situated position in the bodies and lives of particular persons. Inscriptional practices are marks in monumental time, which Herzfeld (1991, 7–10) argues 'is reductive and generic. It encounters events as realizations of some supreme destiny, and it reduces social experience to collective predictability. Its main focus is on the past — a past constituted by categories and stereotypes'.

Joyce (1998) has argued that in ancient Mesoamerica, standardized body ornaments and human figural images executed in permanent materials were media for the inscription and control of bodily practices at the scale of the individual subject. Joyce & Hendon (2000) have extended this argument to the construction of places. They suggest that the location of buildings on the landscape can be understood as a way that social groups seek to concretize and generalize certain key identifications. Placing buildings in space can create more enduring histories for specific identities by marking them permanently on the landscape. Through the interplay of placed bodily materialization and the inscription of embodied subjectivity in places, settings in which citational precedents for performance shaped the subjective experience of bodies moving in space were constructed.

Bodies moving in space

Our current investigation concerns the effects on embodiment and on day-to-day experience of the constant presence of permanently-inscribed images of idealized human bodies, which served as citational precedents for lived performance in Mesoamerica. Although there are many distinct societies in the history of the region, across different contexts, personhood took the form not of the autonomous and disconnected individuals of contemporary methodological individualism, but of relational selves (López Austin 1988; Furst 1995; Gillespie 2001; Joyce 2001). The materialization of the embodied person was accomplished through social interaction among groups of people living in structured spatial settings. Mesoamerican practices of materializing the body, with substantial antiquity and longevity, include the inheritance of ancestral names, calendrical fates, and named spirit doubles who are active while the embodied person sleeps, dreams, or has visions. The cultural modification of the skin, skull, teeth, and ears were physical practices materializing embodied Mesoamerican persons from the earliest villages known, around 1500 BC, through to Spanish contact in the sixteenth century AD.

The profusion of human sculpture in Mesoamerican sites has received much attention as a source for individual histories, for the definition of culture-specific styles for establishing chronology and interaction, and for the study of iconography to construct models of cosmology and ideology. Less attention has been paid to the fundamental question of the effects on the people living in these places of ornamenting space with human figures. Needless to say, this is by no means a universal cultural practice. Human figures need not predominate nor even be present in different representational traditions. Consequently, we take the deployment of images of the human body as a significant exercise of agency, making choices to depict, and to patronize the depiction of, idealized models of human bodily being.

In Mesoamerica, not all societies portrayed human images in all, or even most, spatial contexts. For example, while the façades of residences of nobles (the apparent social, political, and economic élites) at Classic Maya sites like Copán (discussed below) incorporate human images, the façades of residences of the corresponding social segment in the Postclassic Valley of Oaxaca featured geometric patterning (Hamann 1997). Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1950, 170–72) noted the replication of human figures on virtually every visible surface of monumental architecture at the Terminal Classic Maya site, Chichen Itza (Fig. 1). This multiplicity of human figures contrasts with more selective use of human figures in partly contemporary Classic Maya centres further south. Proskouriakoff suggested that the architectural spaces of Chichen Itza were visually populated with a permanent crowd of warriors, reflecting a distinct social world from that of other Maya sites.

In order to discuss such contrasts, and particularly to relate them to the lived experience of human subjects for whom these images served as a source of precedents for citational performance, we need to sketch out some distinctions among Mesoamerican spatial settings. Joyce & Hendon (2000) identify variation in intimacy, visibility, and circulation frequency as key dimensions in the spatial organization of Mesoamerican settlements. Variation in the scale of settings, from the interiors of individual houses to the great exterior plaza spaces, created and reinforced differential relations of intimacy among those persons present. Visibility ranged across a spectrum from the least visible, subdivided interior spaces of

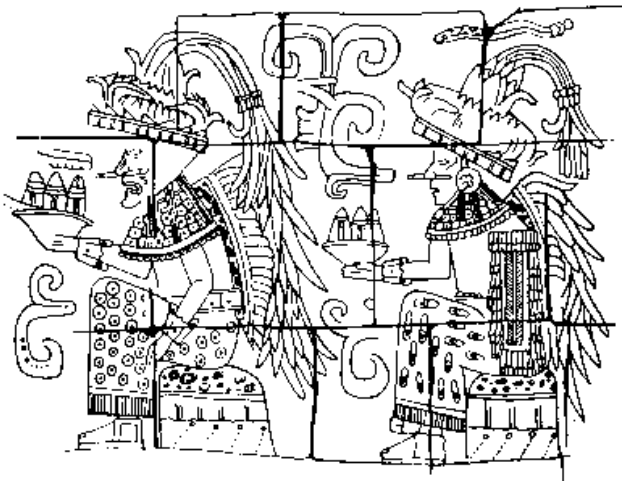

Figure 1. *Drawing of seated human figures from a bench in the Terminal Classic Maya Temple of the Chac Mool, Chichen Itza, Mexico. (From Tozzer 1957, fig. 671.)*

buildings, to the visual omnipresence within sites and even regions of monumental architecture. Regular or opportunistic visits to sites of ritual practice, prescribed by calendars or required by events in individual lives, and everyday circulation within house compounds established endpoints in a continuum in circulation frequency and formality.

Particular Mesoamerican settings can be characterized in terms of these three dimensions of spatial difference (Hendon 1997; 1999; 2002; Joyce 2000b; 2001). Only those with access to the intimacy of the interior space of the house would have witnessed practices in this location. Plazas were potential assembly spaces for many people and offered high visibility for practices taking place on the raised, larger-scale external platforms facing plaza interiors. Different spatial settings combined or segregated the repetition of everyday practices, the punctuated, predictable timing of practices dictated by calendars, and the irregular but marked periodicity of the practice of life-cycle ceremonies (compare Conkey 1991, 66–81; Love 1999; Pred 1984; Moore 1986; Rodman 1992).

Different spatial settings provided more and less hegemonic scales of performance (Joyce & Hendon 2000; Joyce 2001). Performances that were highly visible to larger segments of the population would have been normative, creating a community through common experiences. Less visible, intimate performances in house compounds, repeated daily and at punctuated intervals, would have been effective media for the reproduction of performance, because awareness of discipline incorporated through repetition was routine in everyday life (Butler 1993, 93–119; compare Bourdieu 1973). Residential buildings constructed as citations of a vernacular architecture (see Steadman 1996, 64–72) would have disciplined their inhabitants through the repetition of architectural features. Specific motor habits required to navigate different kinds of building are learned through experience and remain uninterrogated. Mesoamerican buildings, with their stairs, stepped platforms, floor level thresholds, and low benches for seating, would have conditioned particular habits of movement. These features of architecture would have interacted with other materialities of embodiment, such as clothing, whose effects were experienced simultaneously as human actors moved through Mesoamerican sites. Among the most striking intersections of architecture and other materialities of embodiment in ancient Mesoamerica was the representation of the human body in living spaces. In Late Classic Maya sites, for example, life-size human figures were literally attached to the façades of buildings, merging spatial discipline with citational precedents for embodiment.

Embodiment in Late Classic Maya residential space

Residential compounds in the Copán Valley were one locale in which social relations were constructed through practice, and citational precedents of concern to the inhabitants of the compound were insistently enforced. At its peak of population in the eighth century AD, the Classic Maya Copán Valley was dotted with groups of low stone platforms supporting residential structures, arranged to form rectangular courtyards (Fig. 2). While many of these groups consisted of one set of buildings, others were aggregates of multiple courtyard groups. Along the Copán River, the density of buildings reached a maximum in an area extending approximately 2 km. Here, the largest number of aggregated courtyards are found, the tallest supporting platforms were built, and the most labour-intensive forms of construction were employed, using cut stone blocks, rubble fill, and stucco plaster. Included here was the Main Group, a massive set of buildings including the residence of the ruling family, large plaza spaces surrounded by inscribed monuments, and special-use buildings, including a ballcourt. High-status, but non-ruling, families occupied other residential compounds in this centre of population and construction.

The façades of the inward-facing, massive buildings of high-status residential compounds provided their owners with a locus upon which to inscribe mes-

sages, in the form of stone sculpture, that are intimate, visible, and generalizing (Hendon 2002). Not all buildings are so decorated, not all compounds, even in the high-status area, used sculpture, and not all sculpture depicts the same images. Animals, plants, objects, natural features, humans, and deities are all represented. Human images are frequent but do not predominate. The decoration of certain buildings' façades with human images (Fig. 3) represents a set of choices. We argue that these choices relate directly to the desire of certain noble houses to represent permanently their view of the ideal person both for the benefit of their own members and to convince others of their approximation to that ideal. Since the compounds in which such imagery was featured were the settings for feasts celebrating significant life-cycle or ritual events, they were regularly visited by guests from outside the patio (Hendon 2001). Some of these guests would have been relatives who had the opportunity to renew their association with the citational precedents embodied in the sculpture. Other guests would have been from unrelated, even rival, houses. In being reminded of the claims of their hosts, these outsiders would have had the chance to compare their own approximation of proper bodily decorum with that of their hosts.

The high-status residents of three compounds, Groups 9N-8, 8N-11, and 10L-2, invested great time and energy in the creation of permanent citational precedents in the form of idealized human figures. Groups 9N-8 and 8N-11 are located East of the monumental centre. Group10L-2 lies just to the South of that centre. Its residents may have been connected with the ruling Copán dynasty (Andrews & Fash 1992) whereas the inhabitants of the other two groups, while certainly noble, do not seem to have had such a close connection.

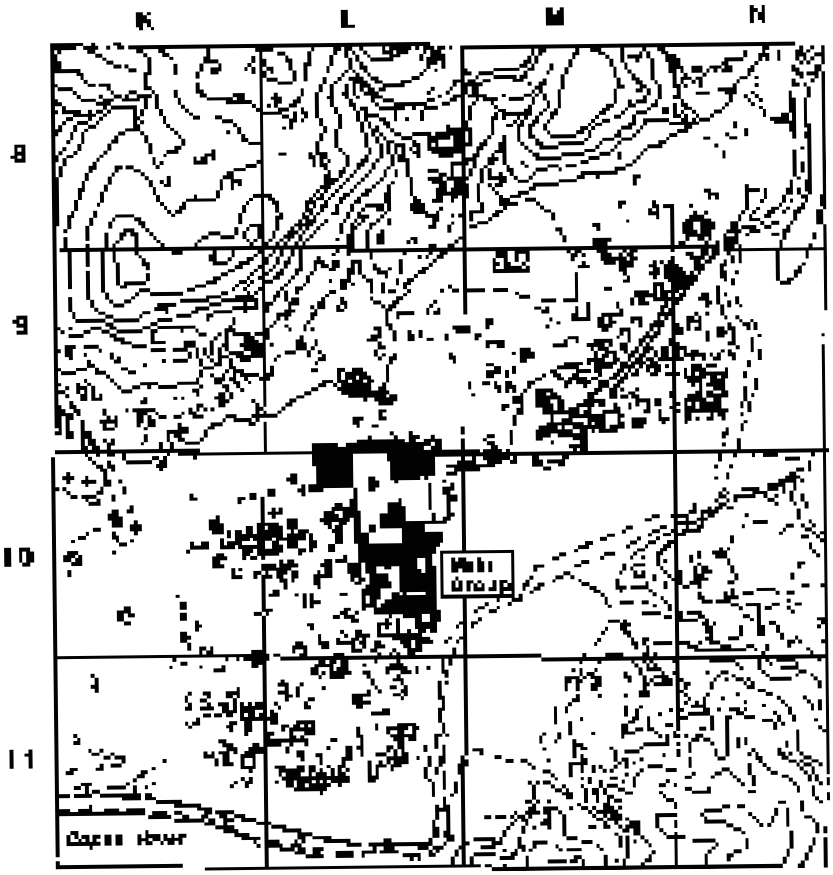

Figure 2. *Map of the Main Group and nucleated settlement in the Copán Valley.*

Figure 3. *Restored façade of a Late Classic Maya noble residence from Copán with three-dimensional stone human figural sculpture. (Photograph: Julia Hendon.)*

In Group 9N-8, the southernmost building of the southernmost patio, Structure 9N-82, was deco-

rated with eight seated human figures — three on the front, three on the back, and one on each side (Fash 1989). Carved almost in the round and held in place by tenons, the figures projected out beyond the plane of the wall and were placed more than 5 metres above the level of the patio. Structure 10L-32 of Group 10L-2 also features seated figures, three on the front and three on the back (Andrews & Fash 1992). The figures on Structure 8N-66S in Group 8N-11 do not include the lower body. Eight figures, with heads, arms, and torsos only, are arranged on the upper façade in the same way as the Group 9N-8 full figures. The Structure 8N-66S figures emerge out of niches. Their arms are folded as if they are leaning on the niche and the palms of their hands face each other in front of their chest (Webster *et al.* 1998).

The figures on these buildings share certain characteristics. They are all male, young, and beautiful, with large, high-bridged noses, sloping foreheads, rounded limbs, and graceful posture. Dressed and ornamented as people of high rank, they also wear regalia that associate them with deities or sacred materials such as maize. The full-figure carvings show people sitting cross-legged or with one leg folded under and the other hanging down. They hold their arms out in front of their bodies and gesture with their hands. Young male figures are presented as the ideal human form not only here at Copán but in sculpture and other visual media associated with noble courts, such as painted polychrome vases, at a variety of Maya sites. Joyce (2000c; 2002) has argued that the presentation of young male figures as the ideal human form singled out young men as subjects of desire and admiration for adult men and women.

This athletic moving body of youths — an intrinsically transitory moment in the experience of embodiment — as a citational precedent would necessarily have presented all those moving through these spaces with such an unachievable ideal. It was a constant reminder of their failure to approximate this unachievable ideal. And while the representation of desirable human bodies would have visually embellished noble residences, the figures at Copán also communicated subtle but significant images of essential social difference.

Although at first glance all figures on a building at Copán present an overall similarity and a sense of repetition, implying the importance of the whole rather than its individual parts, they also speak of hierarchy. The central figure on each building has different regalia and body ornaments. Baudez (1989) has argued that the men on Structure 9N-82 are apotheosized ancestors. According to Andrews & Fash (1992), the figures on Structure 10L-32 represent the most important person living in the compound. A similar argument has been made for the central figures on Structure 8N-66S (Webster *et al.* 1998). Whether the figures were past or present important members of the house, all are surrounded by sculpture representing elements of the natural and supernatural world. They are embedded in a set of ritual and metaphorical associations that transcend the everyday world of day-to-day activities going on in the patio compounds below them. These figures of bodies not only embody an ideal but are also a representation of the people who were living or had lived in the compound. In this sense, they result from practices similar to those evident in the sculpture of the Main Group associated with the ruling lineage.

Copán rulers invested considerable energy in the construction of permanent, monumental citational precedents incorporated into architectural settings. Like their noble subjects, they too placed idealized images of themselves and their ancestors on and in buildings. Perhaps the most salient example is the Hieroglyphic Staircase where the dynastic history of Copán is embodied in statues of rulers seated in the midst of the documentation of their accomplishments (Fash 1992; Fash *et al*. 1992). But like other Maya ruling houses, the Copán dynasty *detached* imagery of these ideal versions of themselves from buildings and especially from houses. Free-standing monuments (stelae) are the principal way that Maya rulers inscribed their citational precedents on the landscape. In the Great Plaza — a larger, more accessible, version of the patios in residential compounds — stelae presenting images whose specific historical identity is precisely delimited by texts with dates in the Maya 'Long Count' calendar foreground the person of the ruler over the corporate group (Fig. 4). In high-status residential compounds, patios were clear of free-standing sculpture while images of exemplary bodies were bound to the houses. In the most visible area of the residence of the ruling family, the ruler's presence and history framed the architectural space. Copán rulers extended this process to enclose the settlement around the Main Group within a framework of inscription, through the erection of stelae at the eastern and western edges of the valley (Morley 1920).

Embodiment in Formative Olmec settlements

While their spatial contexts are not as well defined as those of the Classic Maya, Olmec human sculptures in the round are an equally striking example of

the material representation of bodily practices and ideals. Produced between 1200 and 400 BC at sites in Mexico's Gulf Coast (Fig. 5), Olmec sculptures are the earliest large-scale figural representations in Mesoamerican history. The archaeological sites where they are located include some of the earliest examples of monumental architecture, including earthen pyramids and platforms defining large open spaces. These sites also included residences of people whose material culture suggests that distinctions in economic status were well established.

Olmec figural representations include colossal human heads (Fig. 6), large rectangular block seats or thrones with life-sized human figures carved on their sides (Fig. 7), and free-standing human figures in the round (Fig. 8). Zoomorphic figures were also produced so the decision to represent human figures has some significance. All of the human figures depict males.

Although Olmec sculptures are not physically incorporated into architecture they are explicitly linked to structures by being set on top of, against, or in proximity to them. Pairs or groups of sculptures often are incorporated symmetrically in architectural settings. Earthen plazas and mounds like those at the Olmec sites of San Lorenzo and La Venta acted as the mortar into which these stone carvings were set. Sculptures either rested on the ground surface, or were partially embedded in the clay surfaces (Drucker *et al.* 1959; Coe & Diehl 1980, 340). In some cases other stone figures may have been seated on top of thrones (Cyphers 1999, 168).

Olmec people did not use stone figures to inscribe permanent meaning on the landscape as did Maya élites with the façades at Copán. Ann Cyphers (1996, 68; 1999, 163, 174) has argued that Olmec sculptural arrangements are scenes with interchangeable and moveable pieces. Olmec sculptures were repositioned, mutilated, buried, and in many cases recycled (Coe & Diehl 1980, 302, 320, 330; Grove 1981; Cyphers 1999, 163, 174). Olmec spaces were more pliable than those at Copán, allowing for the expression of changing meaning through changing practices. Shifting the positions of monuments shifts their meanings, and hence the experiences of people moving through spaces (Love

Figure 4. *Closer view of one of the human sculptural figures of the restored façade in Figure 3. (Photograph: Julia Hendon.)*

Figure 5. *View of the Great Plaza of Copán, showing free-standing human figural representations (stelae). (Photograph: Julia Hendon.)*

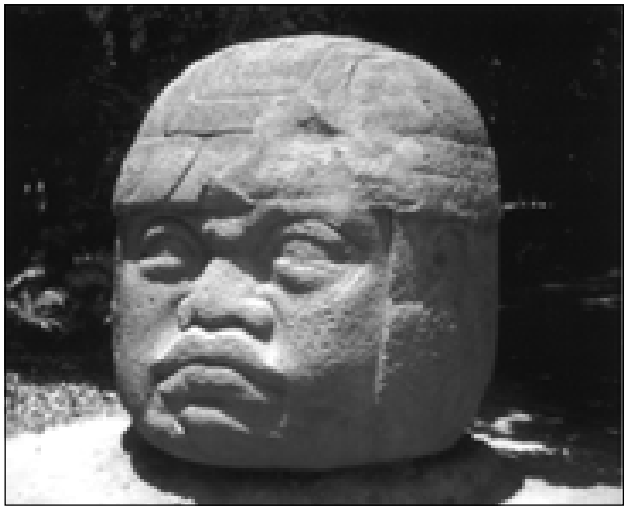

Figure 6. *Colossal head from La Venta (monument 1). (Photograph courtesy of Rus Sheptak.)*

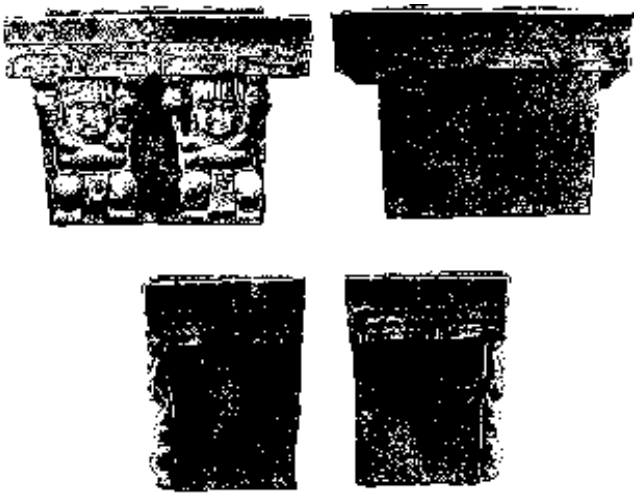

Figure 7. *Throne from San Lorenzo. Portrero Nuevo, monument 2. (Coe & Diehl 1980, fig. 496: by permission of the University of Texas Press.)*

Figure 8. *Seated human figure from La Venta (monument 23). (Photograph courtesy of Rus Sheptak.)*

1999, 130, 144).

Olmec human sculptures are found in groups of large earthen mound structures, plazas, and walled courtyards, and are associated with aqueduct systems (Drucker *et al.* 1959; Coe & Diehl 1980; Cyphers 1999; González Lauck 1996). While walled courtyards indicate restricted and more intimate practices, plazas were certainly sites for more open and highly-visible special performances. Plazas also may have been experienced in less formal ways, as people moved through them on other occasions. Aqueduct systems, though formal in design and generally associated with élite house groups, were a part of the mundane daily practices of water procurement and distribution (Cyphers 1999, 165). The positioning of monumental human sculptures in zones of mixed activity such as plazas and aqueduct systems provided precedents for embodiment for a variety of individuals performing diverse activities.

The standardized forms and characteristics of Olmec human sculptures imply institutionalized practices and norms. Some of the bodily ideals and practices that can be distilled from these sculptures are posture, ornamentation, and ideals of facial appearance. The postures of the majority of Olmec human sculptures in the round can be described as seated or crouching. Standing figures occur but they are rarer than seated or crouching figures. Seated figures take a variety of cross-legged positions or may be seated with one knee up. Crouching figures are kneeling, or kneeling with one knee up. The torso of the body leans forward with arms akimbo, hands resting on thighs and knees or extended downward towards the ground in front of the legs. The hands in the latter case often grasp a short bar or section of rope.

Bodily ornamentation is also simple but distinctive. Clothing usually consists of a sash or loin

cloth and sometimes a short cape. Most figures are barefoot but sandals are sometimes worn. The most common form of ornament is a large circular medallion that may represent an iron ore mirror. Other types of ornamentation include wrist and ankle bracelets. Figures whose heads are still intact have highly varied headdresses. In general clothing and ornamentation are minimal, exposing the chest, legs, and arms.

Perhaps the most distinctive and intriguing form of bodily representation in Olmec human sculpture is the colossal heads. These heads have helmet-like headdresses that are not carved in the same detail or relief as their facial features. Nor are the ears or other peripheral elements highly elaborated. The face is clearly emphasized as a focal point. These faces have broad flat noses, large lips, and the cheeks are full and round giving an impression of chubbiness. Though clearly adhering to a set of standards, the carved faces are individualized by subtle details of expression, such as furrowed brows, crossed eyes, grins, and parted lips exposing rounded and sometimes crooked teeth.

What type of effect did these sculptures have on individuals moving in spaces around them? We have already established that a variety of ordinary and extraordinary activities would have taken place within view of these human sculptures. These concretized presentations of bodily ideals and standards of comportment, when positioned to be highly visible during a variety of activities, serve to create a communal experience and reinforce bodily practice and bodily ideals on a subliminal level.

Part of the subjective experience of viewing inscribed ideals of bodily practice involves scale. The scale of Olmec human sculpture is life-sized or larger. Viewers could compare their bodies to life-sized figures part-for-part without scaling. On the other hand the larger than life-sized colossal heads dwarf a viewer. In both instances the viewer could easily have identified or even highlighted deficiencies of their own body as compared with the large-scale citational precedent.

Like figural representations at Copán, monumental human sculptures may have been employed by Olmec rulers to legitimate their authority and control, through the intimidating presentations of ideal bodily practice and performance. Olmec human figures are identified as depictions of rulers or prominent ancestors (Coe 1965; Cyphers 1999; Grove 1981). If sculptures are indeed embodiments of rulers and their authority, then mutilation or recycling by subsequent rulers or relatives would have served the purpose of dispelling or revoking the authority or power of that individual (Grove 1981). The great efforts taken to move Olmec sculpture so as to reorder the inscribed citational landscape suggests the importance of sculpture as a medium for the realization of social ideals and power.

Conclusion

Our investigation of the way that human sculpture served as a permanent marking of precedents for citational performance will continue. At a minimum, we believe we have demonstrated that the experience of human sculpture was pervasive in those Mesoamerican societies that produced monumental sculpture. Most people in these societies would have had the experience of evaluating themselves in the light of these permanent ideals. The permanence of sculpture could be reinforced by its incorporation in architecture. Some people in these societies subverted this permanence. Free-standing sculptures of ruling Maya nobles in the form of stelae, for example, detached embodied personhood from group membership and identity. The almost inconceivable, but well-documented, efforts expended at Olmec sites to reposition sculptures and create new 'permanent' scenarios changed histories that their creators probably thought were set in stone. A narrow range of kinds of personhood was represented in Mesoamerican monumental sculpture, for example, young beautiful men as the dominant subject of Classic Maya sculpture. The crucial importance of scale was particularly salient for Mesoamerica's earliest tradition of stone sculpture, among the Gulf Coast Olmec.

Body knowledge is produced not solely through the experience of the flesh, but also through the experience of embodiment at one remove, in precedents for citation. Among the difficult challenges for an archaeology of the body has been the tendency in the post-enlightenment western tradition to consider the body and mind as one natural unit. This problem, the other side of the often-lamented Cartesian dualism of mind and body, treats the flesh as an unproblematic natural 'given' which is merely experienced. This is not necessarily an ancient Mesoamerican understanding of embodiment. Maya scholars have deciphered claims by ancient Maya ruling nobles that stone stelae were, in fact, not simply representations but parts of their total physical self. While this may seem bizarre to modern western readers, we suggest, following Butler, that the flesh, while a vehicle for experience, neither grounds that experience in a pre-existing essence, nor limits the

experience of embodiment. We would do well to keep in mind the need for theories of personhood in which the person may have many parts, not all of them unique, not all of them bounded by the skin.

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Making Something of Herself: Embodiment in Life and Death at Playa de los Muertos, Honduras

Rosemary A. Joyce

Through an analysis of hand-modelled human figurines created in the Ulua River Valley of northern Honduras between 900 and 200 BC, this article explores the recursive links between crafting representations of bodies and crafting physical bodies. 'Playa de los Muertos'-style figurines are characterized by extremely detailed treatment of hair and ornaments. They have been treated as unique portraits, each individualized, and have resisted broader archaeological interpretation. Drawing on recent excavation data, this article explores the treatment of bodies and representations of bodies within a single set of interconnected villages as material media of embodiment.

Among the traditions of hand-modelled figurines that are hallmarks of the Formative period in Mesoamerica, those associated with the Playa de los Muertos site on the Ulua River in Honduras are particularly notable for their extreme detailing and apparent individuality. Manufactured in a number of distinct ceramic wares, likely representing localized production in several contemporary village sites occupied from 900 to 200 BC, Playa de los Muertos figurines raise issues of representation, embodiment, and experience. Attempts to create typological classifications of these figurines based on stylistic criteria failed, and researchers dealing with them suggested that each was a unique portrait. My own analysis of the figurines groups them by bodily traits — posture, gesture, and especially, treatment of hair — leading me to view them as media for the representation of marked physical states associated with transitions during life. Some of the distinctive traits can be associated with different age statuses, based on burials contemporary with the earliest figurines. Burials apparently involved a new set of practices of body processing. Late examples of the figurines were themselves pierced for suspension, probably to be worn as body ornaments.

In this article I examine bodily experience and materiality within the society that produced figurines in the Playa de los Muertos tradition. Attention is paid to the recursion between unrepresented experiences of embodiment and representation at multiple scales: the individual life and multiple generations represented by household remains; the developmental cycle of the figurine tradition itself, and of the sites whose residents produced and used these objects; and the long-term trajectory of human representation of which the Playa de los Muertos tradition is only a small part.

Embodied places: villages of the Playa de los Muertos tradition

There is good reason to suspect that humans populated the area of modern Honduras long enough to significantly alter plant communities before 2000 BC (Rue 1989). But human settlements first become obtrusive in the Early Formative period (*c.* 1600–900 BC) with the creation of fired-clay vessels and figurines that draw attention to more ephemeral traces of perishable houses around which they were discarded (Joyce & Henderson 2001). By the succeeding Middle Formative period (900–400 BC) village sites, while hardly common, can be identified over a wide area. Some of the ubiquitous fired-clay objects from Middle Formative sites were recovered intact in human burials, a new feature of these villages (Joyce 1992; 2000). The first such site recognized by researchers in Honduras was detected through the erosion of burials along the Ulua River in its low-lying flood-

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plain bordering on the Caribbean (Gordon 1898). Later work took burial sites along the river, in an area called Playa de los Muertos, 'Beach of the Dead', as the type locale for the Middle Formative culture of northern Honduras (Popenoe 1934; Strong *et al.* 1938; Kennedy 1981). Playa de los Muertos-style pottery and figurines have since been excavated at a number of sites in the lower Ulua Valley and along tributary streams to the east (Fig. 1).

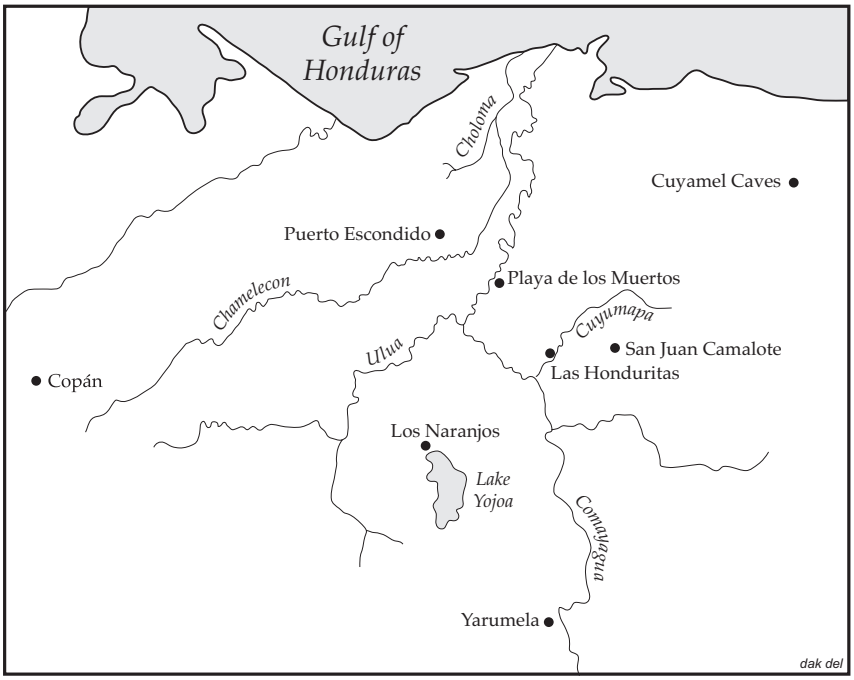

Figure 1. *Map showing locations of Formative sites mentioned in text.*

With roots in the late Early Formative, and final expression in the early Late Formative period (*c.* 400–100 BC), figurines of the Playa de los Muertos tradition represent a millennium of continuous reproduction of conservative representations of the human body in villages undergoing substantial social change. The millennium from 1100 BC to 100 BC witnessed construction of the first monumental projects in Honduras, earthen platforms up to 20 m tall with stone pavements, ramps, and stairs at sites such as Los Naranjos and Yarumela (e.g. Baudez & Becquelin 1973, 17–50; Canby 1951; Joesink-Mandeville 1986). These structures marked points on the landscape at a newly-broadened spatial scale, and transformed spatial relations within the villages in which they were built (Joyce 1992; 1996; 1999, 38–40). The same millennium saw increasing social differentiation among villagers, manifest in the use of new burial locations and practices, primary and secondary burial in monumental platforms and secondary burial in cave shrines, restricted to certain individuals and groups (Joyce 1992; 1999). The post-mortem processing of bodies disposed of in these new fashions included both selection of body ornaments for inclusion with primary burials, and selection of body parts for reinterment in secondary burials.

Over the long span of time that figurines in the Playa de los Muertos tradition were created, used, and discarded, the village sites within which they were found must consequently also have developed and changed. Unfortunately, owing primarily to the deep burial of such early villages by river flood deposits and later settlements, only limited windows into them are available. The actual sample of scientifically-excavated and adequately-described Formative figurines from these sites is extremely small: only 131 examples that I have been able to confirm. These excavated examples nonetheless provide a basis for describing the kinds of contexts in which Playa de los Muertos figurines occur, and for considering what they might indicate about the use and interpretation of these figurines.

The earliest related figurines, dating between 1100–900 BC at Puerto Escondido on the Ulua River, come from the remains of perishable buildings of wattle and daub (Joyce & Henderson 2001). At the end of this period, some standing buildings were destroyed and the area around them was filled in to form a broad, low, stepped earthen platform with some preserved plaster stucco. Placed within this platform were at least two extended human burials, one with red pigment adhering to the poorly-preserved bones. Cached vessels and stone artefacts were also placed within the earthen platform. Newly-reconstructed buildings located close to this platform had thick packed earth walls, internal posts, and plaster surfaces. Fragments of early figurines, along with large segments of finely-finished and decorated serving bowls and bottles, formed a specialized fill that was part of the initial construction of the earthen platform.

The suggestion that figurines were associated with unusual events that marked the creation of special places within early villages is reinforced by the

context of slightly later (*c.* 700–570 BC) Playa-style figurines recovered at Las Honduritas on the Cuyumapa River, east of the Ulua Valley (Joyce & Hendon 1993; 2000; Joyce 1996). There, excavation exposed a 6 by 8 metre area of an ancient earthen surface on which were smashed bottles and bowls decorated with the most complex techniques in use at the time. Scattered in this context were fragments of figurines. Because the buried surface extended below a later, intact building, it could not be followed to the edges of the deposit. The area exposed showed no signs of construction, and it seems most likely that this was the remains of a specialized dump. From the frequencies of highly-decorated serving vessels, we suggest that the deposit stemmed from a ceremonial feast.

Slightly later (between 450–300 BC), figurine fragments were deposited in refuse from a sequence of remodelled pole and thatch houses at Playa de los Muertos (Kennedy 1981) and similar remains of remodelled houses at Puerto Escondido. At Playa de los Muertos, the sequence of houses continued to be renovated for several centuries (to *c.* 300–100 BC), incorporating burials under house or yard floors. While informally-excavated museum collections often attribute Playa-style figurines to burials, out of sixteen burials archaeologically-excavated at the site (Popenoe 1934; Kennedy 1978, 205), only one contained figurines, a pair, both intact. Clearly, while Playa-style figurines were sometimes deposited away from residences as a result of unusual events, they were also used and discarded around house compounds. Late Formative excavated contexts at Playa de los Muertos and Puerto Escondido were residential, but figurines were also recovered from extra-domestic contexts at other contemporary sites. At San Juan Camalote in the Cuyumapa drainage, a refuse deposit on a terrace behind a ballcourt included high frequencies of bottles and bowls. It has been interpreted as evidence of feasts sponsored in conjunction with ballgames (Fox 1994). Intact Playa figurines were recovered in this deposit as well.

Playa tradition figurines, in other words, were used in practices carried out close to residential spaces, but also in ceremonies in newly-created spatial arenas separated from houses. While some intact examples come from burials, they are not limited to burial deposits, nor were burial contexts common among the archaeologically-documented examples. They were made and used for a millennium over a relatively well-defined region within northern Honduras. The highest frequencies are reported from sites along the Ulua River in its lowland valley, partly because an ancient river levee segment was preserved from complete destruction by radical shifts in the course of the river (Pope 1985). This providentially preserved the type site of Playa de los Muertos, and sites on United Fruit Company's Farms 10, 11, and 13, localities near the modern towns of Santa Ana and Santiago. Wherever early deposits have been identified in the lower Ulua Valley Playa-style figurines are found (Pope 1985, 60, 124–5), especially along tributaries to the northwest, the Río Choloma (Sheehy 1976; 1979; Dockstader 1973, fig. 123) and Río Chotepe (Joyce & Henderson 2001).

Outside the lower Ulua River Valley, occasional Playa-style figurines are reported, possibly as a result of exchange, in sites throughout southern Honduras and El Salvador (Agurcia Fasquelle 1977, 21, Baudez & Becquelin 1973; Canby 1951; Dahlin 1978; Joesink-Mandeville 1986; 1987; 1993; Stone 1957). Only in the drainage of the Rio Cuyumapa, a tributary immediately east, does the frequency of Playa-style figurines compare to those in the Ulua Valley itself. Distribution of the earliest Formative figurines is even more limited, to the lower Ulua Valley (Joyce & Henderson 2001) and the Cuyamel Caves in the Aguan Valley to the northeast (Henderson 1992; Healy 1974). Playa-style figurines are notably absent from Early and Middle Formative deposits described at Copán, to the west (Viel 1993; Viel & Cheek 1983).

As Agurcia Fasquelle (1977, 8) noted, stylistic features of Playa tradition figurines do not correlate with the multiple paste compositions that can be identified. In the core area of their production and use, Playa-style figurines were apparently manufactured in multiple locations independently, conforming to a single canon of representation. The archaeological data sketch out a regional network of linked villages throughout which Playa de los Muertos figurines were used. Contemporary with the figurines, specific mortuary treatment of the human body was practised in these societies. Linking the figurines and burials are a suite of body ornaments, depicted in figurines and placed on the body in primary interments. The figurines and the embodied practices to which they relate were part of a particular way of being in the world within the drainage of a single major river and its tributaries. Far from simply mechanical distinctions of 'style', the archaeological definition of the regional Playa de los Muertos figurine tradition recognizes the reproduction, over a long period of time, of a particular way of representing the body. The relationship between the production of figurines and the production of members of this regional society was recursive. The makers

and users of figurines learned stages of the social life cycle through the reproduction and use of representations of idealized moments in the lives of human subjects, through their own processing as living bodies by others, and through the retrospective processing of the bodies of the dead.

The represented body at Playa de los Muertos

Researchers have suggested that each Playa de los Muertos figurine was a unique portrait of a person conceived like a modern individual, denying any shared categorical features. In contrast, in my own analysis I grouped figurines by bodily traits and found that despite the individuality of each hand-modelled figurine there were general associations of posture, gesture, hair treatment, and ornaments (Joyce in press). For my study, I recorded attributes of 131 figurines in the collections of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, and compared these results to those of a study of 130 early figurines in the collections of the Middle American Research Institute at Tulane University, analyzed by Ricardo Agurcia Fasquelle (1977; 1978). The 261 examples (Table 1) include all the excavated and informally-collected examples resulting from pioneering research in the lower Ulua Valley by George Byron Gordon (1898), Dorothy Popenoe (1934), William Duncan Strong *et al.* (1938) and Doris Stone (1941; 1957). To this sample I have since added figurines recovered from excavations at Puerto Escondido (Joyce & Henderson 2001) and in the Cuyumapa valley (Joyce & Hendon 1993; 2000), and examples curated by the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia in La Lima, Honduras.

The earliest figurines are relatively uniform in size, posture, and the features represented, although they vary greatly in surface finish (e.g. Agurcia Fasquelle 1977, 17–18, fig. 16; Henderson 1992). All examples are seated, most with conical legs 4–5 cm long that end in blunt stubs, spread in a V shape (Fig. 2). Both arms are usually disengaged from the body with highly-conventionalized hands resting on the upper thighs. Toes and fingers, when shown, are deeply incised lines. Average dimensions are 13 cm tall, 10 cm wide at the feet, and 9 cm from front to back, with heads ranging from 4 to 7 cm high and 4 to 5 cm wide, markedly larger than later Playa de los Muertos figurines. Both solid and hollow examples are known, some with polished white slip or black slip on the typical brown paste. Traces of thick red-brown paint or slip, bright fugitive red paint, or black or brown paint are present on some.

Hair treatment, in comparison to Playa de los Muertos figurines, is extremely simple, with the head typically simply smoothed. Ear spools and ear pendants are depicted. Necklaces are common, made of raised appliqué bands with rows of punctations or slashes to indicate beads, but bracelets and anklets are absent. Appliqué bands that bridge the gap between the thighs immediately adjacent to the body,

Table 1. *Comparison of characteristics of figurines in the Peabody Museum and MARI.*

		Class 1 Punctate	Class 2 Topknot	Class 3 Beaded	Class 4 Basic	Totals Peabody	Totals MARI*
Peabody:	%	19	13	31	37	100	
	N	19	13	32	38	102	
MARI:	%	25	5	33	37		100
	N	16	3	21	24		64
Hair:	*tresses*	x	x	x	x	50%	?
	shaved	x	x	x	x	55%	80%
	beaded	x	x	x	–	40%	~33%
Ear ornaments	%	100	33	52	26	49	?
Necklace	%	66	15	70	75	69	75
Bracelet	%	80	–	100	89	93	75
Anklet	%	50	–	66	100	86	50
Posture:	*seated* %	71	–	64	86	74	70
	standing %	29	–	36	14	26	23
Skirt/apron	%	5	–	27	45	40	50***
Ware*:	*Type A* %	PM 41	PM 80	PM 78	PM 66	70	
		MARI 50	MARI 100	MARI 66	MARI 75		58
	Type B %	PM 24	PM 10	PM 6	PM 11	12	
		MARI 50	MARI 0	MARI 34	MARI 25		31
	brown %**	24	10	12	8	14	–
Small figurines:	*N***	1	0	6	6	13	–
	%**	8	0	46	46	100	–

* PM = Peabody Museum (data from Joyce in press); MARI = Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University (data from Agurcia Fasquelle 1977)
** data available from Peabody Museum only
*** includes all lower body garments regardless of description

Figure 2. *Early Formative figurine from the Ulua River Valley. Collection of the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia. (Photograph courtesy of Rus Sheptak.)*

Figure 3. *Early Formative animal figurine from Puerto Escondido (CR372-5F-14). (Drawing courtesy of Yolanda Tovar.)*

found on about half of the examples, recall the more elaborately detailed aprons of later Playa de los Muertos figurines. In addition to seated human figures, a few fragments from Puerto Escondido can be attributed to depictions of animals (Fig. 3).

Several features of the early figurines continue in the Playa de los Muertos figurines made after 900 BC. A seated pose continues to be most common, and in addition to human figurines, animal subjects are well represented. Specific items of costume, and the manner of representation of eye, nose, and teeth, continue. But the later figurines contrast markedly in size and in their solid construction. Standard size figurines (over 85 per cent of the recorded samples) average 6.6 cm tall by 6.3 cm wide by 4.0 cm deep when shown seated, and 8.9 by 6.8 by 3.9 cm when depicted in newly-introduced standing pose. The immediate effect of the smaller scale of Middle Formative figurines would be to reduce the visibility of these human effigies at a distance, requiring greater intimacy for someone to appreciate them as images. Smaller figurines that formed the remainder of the recorded sample averaged 5.1 by 3.3 by 2.5 cm. In addition to their smaller size, many of these small figurines were pierced for suspension, probably serving as pendants. All of the recorded animal figurines were small scale, and over half of these were definitely pierced for suspension. Their smaller scale, requiring even greater proximity for viewing, and the use of small figurines as body ornaments, would have reinforced their intimate connection with the person using them.

Middle and Late Formative Playa de los Muertos figurines are solid, hand-modelled, well-burnished, and when underlying paste colour is dark, slipped to create a light surface, highlighted by the use of red, orange, and white paints (Fig. 4). Their heads are almost cubical. Their broad square faces are marked by appliqué and punctate features, including an open mouth with upper row of teeth delineated, and eyes formed like those of the earlier figurines. Limbs and body are full and rounded, with wrinkled folds of flesh depicted. Human subjects are shown seated (74 per cent) or standing (26 per cent). Animal subjects include monkeys, armadillos (Fig. 5), a crocodilian, and a furry quadruped.

By tracing variation in secondary features among classes defined on the basis of non-overlapping and mutually exclusive traits of hairstyles, I was able to define four representational classes (Joyce in press). The frequencies of the classes thus defined in the Peabody Museum collection are quite close to

Figure 4. *Playa de los Muertos figurines, Ulua Valley, Honduras, Middle Formative Period (N31798)***.** *Right, top and bottom: Class 2 (Topknot). Left, Class 4 (Basic). Lower left: simple medium length hairstyle, necklace, and apron. Upper right: hair bound in side knot with beaded pendants hanging from headband. Lower right: hair bound in central knot with pendant beads, shaved stepped hairline, and necklace. Note prominent depiction of ear spools. (Photograph: Steve Burger; copyright President and Fellows of Harvard College. Used by permission of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University.)*

Figure 5. *Small armadillo figurine pendant, Ulua Valley. Peabody Museum 33-57-20/2465. (Computer graphic: Rosemary Joyce.)*

Figure 6. *Class 1 (Punctate) figurine head from Puerto Escondido (CR372-2G-23b). (Drawing: Yolanda Tovar, used with permission.)*

those that Agurcia Fasquelle (1977; 1978) recorded for the collection of the Middle American Research Institute at Tulane (see Table 1). The proportions noted in the excavated subset also parallel those recorded in the two museum collections as a whole. This suggests that, while these museum collections cannot be taken as statistically representative of the original population of figurines, they do not reflect specific collecting biases.

Most distinctive were figurines with hair represented by an over-all pattern of punctation extending from a defined hairline in front, above the ears, to the nape of the neck in back (Class 1, Punctate). Half of the examples have additional hair treatments: shaved areas (Fig. 6), beaded locks, and long tresses. This class has the highest proportion of figurines with ear ornaments or pendants, but the lowest proportion of figurines wearing necklaces, bracelets, or ankle ornaments. Clothing is extremely rare: only one example wore an apron. This class includes all the figurines depicting signs of age (37 per cent of the class), such as incised lines forming wrinkles on the cheeks or forehead, drooping breasts, a single tooth in the mouth, and sunken cheeks (Fig. 7).

Figurines in the second class have long hair drawn up into a knot, positioned at the peak of the

Figure 7. *Class 1 (Punctate) figurine with signs of old age, Playa de los Muertos. Peabody Museum 30-46-20/C11020. (Computer graphic: Rosemary Joyce.)*

skull in the centre or at either side (Class 2, Topknot; Fig. 4: top right, bottom right). The knot can be tied with a single band or overlapping bands (Fig. 8), or is bound with an ornament of linked squares or circles. Additional hair treatment, shaving or beading, is typical (62 per cent). All examples have at least a simple punctation indicating ear piercing (Fig. 4:top right). But Class 2 figurines share with Class 4 figurines the lowest frequency of depiction of ear ornaments in use (Fig. 4: bottom right).

Figurines lacking the distinctive punctate hair pattern or topknot can be divided into two classes based on the presence or absence of beads in the hair. In one group, sections of hair are shown threaded through sets of vertically-oriented beads (Class 3, Beaded). Beads are found both in the bangs in front and in long tresses that typically extend below the shoulders in back (Fig. 9). A single or double lock of hair ornamented by beads may be centred on the forehead, extending down from the bangs to the top of the nose. Round beads are sometimes depicted at the base of these locks. Hair is represented by rows of vertically-oriented fingernail impressions, aligned so as to suggest successive waves. Shaved areas are combined with beaded tresses to form the most complex hairstyles recorded. Class 3 figurines have the highest overall degree of body ornamentation, and the greatest diversity of ornaments recorded at any one site on the body. All of the figurines with preserved wrists wear bracelets

Figure 8. *Class 2 (Topknot) figurine, Ulua Valley. Peabody Museum 29-54-20/C10979. (Computer graphic: Rosemary Joyce.)*

(Fig. 10), and most wear necklaces or pectoral ornaments and ankle ornaments. Class 3 includes the highest proportion of standing figurines, including all the standing figurines depicted wearing skirts or aprons, despite the fact that skirts are actually somewhat less common in this class than in the figurine population as a whole.

The remaining figurines have hair represented by parallel vertical lines, either fingernail incisions or continuous incised lines (Class 4, Basic; see Fig. 4: left). Most are shown with long tresses that reach below the shoulder, and more than half also show shaved patterned areas. The remaining examples have hair that extends only to the nape of the neck without marked tresses, but have shaved areas (Fig. 11). It would thus be possible to subdivide this class into a short-haired, shaved group and a shaved-with-tresses group, if in larger samples this difference were found to be constant and related to other kinds of variation. One composite figurine shows one human figure holding a smaller figure in the crook of the elbow. While the head of the larger

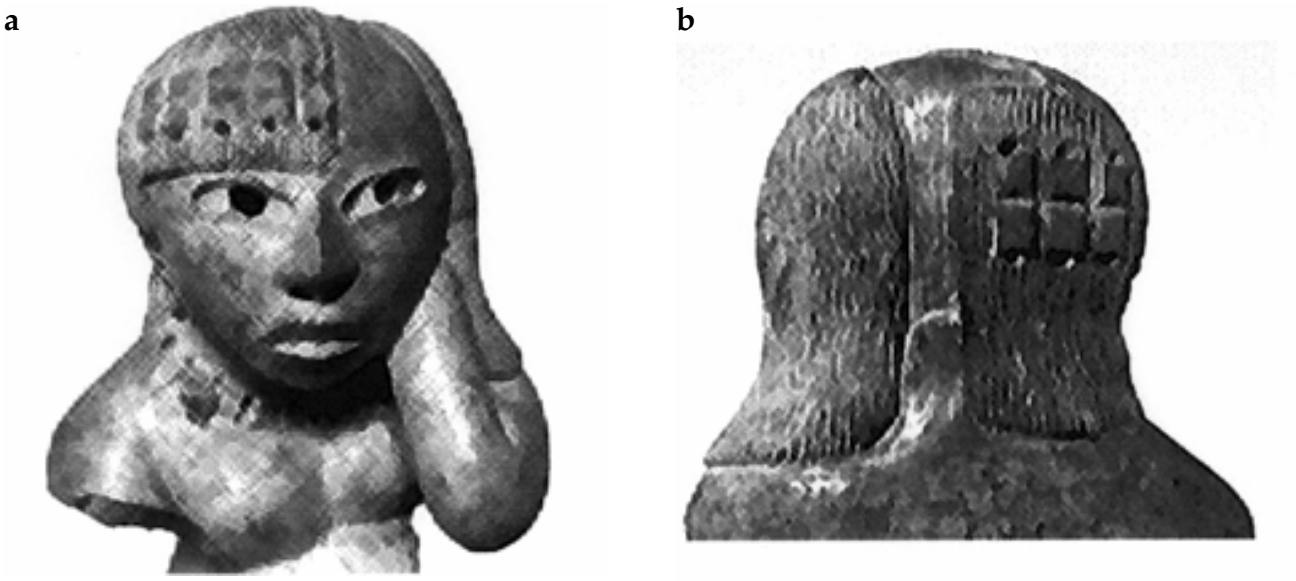

Figure 9. *Class 3 (Beaded) figurine with hand entwined in hair, Playa de los Muertos. Front (a) and back (b) views. Peabody Museum 31-43-20/C13692. (Computer graphics: Rosemary Joyce.)*

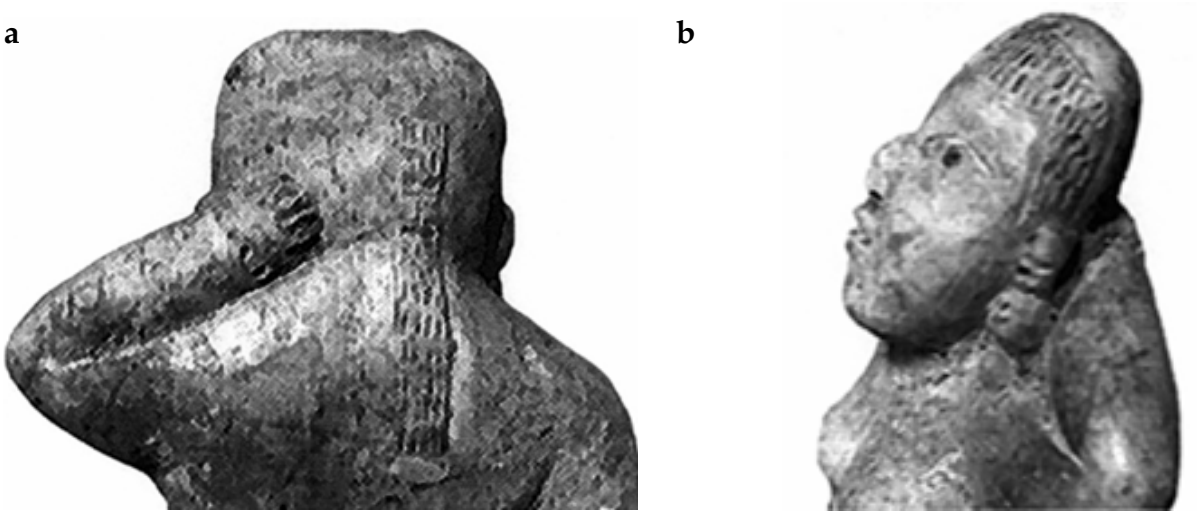

Figure 10. *Class 3 (Beaded) figurine with hand entwined in hair, Playa de los Muertos. Back (a) and side (b) views. Peabody Museum 31-43-20/C13692. (Computer graphics: Rosemary Joyce.)*

figure is missing, the head of the smaller figure is intact, with incised vertical lines extending to the nape of the neck over the entire skull, with no shaved areas, beads, or other ornaments. Class 4 figurines share with Class 2 figurines the lowest frequency of ear ornaments, despite an indication of ear piercing on most examples. The highest proportion of figurines with ankle ornaments is assigned to this class. A higher proportion of Class 4 figurines are shown seated than is typical of the collection as a whole, including all but one of the figurines wearing an apron.

Late in the sequence of production, small figurines (Fig. 12) rise in frequency, forming 27 per cent of the excavated sample in the latest Formative contexts at Puerto Escondido. Examples were found in a burial at Playa de los Muertos (Popenoe 1934), in the specialized trash at the ballcourt at San Juan Camalote (Fox 1994), and in refuse near monumental platforms at Los Naranjos, south of the lower Ulua Valley

Figure 11. *Shaved hair pattern on back of head, Class 4 (Basic) figurine, Playa de los Muertos. Peabody Museum 31-37-20/C13493. (Computer graphics: Rosemary Joyce.)*

Figure 12. *Small figurine pendant, Class 4 (Basic) from Puerto Escondido (CR372-2C-2a). (Drawing: Yolanda Tovar, reproduced with permission.)*

(Baudez & Becquelin 1973, fig. 150Q). Solid, hand-modelled, full-size Playa-style figurines remain a majority at each of the sites for which quantitative data are available, although at Playa de los Muertos the small figurines are said to 'predominate' (Stone 1972, 62).

The body represented in Playa de los Muertos figurines is selective and stereotyped. The determination of sex is not always clear. Agurcia Fasquelle (1977, 13–14) identified 84 per cent of the figurines he examined as female based on the presence of 'large breasts, as genitalia are not depicted on any of the large figurines'. My own analysis avoids treating ambiguous physical characteristics as indications of distinct gender categories, in recognition of the fact that gender in Mesoamerican societies was more complex than a binary division between male and female (Joyce in press; 1993; 2000; 2001; compare Knapp & Meskell 1997). Of the figurines that could have presented physical sexual characteristics, 35 per cent depict pre-adults, while only 6 per cent can be associated with a defined (female) adult sex. While the majority (58 per cent) may be interpreted as indicating stages in adult female sexual status, only one figurine does so through the depiction of primary sexual characteristics. Rather than being concerned with distinctions between female and male (a category entirely unmarked in the assemblages I have studied), the depiction of sexual status in Playa de los Muertos figurines may more accurately be characterized as emphasizing transitions in age, perhaps primarily of sexually female subjects. Agurcia Fasquelle (1977; 1978) made a related argument, noting that the subset of Playa de los Muertos figurines with the most explicit depiction of female genitalia also had body proportions and postures suggesting they represented infants. Body form, processing of hair, and ornamentation were combined in these figurines to commemorate the gradual production of social persons, an activity concretized in the parallel manipulation of clay to produce the figurines themselves.

Embodiment and representation

The discovery of figurines in household settings in other early Mesoamerican societies has led Cyphers (1993) and Marcus (1999) to argue that they were used in household-based ceremonies, such as ancestor veneration and life-cycle rites. Formative figurines used in these and other ways in household settings were a medium for the objectification of stereotyped social identities (Joyce 1993). Early Mesoamerican figurines were produced during periods when social relations were undergoing transformations that radically reformulated everyday life (compare Lesure 1997, following Clark 1993). The tension between the extremely individualized execution of specific figurines in the Playa de los Muertos style, and the restricted range of actors and actions depicted, is in my view a consequence of the use of figurines as media for the negotiation of social identity. The figurines reflect both a desire for social intelligibility and the evasion of ultimate intelligibility on the part of the persons making and using these items (see Butler 1993, 93–119).

This theoretical perspective has implications for the kind of typology that I proposed for the Playa figurines. The selection of hair treatment and ornaments as key traits was not arbitrary. My decision to record extensive information about these features was conditioned by my prior knowledge that in later Mesoamerican societies, life-transitions related to age and the formation of adult genders were accompanied by the modification of bodily appearance cues (see Joyce 1993; 2000; 2001; 2002). From this stand-

point, the classes I defined for Playa-style figurines may be interpreted as objectifications of turning points in the formation of social personae. This figurine classification forms a theory of the experience of embodiment in Playa de los Muertos by those subject to the practices that were depicted.

The unprocessed hair of some Basic figurines — and that of the single infant in arms identified in the sample — is a raw material that in the other Playa de los Muertos figurines has been socially marked. Because hair grows, it is possible to view the figurines in this class as a sequence from the straight, short hair of the infant, to the nape-length hair marked with shaved patterns, to hair falling in tresses below the shoulders. Texts explicitly describe and illustrate a similar sequence of hair growth at various life stages for Mexica women in the sixteenth century AD (Joyce 2000). Playa de los Muertos figurines mirror the bodily experience of the people who made and used them, effectively linking embodiment and representation.

The mirroring of embodied experience in figurines is not limited to natural processes, but also includes careful and selective representation of social practices of adornment. In the sample, Class 4 (Basic) figurines have the lowest proportion of ornamentation of the head, the locus that was the site of marking of adult identity in many Central American societies (Joyce 1998). Like the actual bodies of juveniles in contemporary burials, these figural representations of what may be children on the verge of young adulthood have a very high incidence of marking of the limbs through the use of jewellery. The one figurine depicting an infant held in the arms of an adult shows ornaments on all the preserved limbs of the child, but lacks a necklace or pectoral ornament.

The sixteen burials excavated at Playa de los Muertos yielded ten strings of beads, no two alike (Popenoe 1934; Joyce 1992; 1996). Both juveniles and adults were buried wearing wrist and neck ornaments, with shell employed in children's costume and green stone in both adult and juvenile ornaments. Ear ornaments, whether of ceramic or green stone, were worn only by adults. For example, Playa de los Muertos Burial 8 (Popenoe 1934) was a child buried with four pottery vessels and two figurines. This child wore an ornament of white shell beads with a central shell pendant around the crown of the head. A series of green stone 'duckbill' pendants was located at the neck, and a double row of green stone beads formed a belt at the waist. Despite the otherwise lavish treatment, the child had no ear ornaments. The burial adornment is consistent with that depicted on Beaded (Class 3) and Topknot (Class 2) figurines. Comparing the two contexts, these classes of figurines appear to represent a moment of transition, between childhood and adulthood, also marked in the burial.

The versimilitude of the depictions of body ornaments on figurines does not end with their position on the body, but includes tiny, meticulously executed details of form and colour. Red, white and yellow painting on strands of beads shown on figurines suggests the colours of shell ornaments like those from contemporary burials of children. Necklaces are often shown forming a V at front centre, further evidence that they did not represent simple strands of round beads. A few carefully detailed beads are modelled with a raised or folded-over segment above a lower-relief, expanding trapezoidal section. They suggest the form of the 'duckbill' pendants found in contemporary burials. Round pendants with incised features suggesting masks, simple round and oval pendants, and round beads at both sides of a single long bead, are repeatedly depicted, suggesting representation of specific forms of ornaments that were actually in use.

In Middle Formative lived experience, standardized forms of beads were combined in a diversity of ornaments. Local manufacture, or at least local preferences, are evident in contrasts in the materials used at different sites. Most common throughout the region was the use of 'napkin ring' ear spools of polished black and brown ceramic (Sheets 1978, 45–7) or fine green stone (Popenoe 1934, 67). In the Ulua Valley most costume ornaments were manufactured from green stone or shell. At contemporary Chalchuapa (El Salvador) amphibolite (a red-brown stone), bone, and animal teeth were more common (Sheets 1978, 42, 48–52). Individual flat discs, cylinders, animal teeth or claws, skulls, and 'duckbills' were executed in shell, bone, iron pyrites and green stone (Baudez & Becquelin 1973, 387–8; Healy 1984, 125; Popenoe 1934, 64, 74; Fash 1985, 138). Standard materials and standardized forms of ornaments supported play or competition within common standards of beauty (Joyce 1992; 1996).

The play of ornamentation in lived experience was permanently recorded in figurines with detailed depictions of age-appropriate ornaments, detailed to suggest specific ornament forms and materials. Over 85 per cent of the figurines I recorded were depicted with ornaments on the ears, neck, wrists, and/or ankles. The majority of figurines had necklaces or pendants. Figurines with preserved arms or legs almost always had additional strands of beads

at wrists (93 per cent) or ankles (86 per cent). The ubiquity of these forms of ornaments parallels the data from burials, where juveniles and adults used a variety of bead ornaments at the same sites on the body. Ankle ornaments, most common on Class 4 (Basic) figurines, were also found only with juveniles in burials.

Burials call attention to the more restrictive distribution of one form of body ornamentation, ear ornaments. These were found only in adult burials, despite the extreme elaboration of ornaments on children's bodies. In figurines, three modes of ear ornamentation can be distinguished: punctation to indicate piercing, without a clear depiction of an ear ornament; ear spools, sometimes quite wide; and pendant round or cylindrical beads hanging from the ears. Class 4 (Basic) and Class 2 (Topknot) figurines share the lowest frequency of ear ornaments, despite clear depiction in almost all cases of a punctation at the earlobe. For the makers and users of these figurines, the distinction between ear piercing and the wearing of ear ornaments depicted in the figurines would have commemorated and recalled their own embodied experience of preparation of the ear for use of these ornaments. In later Mesoamerican societies, ear piercing was part of life-cycle rites, and in other contemporary and later societies, wearing ear ornaments was a prerogative of adults (Joyce 1999; 2000).

As possible representations of a young age grade within the society that produced them, Playa-style figurines also served as models of decorum, citational precedents for the kind of action that was viewed positively for children of that age (Joyce 2001). The posture typical of Class 4 Basic figurines is a seated pose, in which the frontal apron is displayed lying undisturbed across the thighs. This pose might be considered not only as a precedent for action by living viewers of the figurines, but also an historical precedent, since it is the sole documented posture of the larger early Formative figurines (Fig. 2). But the later figurines differ fundamentally from their historical predecessors in the extreme attention given to details of the treatment of hair.

Class 2 (Topknot) figurines share with Basic figurines the lowest frequency of depiction of ear ornaments. This draws greater attention to the way that these figurines make hair treatment itself their central representational theme. Hair, shown as incised lines, is pulled up and tied in a knot (Figs. 4 & 8). Accompanying this distinctive treatment are examples of beading applied to locks of hair. Among the later Mexica, the long hair of young girls was pulled up and shaped into a knotted style on the crown of the head when they entered adulthood (Joyce 2000). Topknot figurines suggest a concern with the same embodied moment: the period when hair began actively to be transformed, by shaving and elaborate dressing, into prescribed social forms that required constant maintenance and self-monitoring.

The peak of hair elaboration, and of general bodily ornamentation, is in Class 3 (Beaded) figurines. Universally provided with beaded locks of hair, usually sporting shaved hair designs, more than half wear ear ornaments and anklets, and all the examples I recorded were provided with bracelets. Beaded figurines are further distinguished by their posture. They include the highest proportion of standing figures, and many — whether standing or seated — have arms raised, hands touching the face or the back of the head, even entwined in the hair (Figs. 9 & 10). This is in stark contrast with the majority of other figurines, in which hands rest along the side of the body, are crossed on the belly, or are placed on the thighs. The raised arms and standing postures of Beaded figurines suggest movement, and combine with their elaborate costuming to hint at the possibility that they commemorate dance (Joyce 2002).

Musical instruments are another new feature of the material culture of the Formative period. Tinklers, shells pierced to create rhythmic sound, have been excavated in the earliest deposits at Puerto Escondido. In burials at Tlatilco, Mexico, contemporary with early Playa de los Muertos, musical instruments were most commonly included in the burials of older individuals (Joyce 1999; 2002). Tlatilco figurines represent younger persons standing, dressed in extremely elaborate costumes, while burials present the bodies of young people wearing similar costumes. If the ceremonies carried out in the patios, plazas, and ballcourt terraces of villages in Formative Honduras included dance, they would also have been embodied practices simultaneously commemorated and disciplined by the citational precedents provided by figurines.

Making something of herself

Representation of the ornamented body of youthful subjects has also been identified at the contemporary village of Paso de la Amada, where Richard Lesure (1997) argues that young women were objectified in marriage exchanges negotiated by elderly men and women. At Paso de la Amada, figurines of young, standing women complement a group of

seated, older males and females dressed in highly-individualized costumes. While the situations are not entirely parallel, Class 1 (Punctate) Playa-style figurines also present an image of embodied old age. Defined originally on the basis of the distinctive use of punctation to denote short cropped hair on the skull, the possibility that this class of figurines commemorates old age is supported by both unique depiction of physical features and representation of cultural practices. All figurines in this category wear ear ornaments, and the largest and most elaborate examples are limited to this class. If ear ornaments are, as burial data suggest, a prerogative of adults, all of these figurines represent adults. Unique to this group of figurines are modelled physical features that suggest old age, including a single tooth, rather than the row of teeth normally present, and furrows on forehead and in cheeks (Fig. 7).

The diagnostic feature of punctation is absent from most of the early Formative figurines. They universally depict ear ornaments, however, with close parallels between specific ear ornament forms and examples limited to Middle Formative Class 1 Punctate figurines. These observations suggest that the earlier figurines represented an idealized adult status. The decorous seated body of the earliest, larger, and consequently more easily visible figurines served as a model for only one stage of life in the house compounds where these figurines were made and used.

In contrast, the variety within Playa-style figurines of the succeeding Middle Formative suggests an explosion in the expression of individuality. But in fact, the same dimensions of bodily experience are foregrounded in the new, smaller-scale figurines, used both in house compounds and more public venues. The greater range of Playa-style figurines makes more explicit a sequence of embodied experiences whose end-point is the decorous body of the adult. The extreme attention to details, such as the forms of the minuscule ornaments threaded in the hair and worn around the neck, would have reinforced the application of these processes to the living bodies of those in sufficiently close proximity to view them.

This would notably have included those who manufactured the figurines with such care to reflect details of embodied experience. It is difficult even today to see all this detail without holding the figurines close to one's eyes. Even if used in some form of ritual practice within households (Cyphers 1993; Marcus 1999), most of the detail would have been undetectable to participants. But for those who participated in their construction, knowledge of the details would have filled in the gap in experience. Forming the clay into its final shape was effectively a metaphor for the shaping of the actual substance of the human body that was a significant part of socialization, beginning with shaping the skull in infancy (Joyce 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001).

That this recursion between embodied practices and practices of representation that I am suggesting was more than my own projection on these figurines is supported by the use of small figurines as pendants (Fig. 12). This practice grew in frequency over time. This leads me to suggest that the miniaturization of figurines for suspension followed the initial elaboration of figural precedents for stages in the process of shaping the adult body. Worn as pendants, small figurines would have been the most intimate form of bodily representation, a kind of mirror in a mirror for the practice of ornamentation in which they were used. This intimacy also allowed space for the production of otherwise unknown subjects, including unusual forms of costume (all examples of human figurines wearing a textile cape) and especially, animals (Fig. 5).

Animals were already subjects of figural representation in the earliest large-scale figurines (Fig. 3). But the small animal figurines used as pendants suggest that one final aspect of the experience of embodiment documented for later Mesoamerican peoples was also relevant in these early villages. This was the recognition of a non-material part of the self, represented as an animal, that acted while the body was asleep, and could act in arenas where the physical body could not, including the realm of ancestors and sacred beings (Houston & Stuart 1989). Here, finally, we may see some scope for the commemoration of individuality on the part of makers and users of Playa de los Muertos figurines. But this resides not in the western notion of portraiture, but in the Mesoamerican practice of recognizing a unique animal spirit companion as a part of the embodied self.

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