THE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION OF GENDER IDENTITY THROUGH THE
PRODUCTION AND RECEPTION OF LOWLAND MAYA FIGURINES

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory

We accept this thesis as conforming
To the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

February 2003

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Date March 17, 2003
ABSTRACT

From the earliest studies of Maya figurines to some of the most recent the possibility that these ceramic sculptures functioned as children's playthings has been raised but never pursued seriously as a topic of investigation. In addition to compiling evidence already available in the archaeological literature that supports this contention, I further investigate the possibilities that women produced these figurines for their children's use and therefore that these figurines represented a women's visual discourse. As well, this thesis explores uses for figurines as gift offerings in funerary contexts.

I have chosen to investigate specifically the impact that figurines may have had on the formation of gender identity. I argue that figurines not only communicated the social values of their producers but may also have been instrumental in actively constructing the world of the individual through gender performance. I therefore examine figurine representations of women, men and children in relation to visual materials [primarily polychrome ceramics] assumed to be produced by men in an attempt to elucidate the contested nature of gender identity within Classic Maya households. I
argue that instabilities and changes within gender relations could be understood as arising from power relations that were mediated through such visual imagery.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks go first and foremost to my advisors, Marvin Cohodas, Professor in the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory, Maureen Ryan, Associate Professor in the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory and William French, Professor in the History Department at the University of British Columbia. I am deeply appreciative of the guidance and support offered throughout my graduate education.

I am indebted to Dr. Takeshi Inomata, Associate Professor Department of Anthropology, University of Arizona, Dr. Daniela Triadan, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Arizona and Erin L. Sears, working on the Cancuén project at Vanderbilt University for their generosity in sharing research information.

I would like to thank my family for their patience and understanding.

Last but not least, a very special thanks to my partner, Amanda Boursicot, for her constant support and encouragement.
INTRODUCTION:

A figurine in the collection of the Museo de Jonuta, Instituto de Cultura del Estado de Tabasco (Figure i), depicts a simply dressed woman holding a young child by the hand (Figure ii). The child in turn embraces a figurine in her folded right arm. From the earliest studies of Maya figurines to some of the most recent the possibility that they functioned as children's playthings\(^1\) has been raised but never pursued seriously as a viable or appropriate topic for examination (Rand and Rand 1965:559; Kidder 1965:150; Tourtellot 1983:40; Triadan 2001:4; Sears 2000:19). Perhaps the reasons for this apparent reluctance to explore an archaeology of children stems from our culturally specific concept of childhood as a prolonged period of dependence on parents. Such a concept leads to an assumption that children had little control over the production of material culture and social ideologies and are therefore not of interest to an archaeological investigation of social change (Sofaer Derevenski 1997: 193).

Figurines recovered archaeologically have been grouped as an artifact category, preserved, measured, counted, drawn, photographed, scanned to determine paste, inventoried by site,

\(^1\)To equate such figurine usage with contemporary "dolls" would involve too many universalist and presentist assumptions about both child's play and child-rearing.
dated by stylistic analysis and seriation, methodically catalogued by stylistic groupings, subject matter, trait, head type, body type, pose, facial decoration and costume. These classification systems have not provided any real information for interpretation of figurines in the context of their location within the household. Yet these de-contextualized taxonomies are still standard procedure for figurine treatment.

In contrast, this thesis will investigate the context and use of figurines, and specifically, the possibilities that mould-made whistle-figurines produced during the Classic Period in the Maya Lowlands functioned as children's playthings, as seems evident from the Jonuta figurine. I will argue further that the subjects of figurine representation constituted a woman's discourse through which women expressed their opinions on a variety of issues. Thus, the production of figurine-whistles as mechanisms for the engendering of children was a means by which women passed on knowledge, concerns, and struggles to their children.

Both of these assertions are designed to contribute to a growing literature on women's lives among the ancient Maya and on gender relations between men and women. Thus, although
figurines must of necessity have been polysemic and potentially poly-functional [as toys accomplish many things simultaneously] I have chosen specifically to explore the impact that figurines may have had on the formation of gender identity, a process that was also a crucial dimension of social reproduction linking the body to political and economic organization. I will argue that figurines not only communicated the social values of their producers but may also have been instrumental in actively constructing the world of the individual on the most fundamental level of bodily experience through gender performance.

As many authors have demonstrated, gender is not an individual attribute but rather that which is accomplished through interaction with one's world. In this thesis, gender means knowledge about sexual difference. That is, the term gender does not denote fixed or natural biological differences between men and women but, rather, the knowledge that establishes meaning for bodily difference (Wolff 1990: 126-128). As the construction of these meanings varies across social groups and through time, sexual difference cannot be viewed as anything other than an historically situated understanding of the body—understandings which have been invoked and contested as part of many kinds of struggles for
power or autonomy. Sexual difference is not, then, the original cause from which social organization ultimately can be derived, but is instead, a variable in social organization that must be explained (Scott 1988: 20).

Gender is a construction that everywhere takes socially and historically specific forms. Although societies past and present elaborate on notions of masculinity and femininity in different ways, all societies in some way create social categories from perceivable or conceivable differences between men and women. This requires that we investigate the social to determine how gender relations are produced and reproduced in each determinate historical situation. I will argue that children's imaginative experiences with figurines were an important means for reproducing gender relations among ancient Lowland Maya peoples.

I make no claims in this thesis to have recovered a "truth" about the past. There is always a great diversity of meanings about any topic, and more than one way of representing or interpreting it. An emphasis on the social production of art discloses the ways in which artistic practices are embedded in and informed by broader social and political processes, institutions and economic forces. Of course, the actual
relationship of the economic and the ideological, or the transformative potential of a particular work or form of art, are questions that require the analysis of concrete situations (Wolff 1981: 140). An important part of the understanding of art is a consideration of the audience or "cultural" consumer. The reader, viewer, or audience is actively involved in the construction of the work through reception/consumption and through interpretation (Wolff 1981: 95). In short, any reading of any material product is an act of interpretation that necessarily involves the individual's perspective and position in ideology (Wolff 1981: 95). Historical understanding cannot ever consist of somehow transposing oneself into the past, or as some empathetic understanding of another person's "reality." Spectators are invested in the idea of "truth" and the "real" and reserve the right to confront a "cultural" product with their own personal and "cultural" knowledge (Shohat and Stam 1994: 179). Thus, one's own present and historicity enter the act of interpretation and in so doing colour the understanding itself (Wolff 1981: 100). Yet, recognizing prejudices does not amount to being freed of them (Wolff 1981: 106). Therefore, there can never be a recovery of any "original" meaning. As interpreters we can only attempt to historically locate and thus "explain" texts and images as ideological mechanisms in the present. In other words, the
role of the historian or interpreter, like that of the reader is a creative role but at the same time it is politically situated (see also, Miller and Tilley 1984; Tilley 1989).

One methodological approach to understanding art that also takes the concept of reception into consideration is to speak less of images than of voices and discourses (Wolff 1982: 214). Michel Foucault (1972: 25-30) has contributed significantly to our understanding of discourse as it relates to the "problem" of representation. For Foucault a discourse is a set of statements that share conventions of exclusion and inclusion and which in turn provide a way of representing the knowledge about a particular topic at a particular historical moment (1972: 25-30). It is important to note that the concept of discourse in Foucault’s usage is not purely a linguistic concept; it is about the production of knowledge through language and practice. Foucault argued that discourse never consists of one statement, one text, one action or one source. Discourse, according to Foucault, constructs the topic, defines and produces the objects of knowledge, governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about, and influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others (1972: 25-30). The idea that discourse produces the objects of knowledge which in turn influence the
ways individuals come to understand themselves and others and the basis on which they take action, greatly expands the scope of what is involved in representation.

I will be applying these theoretical positions on the social production of art, the historical meaning of "gender-appropriate" behaviour and the associations of discourse, knowledge and power to the problem of function and meaning for Maya figurines.

In Chapter One I set out the organization and functioning of the Classic Maya household, focusing on the residential group as its spatial articulation, the primary locus for the manufacture and use of ancient Maya figurines. Recent scholarship has investigated particular aspects of the ways in which space and place are commonly conceptualized in daily and political life. Briefly, the spatial is thought of in the context of space-time and as formed out of networks of social relations and understandings at all scales (Massey 1994: 5). However, the argument insists that social relations are never still; they are inherently dynamic (Massey 1994: 2). Thus one view of a place is as a particular articulation of those social and spatial relations in which "appropriate" gender behavior is learned and enacted.
A focus on the organization of space within houses and cities has renewed interest in Claude Lévi-Strauss' definition and description of "house society" first proposed in the 1970s (first English translation 1982). Lévi-Strauss defined and characterized the "house" as a social category, one which is not equivalent to a lineage, and which is not merely an architectural form or the locus of the household. According to Lévi-Strauss the house is "a corporate body" that holds an estate made up of both material and immaterial wealth that perpetuates itself through the transmission of its goods down a real or imaginary descent line (1982: 174). The individuals who maintain the house are given an identity for themselves and a framework for interacting with others (Lévi-Strauss 1982: 174). Importantly, in conceiving the house as a "type of social structure" the functions of production, sharing, redistribution, reproduction and co-residence membership may be the primary determinants of social relations rather than their outcomes.

Lévi-Strauss' explication of house societies has been heavily criticized for ignoring the major object of inquiry—the physical house itself. He has also been rebuked for his "naïve conception of kinship" and his placing of the house as a new classificatory type within an "outmoded evolutionary
trajectory" (Gillespie 2000: 23-24). Yet, as Susan Gillespie and others have shown, Lévi-Strauss' original vision of the house holds considerable utility for the investigation of societies organized according to group affiliation to a particular place or house such as that of the Classic Maya. Keeping these criticisms in mind a re-examination of Lévi-Strauss' model has resulted in significant clarifications highlighting the material dimensions of houses while employing the various principles of house societies in the study of social organization as "variations on a theme" (Waterson 1995: 48) rather than as a strict category (Joyce and Gillespie, eds. 2000; Carsten and Hugh-Jones, eds. 1995; Macdonald, ed. 1987). My brief sketch of Classic Maya social organization is based on Rosemary Joyce and Susan Gillespie's (2000) critique, clarification, and adaptation of Lévi-Stauss' "house society" to Classic Maya social organization.

Applying Joyce, Gillespie and other contributors' adaptation of Lévi-Strauss' "house society," Chapter One investigates the Classic Maya house as a central and fundamental organizing principle that was intricately connected with gender and the construction of gender relations. Following Massey's (1997: 3) theory of space, place and gender I argue that resource productivity, geographical boundary, local and long-distance
exchange, kinship systems, marriage alliance, "rules" of succession and corporate group structure were experienced differently and variously interpreted by those holding different positions as part of the Maya household.

I consider the elite/commoner or two-class model that is most often applied to the analysis of Classic Maya political and economic organization as too simplistic a model to account for the variability and complexity of apparent household formation. Rather, household social structures impinged upon, and were in turn affected by factional competition through which individuals sought material advantage and social esteem in competition and solidarity with others within and between houses (Brumfiel 1994: 12). Considering factional competition within a house society model of social organization for the Classic Maya suggests that individuals of diverse social and economic standing were both divided and united by common interests and affiliation. This thesis recognizes the rich mosaic of competitive strategizing that involves the manipulation of the material world and those living within it in complex and contingent ways. In doing so, I consider some dimensions of human choice and creativity within a specific historical situation, leaving room for the exercise of human agency.
In Chapter One I also consider what some historic and ethnographic accounts have said about ancient Maya gender identity and roles as complex products of ideology, social status, the organization of space and work, kinship and the household economy. I rely on indigenous 16th century testaments possibly given by Gaspar Antonio Chi and more probably by Nachi Cocom and compiled by Friar Diego De Landa. However, Landa wrote *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán* in Spain during 1566 as a document of self-support while awaiting trial before the Council of the Indies for his alleged abuse of the Indians and misconduct as provincial of the Franciscan order of Yucatán (Gates 1994: 9-21). Thus Landa’s account of Maya life during the early Colonial era in Yucatán, while valuable, must be viewed with a critical eye. In hopes of garnering a broader or more nuanced perspective on the social and political organization of Classic Maya society I reference government documents and other Maya testaments produced during the Colonial era as well as several dating to later periods and ethnographic accounts of Maya family and community structure.

In the second part of Chapter One I draw on archaeological data produced from recent excavations at the sites of Aguateca, [Guatemala], Cerén, [El Salvador], and Copán, [Honduras] as well as earlier archaeological monographs that
pertain to the household context of figurines. In this section I will investigate the concept of overlapping or competing fields of power relations in an attempt to nuance the intricacy and variability of the social production and reproduction of gender identity in ancient Maya society. I argue that spaces within the house took their forms and partial meanings from the differentiation of activities by gender.

Chapter Two considers the material evidence of figurines from three points of view. In the first part I return to a consideration of the archaeological monographs that relate to the household production and use of figurines. Raw clay and moulds used in the manufacture of figurines were primarily located within those spaces designated as women's work areas as evidenced by cooking and weaving implements as were the figurines themselves. Based on this evidence, I disagree with the more standard interpretation of figurines as household ritual objects and instead argue that women manufactured figurines within the house for their children's use as toys. My argument for women's manufacture of figurines is further supported by historic and ethnographic testaments of ceramic figurine production by women in the Yucatán and Highland
Guatemala and the use of figurines as playthings by contemporary children in those regions.

In the second part I discuss the secondary use of figurines as funerary offerings. I consider the significance of ritual and burial practices to the legitimization of social relations and maintenance of the house estate from one generation to the next according to Lévi-Strauss' model of social organization. Archaeological data reveals that outside of a late Classic context at Mayapán and Jaina, figurine-whistles were primarily placed in the burials of children. On rare occasions as at Palenque, more elaborate figurines, often hand-modeled, were included in the furnishing of women's burials affirming their close association. I will follow this with a short discussion of the institutionalization of figurines as funerary offerings at Jaina [Campeche, Mexico] and will consider whether age and/or gender were determining factors in their placement.

The final part of Chapter Two is concerned with the formal aspects or means of representation of figurines [technical manufacture and medium], style [distinct variability] and content [subject matter, theme, iconography] produced by ancient Maya artisans. I will also consider what was not
represented in figurines as a possible means of determining the subject concerns of figurine makers.

In Chapter Three I investigate the possibility that the production of figurines was one of the ways ancient Maya women could enter into the discourse of gender relations. The visual has been employed like any other language to give form to particular ideologies or political positions. The material world that surrounds us is one in which we use our living bodies to give substance to the social distinctions and differences that underpin social relations and symbolic systems (Moore 1994: 71). I also discuss instabilities and changes within gender relations that arise from the clash of power relations that were mediated through visual imagery.

Sherry Ortner and Harriet Whitehead introduced contemporary feminist concerns to the discipline of cultural anthropology through the publication of Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality in 1981. Their introduction to this volume was concerned with how women

\[\text{In Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977:77), Pierre Bourdieu defines his usage of the term "symbolic": "that is, conventional and conditional-stimulations, which act only on condition they encounter agents conditioned to perceive them, tend to impose themselves unconditionally and necessarily when inculcation of the arbitrary abolishes the arbitrariness of both the inculcation and the significations inculcated."} \]
achieve prestige in their societies and how their experiences differ from men's. They argued that women and men utilized a variety of prestige structures to gain status and recognition. Ortner and Whitehead defined "prestige structures" as the mechanisms by which individuals and groups evaluate and impose order on a set of elements of concern to them in their world. Like Foucault in his account of discourse, Ortner and Whitehead were concerned with relations of power, not relations of meaning in their analysis of representation.

Applying Ortner and Whitehead in Chapter Three, I will discuss figurine representation as a prestige structure/discourse within which individuals and groups competing for status and advantage in ancient Maya society during the Classic Period spoke. Figurines were but one of many representations that attempted to influence the particular configuration of power relations within the domestic environment that, in turn, must be understood in terms of its overarching connections with other fields in the social body. I discuss figurines with regard to the sexual division of labour in relation to competition between factions vying for prestige and influence. I compare and contrast figurine representation with other visual materials produced by members competing for social worth or advantage within the house and community in an
attempt to elucidate the contested nature of gender. For example, as I will show the focus on women’s labour in figurine imagery contrasts dramatically with its virtual absence from representational forms dominated by men, such as fancy ceramics, even though the products of women’s labor [food and textiles] were central to the prestation economy that supported male privilege. I argue that this discrepancy represents a struggle between intra-household factions competing for economic control and social worth in separate but parallel prestige structures. I further argue that women for the most part controlled the local market economy that was in competition with the tribute system. Thus the contrasting emphasis on women’s, and not men’s, labor in figurine imagery would have been a visual strategy that attempted to favour women’s contributions in both economies. Hence, I argue that the production and interpretation of visual material was intimately wedded to negotiation or attempted control of gender relations and other ideologies involving the rights and needs afforded differentiated bodies in Classic Maya communities.

In Chapter Four, I have chosen to explore a series of overlapping and contradictory stories of possibility of gendered bodily experience in relation to Maya children’s
experience of figurine discourse. The idea of embodiment
denotes a fluid relation to gendered identity where gender
norms are understood as entrenched but not unsurpassable
boundaries (McNay 2000: 33). Following Judith Butler’s theory
of the performative nature of gender identity and the changes
that can be wrought through signifying practices, I explore
the possibility of political agency in relation to Maya
children’s engagement with figurines.

Judith Butler’s formulation of the idea of the performative
moves beyond understanding the construction of gender identity
as symbolic inscription or determinations that reflect prior
social conditions, by thinking of gender in terms of a process
of reiteration (1993; 1997). Reiterations produce a set of
social effects that “work their social power not only to
regulate bodies, but to form them as well” (Butler 1997: 159).
While every reiteration or performance serves to inculcate
gender norms upon the body, the idea of the performative also
expresses the arbitrary nature of gender identity that may
anticipate and instate altered contexts for future reception
(Butler 1997: 160). Thus performativity can work in counter-
hegemonic ways.
However, Lois McNay (2000: 35) argues that Butler's account of the performative is schematized "mainly as a property of sedimented symbolic structures rather than as an anticipatory element inherent in praxis." By developing some of the temporal implications of Pierre Bourdieu's (1977; 1990) concept of the *habitus* as a "system of structured, structuring dispositions" that is constituted through praxis [a coming to understanding of social distinctions through the body], McNay extends Butler's work on the materialization of gender, and proposes a more substantive account of agency predicated on a negotiation of social complexity (McNay 2000: 40-44).

In Chapter Four I will apply McNay's dynamic account of the process of self-formation to the analysis of the reception of figurine imagery within the ancient Maya household. I will question the role figurines may have played in the performance of gender by children. In the process I speculate on the possibility of contestation and reformulation of the subject. My project in Chapter Four is to analyze how ancient Maya social actors may have understood themselves, as a contribution to how our knowledge about the social and the embodied individual comes to be produced in different places and periods.
In other words, in this thesis, I hope to portray a historically nuanced and dynamic notion of agency in ancient Maya households, one that applied to women and children as well as adult males.
CHAPTER ONE: THE CLASSIC MAYA HOUSEHOLD

Introduction

Present-day academic studies of the household are still mired in the same evolutionary premises that were applied to the analysis of the household and family in the nineteenth-century. In this chapter I consider this problem and suggest that a historically sensitive approach that considers gender relations and focuses on what goes on within the household, on inequalities in how labour and goods are apportioned, offers a theoretical way forward. I do so by exploring the applicability of Claude Lévi-Strauss’ (1982, 1987) “house societies” model of social organization. This model focuses on people’s relationships as a group by virtue of their joint localization to a “house.” As anthropologists like Gillespie (2000a: 1) have noted, because it more closely fits the ethnographic and historic account of Maya social structure than models of kinship [nuclear family or lineage], Lévi-Strauss’ model has the potential to elucidate our understanding of Maya society stretching back into the pre-Hispanic past. In assessing gender and the household I will take up the idea of intersecting and overlapping fields of power relations in an attempt to nuance the complexity and variability of the social production and reproduction of gender identity in ancient Maya society. In the process, I
investigate a number of circulating themes: structure and subordination, strategies of reproduction, access to and accumulation of goods, social relations and spatial structure and the sexual division of labour.

In Part Two I will introduce some of the excavation data on several Maya residences where most figurines are uncovered, and examine implications of the house society model for interpretation of the social uses of space.

**Household Space**

No social issue has suffered more from the imposition of an androcentric ideology than domestic life, with the result that crucial negotiations of status, identity and power within the household have been obscured. Interpretation until recently has invoked the notion of the household as a unified social and economic actor, an undifferentiated unit (Wilk and Ashmore 1990; Sanders 1992; Webster 1992). Relations within the household have often been presumed to be reciprocal and egalitarian regardless of the "stage of development" or degree of involvement in a market economy. According to Richard Wilk, "the domestic world is still an unknown land, perceived dimly if at all...[as a] cavernous black box...households have no history because they have tradition instead" (1991: 232).
The link between the re-iteration of "normative" assertions and power must be taken into consideration in the analysis of ancient Maya domestic communities. Normalized constructions of social hierarchies in Euro-American society have led many archaeologists to accept a unitary view of the household as unproblematic and entirely natural. Thus, Tringham (1991: 101) noted that some archaeologists have interpreted the archaeological record of the ancient Maya household as units of co-operative production, redistribution and consumption, generational, patrilocal transmission, residence, and reproduction—that apparently function without agency. The characterization of the family as a socially integrated domain directs attention away from the fact that the household is a site of gendered labour, albeit often unrecognized as labour in the form of child rearing, animal rearing, food and textile production, meal preparation, and household maintenance (Fraser 1987: 37).

The strategies of representation whose object is to conserve or enhance the interests of individuals or groups of individuals in ancient Maya society are obscured by the partial and reductive materialism of such archaeological methodology. A continued reliance on the construction of the communal pre-capitalist household fails to consider the
relationship of the control of reproduction and production to the potentially attempted subordination of women and other groups. As the very basis of unequal power structures these assumptions have far broader implications for feminist critiques.

A gender-informed approach, which addresses the political dynamics of the household, contrasts sharply with unitary household theories. During the past two decades or so, a growing number of archaeologists and art historians have tackled the thorny question of gender relations. While there has been an interesting plurality of approaches to the engendering of archaeology these studies have succeeded in highlighting a variety of methodological problems and prejudices within the discipline (Conkey and Spector 1984; Classen 1994; Classen and Joyce 1996). Importantly, they have revealed the extent of androcentric bias in archaeological interpretation and, in doing so have pushed for recognition of the value of women's contributions to ancient and modern societies. In keeping with early feminist history the initial emphasis on the "unearthing of women" gradually translated into the socio-economic contributions of women as evidenced by the growing number of studies of the gendered division of labour (Pohl and Feldman 1982; Pohl 1991; Joyce 1993;
Ruscheinsky 1994, 1996). Unfortunately the persistence in archaeology of both processual and cultural evolutionary theories that consider households as primordial and undifferentiated units with a perfect community of interests frames the contribution of women's labour as a reciprocal endeavor. Understandably, the utopian vision that past Non-Western societies were free of gender bias has been an appealing one for some feminist scholarship. Thus, the primitivist construction of the communal pre-capitalist household, which overlooks the relationship of the control of reproduction and production to the subordination of women, continues.

Rather than a bounded unit of analysis, the Maya residential compound, like the modern family in capitalist society, is more usefully conceived of as a political arena in which struggles for power, centred around issues of age, gender, status and economic relations, are indivisible from those carried out at other levels of society (Moore 1992; Hart 1992). This approach opens up for concrete inquiry the domestic politics that are taken for granted in unitary models. That is, how domestic consent is produced and maintained and the conditions under which subordinate household members are likely to challenge and, perhaps, even
redefine the rules (Moore 1992: 132). Above all, it considers the dense web of relations between contradiction, ambivalence, ambiguity and the politics of agency.

Households as the site of engagement between productive and reproductive relations are involved in the production and reproduction of gender ideologies, as well as other forms of difference, which draw on and construct social identities. From this point of view, the household appears as a political arena within which the social definitions of identities, hence rights and needs of individuals, are reproduced (Hart 1992; Moore 1992). Differentiated social identities are related to the exercise of power because the very definitions of those identities are connected to normative or conventional explanations for the social order and to the legitimization of that social order.

Inequalities are established through the subtle inculcation of power relations upon the bodies and dispositions of individuals (Moore 1992: 136-39). This point is crucial to an understanding of how the categories of masculinity and femininity, labour and class came historically into being. It seems important therefore to examine how social identities, which are partially based on an individual's interpretation,
adoption or rejection of "naturalized" societal conventions—those "normative" rules, rights and obligations governing relations between women and men, and elders and juniors—are implicated in power structures and in the structuring of inequalities. Nowhere in society is this power relation more profound than at the level of the household.

Gender identity and role is a complex product of ideology, social status, the organization of space and work, kinship, and the household economy. The feminist concern with the study of family and household has renewed interest in material things and their complex and changing social contexts and meanings. From this perspective, an investigation of representation within ancient Maya households could aid in an understanding of how the subjective and collective meanings of women and men as categories of identity have been, and continue to be, constructed. I hope that this study of ancient Maya figurines will contribute to the understanding of ways that representation participated in the negotiation of power relations, centred on gendered identity, as a crucial aspect of household practice.

Part One: The House Society Model and its Implication

The Maya household, including not only its spaces but also the practices and social relations of the individuals that
contributed to its formation, was the context in which figurines were produced, used and recovered. A reconstructed view of ancient Maya household society must be presented in order to provide a context for the possible meanings of figurines that are the subject of Chapters Three and Four. The negotiation of gendered identity is one function of the household that I have chosen as central to my argument concerning figurines.

An extensive study by Richard Wilk (1988) has shown that ethnohistoric and ethnographic accounts of the Maya,

...seem to point away from the lineage, clan or barrio as the primary social group, at least in the minds of the Maya themselves; the [multiple-family] household in contrast was important in every region and area (1988: 137).

These records indicate that it was an "ancient pattern" that served economic purposes and was part of a "cultural" tradition (1988: 139). Wilk's examination of ethnographic and historic Maya household evidence disclosed no clear unilineal pattern in kinship composition, although some kinds of relationships were more common than others in some regions (1988: 139-140). Although inheritance, naming and preference for succession to public office may have followed a patrilineal tendency in the Yucatan during the Classic period there is no evidence that the household was ever a formally
organized patrilocal group (Wilk 1989: 141-142). Even where "rules" of residence can be demonstrated to have existed, we must consider the possibility that they were broken.

Claude Lévi-Strauss' (1982, 1987) "house societies" model of social organization accords with Wilk's ethnographic findings in its focus on the practices and understandings by which relationships are constructed in everyday social life, rather than on idealized rules of social conformity. Thus, Lévi-Strauss' "house society" assumes a processual rather than a classificatory approach to kinship.

Lévi-Strauss defined the house as

...a corporate body holding an estate made up of both material and immaterial wealth which perpetuates itself through the transmission of its name, its goods, and its titles down a real or imaginary line, considered legitimate as long as this continuity can express itself in the language of kinship or of affinity and, most often, of both (1982: 174).

The recent adaptation by Rosemary Joyce and Susan Gillespie (2000) of the House Society model has renewed attention to its utility as a means to understand ancient Maya society. The reformulation of Lévi-Strauss' model amplifies our ability to interpret gender relations because by emphasizing the residents who contribute to household economy, rather than emphasizing kinship that privileges male descent, women are
seen to participate in the negotiations of status and decision-making. A significant factor in Lévi-Strauss' conceptualization of the house is that the functions of production [food, implements, vessels, and housing]; sharing and redistribution [storage, distribution, maintenance, and curation of goods, including exchanges between households and communities]; transmission [of information, knowledge, titles, authority, materials and possessions, including inheritance and access rights to resources]; reproduction [of people in the biological sense, and their society, including the need to recruit spouses from outside the household and often outside the community]; and co-residence membership, may be the primary determinants of social relationships, rather than their outcomes (see also, Wilk and Rathje 1982, Arnould 1986).

Lévi-Strauss describes the house as a "moral person" [personnes morales] perceived in operation as the objectification of relations rather than as substantive phenomenon (Gillespie 2000a: 32). Indeed if the house was defined by its members' activities and property then no two houses were the same. Each house may have its own names, heirlooms, ritual privileges and material resources that made up its estate. A focus on the house as a corporate body highlights the successful execution of strategies for
maintaining the estate and the reproduction of its members over multiple generations (Gillespie 2000a: 8-9). As adapted Lévi-Strauss' "house society" provides a far more nuanced approach to household archaeology than the unitary models that have been applied to ancient Maya material. However, while Gillespie situates the house society within a two-class model of Maya society (elite vs. commoner), the house society may be more consistent with factionalism as articulated by Brumfiel (1994).

From the perspective of house perpetuity, there is an important distinction between people and the structures upon which house relationships are constituted. The physical house and its immaterial property are key components of the standing of the house as an institution; the maintenance of both via a transference of custodianship and enhancement of property over generations is the responsibility of individual members and is partially accomplished through the strategic exploitation of the language of kinship and affinity (Gillespie 2000a: 48).

If the continued existence of a house were partially dependent on the successful execution of strategies for maintaining its estate [name, goods, titles and the power associated with such positions] then death of a member of the corporate body would
have precipitated an event of social reproduction. It was a
time when the social relationships of the living were
rearranged, status positions shifted, and allegiances were
reaffirmed or realigned in order to safeguard the material and
immaterial wealth of the estate (Gillespie 2000: 2-3). For
example Joyce has argued that the designation of an heir,
hosting of events that included the public or private
declaration of allegiance, recording those events in permanent
form on sculptures, ceramics and books, and co-performance of
ritual events by mother/regent and heir, or father and heir
was undertaken at Yaxchilan, Piedras Negras, Ucanal, and
Palenque (2000: 123-132) were possibly some of the strategies
undertaken by house members in an effort to forestall crisis
in the eventuality of death.

Analysis of the material construction and maintenance of the
estate entails consideration of both temporal and spatial
dimensions (Joyce 2000: 123-132). The temporal dimension
includes the domestic cycle of individual house groups, the
life history of the structures, the continuity and changes
experienced by social houses over generations, and a time
The spatial dimensions of the house include the arrangement of
architectural structure, its furnishings and people within the
house, and must also consider the definition of spatial boundaries that may exceed that of a single residence (2000: 123-132).

Gair Tourtellot's (1988a) archaeological investigation of residential compounds in the periphery of Seibal emphasised not just the physical changes made to structures over time but the "person-object" relationships that emerge from the various uses by actors of tangible and intangible resources of the household. Tourtellot argues that the dominant structures in several of the residential compounds in the periphery of Seibal were distinguished by greater investment of labour and materials. These structures were also found to contain the earliest high status, male burials and were subsequently rebuilt for residential use by a series of successors. Tourtellot's "developmental cycle model" suggests that the rebuilding of the physical space of the house provided the means to legitimate the intact transfer of the material and immaterial resources of the estate across generations of house members.

William Haviland (1988: 123-125) working at Tikal, Guatemala developed a similar theory based on a "life course model." He proposed that the stratigraphic relationship between the
various structures that made up the house or courtyard group showed that remodelling took in all structures at once, about every generation. He suggests this rebuilding was in response to the death of the lineage head which would have triggered a kind of "musical hammocks" as the lineage head's successor moved in, and so on down the line of inheritance.

Such practices deemed necessary for the perpetuity of the ancient Maya house also generated economic stratification and hierarchies of status, prestige or ritual power. According to Cohodas (1996) in ancient Maya society, crises of lineage reproduction, when a head is interred and his successor seated, provided opportunities for reconstituting relations of hierarchy not only in the process of furnishing a tomb, but also in the construction and dedication of a new dominant residential administrative structure above or adjacent to the old one.

Hierarchy is generally present both within and between houses. The estate of a house not only serves to differentiate it but forms a basis for ranking (Cohodas 1996: 9). Struggles over locale, subsistence, production, religion, gender, rank, wealth, and power may be discernible in the archaeological record as considerable differences in allotment of space and
labour, accumulation of subsistence materials, or access to prestige goods and symbolic resources. In other words, when the analysis turns away from the idealized shared working and living arrangements toward competition for rank and status the material record may serve to elucidate the strategic choices made by generations of individuals based on what they believed would improve or at least maintain their status and property rights.

The legitimacy and status of house members often derived from acknowledgment of ties to distinguished founders. For the ancient Maya these founders were represented as house ancestors. Patricia McAnany (1995: 8) has demonstrated the crucial importance of ancestor veneration [a particular genealogical strategy among the ancient Maya] through lineage organization, mechanisms of oral memory, written statements, and most importantly, the continued presence of buried ancestors in residential contexts, legitimized descendents resource rights. Indeed, McAnany proposes

...that exclusionary and inherited resource rights go hand in hand with the genesis of ancestor veneration. Strong links to past ancestors also provided nearly unassailable rights and privileges (1995: 8).

The further back in time and genealogical space the origin of the lineage is located [for the ancient Maya this may include
a legendary or primordial past] the more the assimilative power of those agents that claim descent. Whereas persons who “fall in line” can claim rights and privileges in light of precedence set by progenitors, “house” structure also provided a rationale for emergent and existent social inequality through the partial or total alienation of certain segments of the domestic community (McAnany 1995: 9).

While hieroglyphic statements highlighted kinship in the construction of the house as a “moral person” they may also have, through exclusion, served to render marginal or invisible persons in contractual or indentured relations with the house residing therein. The ancient Maya house structure was developed within, and promoted the perpetuity of a particular type of economic and social condition that was marked by competition and ranking. The ability of a Maya house to maintain or increase its estate may have depended on the consistent success in negotiations with and/or jural control of the disenfranchised members of the domestic community such as slaves, contracted labourers and most importantly, the majority of women and children.

According to historian Matthew Restall (1997) in his analysis of gender relations in Colonial era Yucatan where
patrilocality was common, Maya society involved an essentially patriarchal structure. Although descent was reckoned for some purposes through both the male and female lines, Maya women were denied access to office in the civil and religious hierarchies. They were, as affiliated members of a "house" by virtue of their gender, always the represented rather than the representatives (Restall 1997: 581; Gates 1994: 62-63). This is not to say that women were uninvolved in political activity. The majority of female participation was necessarily unofficial and as a result hidden from us. However, the permanency of stone has enabled the survival of few ancient Maya women's public participation in political negotiation and the unusual circumstances that may have led to their declarations. Specifically, four women are thought to have ruled important ancient Maya city-states: Lady Wac-Chanil-Ahau of Naranjo (Schele and Freidel 1990: 183-191); Lady Kanal-Ikal and Lady Zak-Kuk of Palenque (Schele and Freidel 1990: 220-224); and the Lady of Tikal (Martin 1999) suggesting they were powerful in their own right. At least three of these women ruled as regents for their male heir, and abdicated when he came of age.

Restall (1997: 582) argues that the pre-Hispanic naming system in Yucatan recognized the importance of the female line
through the *nal*, or maternal name. After the conquest, a non-
lineal Christian name replaced the *nal* and although a woman
kept her Maya patronym after marriage, it was [as its name
indicates] her father's patronym, just as her children
received their father's name. In Highland Guatemala, children
receive and maintain both patronyms. Restall observes further
that the term for noble, *almehen*, which had evolved before the
conquest, includes both the word for a woman's child (*al*) and
that for a man's son (*mehen*)—but also notes that only the
gender of the man's offspring was indicated (1997: 582).
Naming practices are consistent with other aspects of Maya
house society in the representation of both male and female
within a patriarchal structure. Gillespie argues on this
basis, as well as on the basis of Maya creation mythology and
Classic period burials and representations of ancestors that
house ancestors were conceived of as male-female pairs
(2000b). She notes that because the lineage model privileges
relations between men, the house society model accords better
with archaeological, ethnohistoric and ethnographic
information on Maya social organization (2000b).

Hieroglyphic inscriptions are as clear about patrilineal
inheritance of names, titles and locales [in genealogical
declarations] as they are about patrilocality [in long-
distance marriages. These inscriptions demonstrate some of the ways that marriage alliance was utilized as a strategy by houses in competition for ranking in both the regional and civic systems of representation. Women thus served a "unique and crucial social role" as mediators between houses (Gillespie and Joyce 1997: 192). Marriage alliances between various houses, when they are repeated over generations, established precedents that were the basis for long-lived relationships between houses that created a network of ties within and beyond the community (Gillespie 2000a: 11). While marriage alliance was an important and strategic resource in the political management of the house, the main and most direct function of marriage strategy was to maintain or increase the material and immaterial resources of the estate. Obviously, not all alliances would have held the same economic and social value for the house. Thus the house estate would have been guarded through the skilful calculation of inheritance rights, titles and property, of both male and female members within the house, and those of other houses with which they would join in contractual arrangement.

The only residence "rule" consistently mentioned in the ethnographic and historic accounts is that of bride service (Wilk 1989: 140). The custom of bride-service specified that
after marriage a couple lived with the wife's family for a negotiated period of time ranging from a few weeks to as much as five or six years (Gates 1994: 64). The groom's father offered a dowry of specified goods [cacao beans and precious stone beads used in necklaces] negotiated and exchanged as part of the marriage agreement (Gates 1994: 64). In return, the bride's family was responsible for the wedding feast. The bride's mother prepared clothing for her daughter and potential grandchildren (1994: 64). The goods exchanged at marriage events help construct a kind of social history for the house that continues for those goods retained as heirlooms from one generation to the next (Joyce 2000a; Gillespie 2000a: 12).

The main and most direct function of the strategies of marriage and inheritance was the maintenance or expansion of the material and symbolic capital of the house estate. The house was explicitly defined by Lévi-Strauss as an enduring social unit that acquires and maintains an estate through both descent and marriage ties (Lévi-Strauss 1982: 174). Thus some members, usually men, of the ancient Maya house perpetuated it by their life-long residence and their ability to recruit and produce new members through marriage and descent. Other members, usually women, were married out to form alliances
with other houses, binding together the larger community.

Epigraphic evidence clearly shows the importance of genealogy and alliance in the creation, definition and maintenance of the house estate in many ancient Maya communities (Schele and Friedel 1990; Tate 1992).

Male representation of family/house was also referenced in Maya land-tenure documentation. Although women are recorded as buying, selling, inheriting and bequeathing land in early Colonial documents of the Yucatan, a woman is never described as the owner of the land (Restall 1997: 528). A similar system was recorded for the K'iche' Maya of Highland Guatemala at contact where women were restricted in ownership and in the inheritance of lands or other production facilities belonging to the lineage in which they lived and to which they were major contributors of labour (Carmack 1981).

The ability of women to achieve autonomy or control of their own opportunities and behavior in ancient Maya society was dependent on the extent to which gender hierarchy permeated male-female relations. Focusing on the patterns of decision-making within the household, Richard Wilk (1989; 1990) identified a further contributing element to relations of gender hierarchy within what we are now calling the house
society. Whereas the extent to which a patriarch could exploit subordinate males within the house was curtailed by their potential ability to establish a separate household, this recourse would have been denied their wives and daughters. While daughters may have expected to marry and move away with their husbands, the disposition of family property may have been a point of conflict (Sandstrom 2000: 59). Some women would naturally have resisted and negotiated their positions vis-à-vis men; they also would have had a stake in a patriarchal system designed to increase both the economic and the social capital of the house to which they belonged.

Discrepancy in the rights and needs of men and women within the house structure that privileged primogeniture and the patrilineal inheritance of titles possibly marked their everyday relations with ambivalent choices between cooperation and competition. For instance, in a system where women were responsible for the majority of domestic labour men may have been equally dependent on women for survival (c.f., for East Africa, Moore 1986: 68). This dependence may also have supplied the occasion for the manipulation and negotiation by women of their rights and needs (Moore 1992). As a strategy in the negotiation of rights and privileges for themselves and their children Maya women may have created and/or participated
more readily in prestige structures that served to value their labour and products. Historic accounts state that Maya women largely controlled textile and food production, marketing and trade during the early colonial period (Tozzer 1941: 127). Thus women’s activity became one among many elements that produced opportunities for social evaluation (Hendon 1999: 268).

In other respects, relations between men and women were likely to have been marked by cooperation and solidarity. For example, although women and men may have been differentially invested in the status quo they may also have cooperated in the negotiation and manipulation of the official and unofficial systems of governance in order to maintain or improve their social and economic position and that of their children.

Archaeological interpretations of ancient Maya households, both those that utilize older kinship models of social organization and those that adopt the recent reworking of the house society model, share an important lacuna: children. If we are to understand how the domestic community operated, physical reproduction must be of central importance. Potential offspring must have been a consideration in the management of
filiations and patrimony through the arrangements of marriage. Children assured the perpetuity of the material and immaterial property of the house. The birth of a child may also have offered individuals within the house a means of maintaining or improving their position within the social and economic hierarchy, in part by adding to the labour pool.

For the first three or four years of life Landa claimed that mothers raised their children (Gates 1994: 75, 77). The age at which boys began learning adult male tasks may be gauged by Classic Maya monumental texts and images that represented events associated with heir designation performed around age six or seven (Schele and Miller 1986: pl. 40, pl. 40a; Schele and Freidel 1990: 154–161). Landa reports that older boys did not associate with married people but instead lived together in large, open young-men's houses where they passed the time playing ball and other games (Gates 1994: 74; see also Carmack 1981: 196). Young men also accompanied their fathers and helped them in their labours. This suggests that men were responsible for the education and welfare of boys over six. Girls remained with their mothers. Women educated their daughters and provided them with the skills needed for domestic labour, childrearing and gardening (Gates 1994: 76–
Thus a substantial amount of household production was accomplished by child labour.

The economic system defined by affinity to a house perhaps played its most important role in ancient Maya society in the structuring and organizing of gender relationships. Through public ritual and everyday activity the child learned the "appropriate" gendered behavior for his or her age group. Landa informs us that transgression of gender expectation often resulted in verbal reprimand and/or physical punishment (Gates 1994: 78-79). Gender specific tasks taught to and undertaken by children within the domestic realm prepared them for adult life. Thus the household was the economic and social system that managed the physical reproduction of its members and therefore of its labour force (Cohen 1983).

In such agricultural communities, labour invested in the preparing of fields and orchards and the management of seeds and trees was continual and was passed on as part of the house estate. Thus, a system of anteriority is set in place that reinforces social hierarchy: the inheriting of labour and materials is a responsibility that indebted the receiver to his predecessors (McAnany 1995: 159). It also obligates the receiver to maintain the estate for those who come after. A
Yucatec Mayan word with implications for understanding the social perception of house authority is the term for the household and lineage head: *ah kuch kab* which may be translated as "he of the burden of the land" (Barrera Vázquez 1980: 343-344; McAnany 1995: 117). According to historic documents of the Yucatan the *ah kuch kab* and the individual family heads within the household organized and supervised agrarian and commodity production on the local level (McAnany 1995: 118). Some portion of that production was consumed locally or used in market transactions, but another portion was used to "pay" tribute to higher ranking community and regional leaders, as well as to sponsor local events such as banquets and feasts that increased the power and status of the house within the community ranking system (McAnany 1995: 118).

Thus, the reproduction of the ancient Maya house depended on the productive and reproductive potential of individuals. Women’s products, especially food and textiles, abstracted from the social context of women and their labour, became crucial in negotiations of household but primarily male status and privilege when presented as tribute, or redistributed as gifts. Of course, that women bore the burden of tribute demands also had the potential to increase the value of their labour to the household and afforded them an opportunity for
negotiation within this prestige structure. The dependence of the house society on the labour and products of women and their social evaluation within the tribute system may have affected, but not controlled, the value of these resources within the parallel prestige structures of production, marketing and trade.

In summary, historic Maya house society was not founded on principles of absolute reciprocity nor was it strictly patriarchal. While the official rhetoric of relationship was represented by male preference, the material grounding for relationship was not "blood", but common investment in the house estate. This alternative way of looking at social relations, as the product of common activity, rather than adherence to "rules" or reflection of the "symbolic order" aligns the analysis of the house with contemporary feminist and cultural theory concerned with agency and the negotiation of social reproduction (Joyce 2000a: 190).

Part Two: Ancient Maya Residences

If we utilize the house society model in applying this ethnohistoric information to the most extensive data on ancient Maya households, we can open up the interpretation of social relations and daily practices in earlier times.
Wilk and Gillespie, among others, have conclusively demonstrated that we cannot infer kinship relations from the excavated remains of Maya residences, because a single residential group may encompass more than one family, and a single family may encompass more than one residential group. These groups thus correspond more closely to households or house societies in terms of shared location and contribution to labour.

Archaeologists have clarified this correspondence between the social and economic relationships that linked people together and the physical form of the residence (Ashmore 1981; Wilk and Ashmore 1988). The most common architectural arrangement that has been identified as an ancient Maya household consisted of three or more buildings arranged around a small cleared space: patio or courtyard. Residential groups were renovated and increased in size and space by rebuilding or by the addition of rooms, or second and third stories to existing structures, free standing structures or to whole courtyard groups.

Marshal Becker (1971) identified and named such arrangements the "plaza plan B". He argued that within a single plaza group, the spatial relationship, size and construction of the architectural components, and their associated artifacts, as
indication of differential access to goods represented the social positions of their occupants. In the nine small groups excavated by Becker, he was able to recognize the primary residence, a multi-roomed range-type structure, fitted with stone benches, often employing solid stone masonry construction more elaborate than that of other residence buildings within the group. More recent scholarship has shown these structures functioned as the dominant structure (Hendon 1987) and the "seat of authority" for the house patriarch (Noble 1999). Semi-perishable and/or fully perishable single and multi-roomed structures occupied other locations around the courtyard. The most consistent feature in the various plazas' architectural arrangements and monumentality was encompassed by the elevated structures occupying the east side of the plaza groups. These buildings were differentiated from the residential structures by the combination of higher elevation, smaller interior space with fewer provisions for sleeping, and squarer ground plans. They were also characterized by the presence of "dedicatory" burials placed in specially constructed graves and containing a high percentage of males. Other evidence of ceremonial activity exclusive to these structures included the presence of caches, altars, and axially located burning on floors. Becker concluded that these structures functioned as "shrines" (see
also McAnany 1995) and that ritual practice within the household was an indicator of social differentiation based on gender. Writing before feminist theory had achieved an impact on American archaeology, he did not elaborate on the ideological implications of such social practice.

The Gendered Uses of Space

Expanding on Becker's conclusion of gender differentiation I (1994: 1996) have argued that the Monjas at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, a large multi-court residence, likely involved gender segregation and hierarchy. Using the architectural construction and distribution of artifact data from John Bolles' excavation ¹ I tentatively assigned the dominant, elevated residence to adult males of the residential group and a highly decorated lower court with adjacent ball court to male adolescents. The majority of the plainer lower spaces in the Monjas were clearly associated with women's labour of food preparation and storage, animal husbandry, textile production and childcare on the basis of cooking and weaving implements as well as other remains.

¹ Both the posthumous publication of John Bolles' excavation of the Monjas at Chichén Itzá (1977) and his original unedited manuscript and field notes 1932-1934 held at Harvard University, Peabody Museum Archive were consulted.
Central to this thesis, and in keeping with Lévi-Strauss' "house model," is the argument that in contrast to the physical place produced by architectural forms, space must be conceptualized as constructed out of social relations that are innately dynamic, never static or singular. According to Doreen Massey such a way of conceptualizing the spatial

...inherently implies the existence in the lived world of a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox or antagonism...because the social relations of space are experienced differently, and variously interpreted by those holding different positions as part of it (Massey 1994:3).

Building on this earlier research, in the following sections I will investigate the interrelation of space, place, and gender in the conceptual nature of ancient Maya residential constructions and in their substantive content. My aim in the investigation of ancient Maya household remains is to unearth just some of these connections.

Rather than discussing Maya household archaeology and its interpretation in general terms, these relationships between gender and space may be more fruitfully investigated through the selection of a small number of examples characterized by richness of applicable data. These examples are derived from excavations at Aquateca, Guatemala, Cerén, El Salvador and Copán, Honduras.
Rapidly Abandoned Structures at Aguateca, Guatemala

Takeshi Inomata has been leading an excavation at the late Classic site of Aguateca, in the Guatemalan Petén, since 1992 (Figure 1.1). The rapid abandonment of a portion of this centre due to extensive fire, possibly as a result of intensified warfare (Inomata 1997: 337), has revealed a large quantity of defacto refuse—that is, still usable objects left in their ancient context of use and/or storage (Inomata 2001: 325). These remains are extremely useful in reconstructing the possible activities that took place within and around the residence and provide rich contextual data on specialized production (Inomata 2001: 325). The distribution of materials in a Late Classic household context at Aguateca suggested to Inomata that the activities associated with food and water storage and preservation, animal husbandry, meal preparation, textile production, and childcare were carried out in different spaces [rooms or platforms] from those of food consumption, carving [wood, shell and stone], painting/writing, administration [familial and/or civic], entertainment, and ritual (Inomata and Stiver 1998).

Structure M8-10, the House of the Scribe and structure M8-13

Structure M8-10, nicknamed the “house of the scribe” by Inomata, occupies the eastern side of a small patio the south
side of which is occupied by M8-13 (Figure 1.2). Structure M8-10 [Scribe, for short] is a three-room masonry residential structure with perishable roof and with a stone bench in each room [for eating, sleeping, and other activities: Noble 1999], with later room additions to north and south, and with front and back porches as external work areas (Figure 1.3).

The activities related to objects found in the south room, addition and adjacent porch, such as, manos, metates, storage jars, bone needles, spindle whorls, miniature bottles and a bark beater, suggested to Inomata that a woman occupied those spaces (Inomata and Stiver 1998: 6-11). Several figurine and figurine fragments were found in this room (Figures 1.4-1.8). This association of figurines with implements used in food and textile production is one of the most consistent features of household archaeology throughout Mesoamerica (Rands and Rands 1965).

The central and north room were possibly used by a scribe/artist (Inomata and Stiver 1998: 11). In contrast to the implements of women’s labour in the south room, these two rooms contained a large concentration of scribe’s implements, including three halved conch shells used as ink pots, eight small rectangular stone mortars and six pestles used for paint
preparation, medium and small jars and several large stone axes. In addition to scribal implements, a moderate amount of bone-work debitage and a small amount of shell-work debitage, un-worked shell and shell and bone ornaments suggested to Inomata that other artistic production was carried out in M8-10 (Inomata 2001: 327). Given the paucity of household material associated with women's activities in these two rooms and the concentration of scribe's implements, Inomata presumed these two rooms to have been occupied by a male specialist (Inomata and Stiver 1998: 7). The musical instruments—drums and flutes—unearthed in the north room and greenstone ornaments were also associated with male activity and prestige by Inomata (Inomata and Stiver 1998: 7).

The north addition where manos and metates and other lithics associated with food production were located suggested to Inomata that the primary function of this space was food preparation (Inomata and Stiver 1998: 10). In direct relation to the implements of food production recovered were a large number of figurines. On the basis of arguments presented subsequently, I would argue that activities concerned with childcare were also performed in this space. Similar artifacts indicate that the same female-gendered activities were carried out on the north terrace, behind the structure (Inomata and
Stiver 1998: 10; Inomata 1995: 719-766). A high concentration of spindle whorls and bone needles conventionally identified as women's textile-production tools, were also found in the south room and addition.

According to Inomata structure M8-10 displays a relatively clear division of male and female spaces (1995; Inomata and Stiver 1998; Inomata 2001: 327; Inomata and Triadan n.d.). The excavation of burials in this structure during the 1997 field season of the Aguateca Archaeological Project supports this interpretation (Inomata and Triadan n.d.). An excavation in front of the bench of the central room in which were found objects of male labour, revealed an extended burial of a 35 to 50 year old male (Inomata and Triadan n.d.). He had dental modification with jade incrustation. The burial contained a polychrome bowl. A skeleton of an infant was in front of the bench in the south room associated with women's labours of food preparation, textile production, and possibly child rearing. Around the skeleton were remains of red pigment and the headpiece of a broken figurine. Behind the structure, in another area of women's labour, the bodies of two adult females were placed in a cyst of irregular-shaped stones on the bedrock (Inomata and Triadan, n.d.)(Figure 1.8).
Structure M8-13 was a small, two room semi-perishable building, employing stone masonry for the lower portion of the walls and perishable materials for the upper walls and roof (Figure 1.9-1.10). A high bench occupied the western side of the west room while the east room was significantly larger and possessed a rear bench. The west room contained metates with matching manos and utilitarian ceramic vessels some of which appear to have been used for cooking (Inomata and Triadan n.d.). The east room contained a group of artifacts including serving vessels, two spindle whorls, a few bifacial lithic tools, and figurine fragments\(^2\). The building had few prestige goods such as shell and stone ornaments; materials specifically associated with male activity were absent. Based on the presence of women’s labour—food and textile production, Inomata and Triadan conclude that M8-13 constituted an independent household of lower status in comparison to M8-10. While class difference is plausible, it is also possible that the differing characteristics of the recovered artifacts indicate that only women and children occupied and used the rooms in M8-13. The model that suggests class difference is based on the notion of nuclear families occupying individual buildings. However, applying the house society model and its indications of extended and multi-family residential

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\(^2\) Daniela Triadan (personal communication April 24, 2001) stated that two figurines representing kneeling women were also recovered on the rear bench of this room.
assemblages opens up the possibility of gender segregation, consistent with the evidence from the Monjas at Chichén Itzá. As will be shown in subsequent sections, the scale of gender segregation appears to vary with the scale of the residential group.

Structure M8-8, House of the Axes

Structure M8-8, nicknamed the "House of the Axes," is located in a patio group just to the north of Structures M8-10 and M8-13 (Figure 1.1). As in Structure 8-10 [Scribe], the structure contains three main rooms with side additions on the north and south. The pattern of artifact distribution in Structure M8-8 is also similar to that of M8-10 in the localization of the activities of food storage and preparation and craft production (Figure 1.11-1.12). Artifacts indicate that food preparation and textile production were carried out in the north room and on the adjoining front terrace. A stone carver appeared to work in the north side-room, a later dirt floor addition to the original three-room structure of M8-8 where the majority of the 18 large, medium and small polished axes showing use-wear for carving stone were found (Inomata 2001: 328). Separated from these spaces of women and men's physical labour were those of administration and entertainment carried out in the central room (Inomata and Triadan n.d.).
Structure M8-17, a shrine

An important part of a residential patio group identified by Becker in his definition and description of the Plaza Plan B is the shrine structure, characterized by greater platform height combined with lesser interior space. Inomata excavated such a shrine at Aguateca, M8-17, which is located in a patio group to the south of M8-10 (Figure 1.2). The plan of the superstructure involves three parallel rooms—front to back rather than side-by-side as in residential structures. The presence of stingray spines, some burned bone artifacts, a possible incense burner and a paucity of material associated with food production led Inomata to conclude structure M8-17 functioned as a shrine (Inomata 1995: 189-195). According to Inomata the fragment of a ceramic figure found in the shrine may have been part of an incensario [incense burner] or a figurine (1995: 792, fig. 8.73). Structure M8-54 to the rear of M8-17 was possibly a kitchen that provided for the activities carried out at the shrine.

Segregation of male and female activities by room

The archaeological data of Aguateca suggests a certain degree of consistency in the use of space in dwellings, articulating differences of both status and gender. In the three-room residences, scribal and carving activities undertaken by
presumed male specialists occur in flanking rooms separate from the relatively artifact-free central room spaces associated with administration and higher status. Rooms also appear to have separated men and women's work areas. The two forms of evidence that have been noted for men and women's presence were burials and implements associated with men's craft production in stone, shell and bone and burials and implements associated with women's labour of food preparation and textile production.

Ash buried structures of Cerén, El Salvador
The agricultural village of Joya de Cerén, El Salvador provides a more rural setting of an ancient Maya household. Like Aguateca, this site was rapidly abandoned. About A.D. 590 a volcanic eruption buried Cerén preserving an extraordinary array of artifacts and features in or near their ancient positions (Figure 1.13). According to excavator Payson Sheets (1992: 1), household inventories are virtually complete, and activities can be reconstructed with a measure of accuracy. The excavated areas of Cerén suggest that each small cluster of domestic structures, including domiciles, kitchens, sweat baths, and storehouses, along with adjoining small kitchen gardens, constituted a single household which was part of a much larger zone of settlement (Sheets 1992: introduction).
Some structures at Cerén are relatively small. In such cases, each building may be functionally comparable to a room of a range structure at Aguateca and other centres (Inomata 1995). In the following sections I will provide a summary of the data provided by the reports of Payson Sheets and his associated excavators working at Cerén.

**Household cluster 1**

Most of the excavated structures at Cerén formed part of a residential group, significant portions of which [perhaps half] were lost to bulldozer cutting before construction was stopped and the remainder of the site could be preserved (Brown and Sheets 2000: 12)(Figure 1.14-1.15). The social unity of cluster 1 as a household group has been demonstrated by the identical pottery, made within the group and used throughout (Payson Sheets October 13, 1998: personal communication to Cohodas). Cluster one actually consists of two patio groups. The smaller of these is referred to in preliminary publications as Household One and includes structures 1, 5, 6, 11 and adjoining gardens. The larger patio group lost most to the bulldozer, and today is known only through structures 10 and 12.
Structure 1, "the domicile"

Structure 1 has been called the domicile because of evidence that this is the building where some of the residents ate, slept, made pottery and cotton thread, and stored some implements and food (Sheets 1992: 39-46)(Figure 1.16). A pottery working area was found on the western side of the extended front porch; the lump of prepared clay there matched the clay of the utilitarian pottery of the household (Sheets 1992: 44). A crudely made miniature pot containing twenty rounded potsherds [broken fragments from various pots] was also found in the porch area. Sheets suggested these might have been a child's playthings; the child may have been learning to count as ethnographic sources record base twenty as the numerical system used by the Maya (Sheets 1992: 44).

The artifacts in the sizeable inner room included large storage jars, stored obsidian blades, a spindle whorl, a miniature metate used for grinding red paint, pieces of sea shells, small pots of stored beans, containers of liquid, and bunches of chili peppers. Fifteen ceramic vessels were recovered inside the domicile and seven more stored under the eaves of the exterior. There was a covered work area attached to the east side of Structure 1 where spindle whorls on a spindle, some broken pots, an obsidian flake, and a "donut stone" mounted on a stick [possibly used as a digging tool]
were recovered. To the south of this area was a metate set up on the forked sticks (horquetas) that elevated it to waist level. A few shards, pots, and a human figurine head were stored on the rafters above this grinding area (Sheets 1992: 39-46).

Structure 6, the bodega

Immediately to the south of Structure 1 was the storehouse (bodega) of the household (Sheets 1992: 46-52) (Figure 1.17). Structure 6, was loaded with pottery vessels: twenty-three utilitarian vessels, many with food within, and five fancy polychrome ceramics. A grinding area was set up inside the structure. A duck tied by its foot to the back wall was likely destined for food. Hammer stones, obsidian artifacts, a spindle whorl stored with red paint mixed with mica, and "donut stones" make up the rest of the inventory of the bodega.

Structure 11, the kitchen

Structure 11, the kitchen is to the east of Structure 6 (Sheets 1992: 52-56) (Figure 1.17). Its doorway conveniently opens directly toward the bodega. The kitchen had stick walls and thatch roof permitting air circulation. As in the bodega and domicile, the kitchen unit was filled with ceramic vessels
[twenty-six in total] storing food and liquids. Fragmentary remains of four painted gourds were also uncovered. Cooking pots, with their smoke-blackened bottoms, were concentrated around the three-stone hearth. Sheets suggested that food must have been taken from the kitchen in serving vessels to the main structure for consumption as serving wares were found in the kitchen, bodega and domicile (Sheets 1992: 116). Based on ethnographic analogy in the gendered division of labour, Sheets suggests Structure 11

"probably was a female activity area focusing on food processing. A probable male activity structure for daytime activities evidently was Structure 5, on the other side of the domicile. The kitchen was constructed with practicality in mind, and it was internally well organized. It was amply stocked with cooking, storage, and food processing vessels and implements. And, those implements often went beyond the minimal requirements for function, as decoration of them was common and sometimes quite elaborate" (Sheets 1992: 56).

Structure 10

Structure 10 was located just northeast of the kitchen [Structure 11] and directly across from the bodega [Structure 6] (Figure 1.19). Its exterior corridor shares the functions of storage and food production. It had an unusual gate-like entry at the southwest corner of its fence-like enclosure. This gateway faced west onto the small court created by the juxtaposition of the domicile, bodega and kitchen (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 46-90). In total forty-one vessels, the majority
of which were used for food storage, were recovered from the front enclosure and west room of the superstructure. A stack of polychrome service wares was stored on a shelf in the east room. Food production activities that ranged from shelling corn to grinding on the metate to cooking on two nearby hearths took place outside the structure within the north enclosure (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 83). According to Sheets and Simmons' preliminary report the relatively high volume of foods, large numbers and sizes of storage and cooking vessels indicate food preparation was done on a large-scale in this area (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 83). More recently, Brown and Sheets (2000: 13-14) argued that structure 10 was designed to prepare food for feasts as well as the storage of festival paraphernalia.

Structure 12
The physical configuration and artifact distribution of Structure 12 is unlike any other structure uncovered thus far at Cerén (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 91-124)(Figure 1.20). In the composite, the artifacts of Structure 12 are notable not only for their nature and unusual distribution, but also for their extensive use wear. In many cases objects were broken or may even have been previously discarded and later retrieved. A concentration of eight small artifacts was possibly stored on
the lintel above the doorway (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 114). They included two spindle whorls, one small and one large used obsidian blade, a painted gourd, a greenstone disk, a cluster of ten tiny crystals common in the surrounding volcanic area of Cerén, and a piece of marine shell (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 114). Another group of small artifacts was found in the niche that was built into the bench immediately south of the North Room. These included: a few scattered beans, a ceramic ring, a human figurine painted black and red, the broken off head of an animal figurine painted white, a broken deer antler probably used as a corn husker [*tapiscador*] and a few pieces of broken shell (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 114-115). Five ceramic vessels were placed on the bench. Leaning against the south wall of the North Room almost below another niche built into its west wall in which was placed a painted gourd, was a large trough *metate* extensively used. A pot that contained maize kernels accompanied the *metate* but no *mano* was recovered nearby. Three ceramic vessels had been placed nearby on the floor at the northeast corner of the North Room. One of these contained beans and was ornamented around the neck of the vessel with a narrow band of matting possibly to facilitate suspension (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 116).
Artifacts found in the inner rooms were also unusual in placement. For example, three small vessels were placed on the floor of the East Room: near the door; the other two near the south end of the room. One of the latter of these was placed on top of four perforated olivella shells that were probably strung together with a string. A miniature *mano* was placed in the niche built into the wall of the room. The only other item in the room was a small pile of beans sitting on the floor. The West Room with the lattice window contained a single artifact, a large open bowl found in the southwest corner.

Sheets and Simmons offer two possible interpretations of function for Structure 12. On the one hand, the building functioned as a council house. This suggestion was primarily based on the latticework on Structure 12's front wall and to a lesser degree on the mat decorating the vessel found in the North Room. "If that latticework was constructed to depict the mat, the symbol of authority in southern Mesoamerica, then Str. 12 probably functioned as the council house" (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 120) used to store items of ceremonial function and as a meeting structure for community leaders (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 121). The second interpretation, amplified by Brown and Sheets (2000: 15), is that the structure was occupied by a shaman/curer. Tracy Sweely (1999) argues that
this shaman/curer was most likely a woman, considering the
gendered labours connected with the implements recovered from
this structure. They propose that the exchange of individual’s
belongings of high personal value, rather than intrinsic
value, for services rendered may account for the unusual
assemblage of artifact found within Structure 12 (Sheets and
Simmons 1993: 118).

Structure 5, the “workshop”
The ramada, Structure 5, had a thatched roof but no walls
(Sheets 1992: 56) (Figure 1.14-1.15). It was connected with
Structure 1, the domicile, by a walkway of stones. The density
of obsidian wastage suggested tool manufacture, a necessary
part of Maya household economy.

Household cluster 2
Several structures of Household 2 have also been excavated.
The bodega, Structure 7, and domicile, Structure 2, and a
sweat bath or temascal, Structure 9 (Sheets 1992: 97-102), as
well as some of the surrounding ground area have been
uncovered (Figure 1.21-1.22). The sweatbath (Figure 1.23)
itself and the area surrounding it were predictably free of
portable artifacts. Sweatbaths are common features of
contemporary highland Maya households. Taking a sauna can be
more than merely a way to become physically clean among Mesoamerican Indigenous Peoples; it often has medicinal and spiritual implications (Sullivan 1998). For example, in Aztec household complexes *temascales* were located in the designated women's areas where women would have used them during menstruation and childbirth (Evans 1991).

**Structure 3**

The best-constructed building excavated so far at Cerén is the large two-roomed Structure 3 that had an additional front porch covered by the roof thatch (Sheets 1992: 89-97)(Figure 1.24). The porch and adjacent area revealed a high frequency of foot traffic to and from this building. Benches were built in the front room creating a central passage to the large rear room. Four niches were built into the walls: two in the back wall, two in the front. Two pots and a deer bone spatula stored in one of the niches were the only artifacts recovered in the front room. A very large vessel used for the keeping and dispensing of liquid rested on the southern bench. The second polychrome vessel stored nearby was probably used as the dispenser of the liquid. The only other artifacts found in the entire building were a "donut stone" and another rock, both of undetermined use.
The disparity of architectural size, high incidence of use and artifact frequency [other structures had 50 times the density (Sheets 1992: 89)] led Sheets to suggest the building functioned as a men's communal house as the setting for deliberation and judgments, celebrated by the drinking of chicha [maize beer] took place (Sheets 1992: 97). However, the plan of the building is characteristic of the residential type structure that Becker considers a primary residence and Hendon calls the dominant structure. In comparison, the graffito scratched into the back wall of this structure (Sheets 1992: 96) is in a comparable location to examples found in dominant residences in the Petén and Rio Bec regions. Sheets' alternative interpretation is based on a larger framework in which Cerén is considered a commoner rural subsidiary to a larger elite centre known as San Andrés. Sheets therefore interpreted the structure in terms of small-scale or "tribal" political relations in contrast to the "elite" political relations that Hendon discusses for Copán. Some authors have disputed this model of ancient Maya society as a contrast of elites and commoners (McAnany 1995: 158-59; Cohodas 1996). On this basis, the absence of evidence for women's labour, so common in virtually all of the other structures uncovered so far [with the exception of the sweatbath], might suggest that Structure 3 functioned as a men's residence.
Segregation of male and female activities by structure

Household cluster 1 has been most fully excavated at Cerén although similar patterns of activities have been identified in all households. For example, food was stored in one place, prepared in another location, and consumed in yet another, and much of the movement of food from place to place was in the polychrome vessels. Gardens were found south of the bodegas containing agave [maguey] plants that would have supplied considerable fiber for twine and rope (Sheets 1992: 120). Manioc and maize crops, bromeliacia plants, and a cacao tree were also cultivated. Each household produced the majority of the goods utilized and consumed within. Some trading between immediate households seems likely.

The distinction of women’s and men’s working spaces accords with information on Aguateca. However, in contrast to the gendered separation of space according to rooms within a single structure, as in Aguateca’s House of the Scribe, no structure yet excavated at Cerén is there clear evidence of gendered division of space within the structure. In Instead we see the distinction of space by structure according to the activities carried out by men and women. Most structures contain multiple indications of women’s labour. Structures that may be associated specifically with male activities
include only the workshop [Structure 5] and the dominant Structure 3.

However, a more cautious and flexible viewpoint would take note of the evidence that at Cerén, as at all Classic Maya sites, there are structures and spaces where it is virtually impossible to designate function in terms of gender. Even with the material record as complete as it is at the site of Cerén the majority of activities that people carry out in their day-to-day existence are lost to the archaeological record.

The house societies model alerts us to such dynamic interrelationships and changes through time, as the use of spaces changes with the daily and seasonal cycles. Many individual actions—embedded in the complex social relations of the house society—that formed the archaeological record would have contradicted or modified the uses of space suggested by architectural forms. These actions remained unpredictable and to some extent unruly. One example might be the wall, a possible modification of Structure 10 that closed off the direct entrance to its front door and required access from the patio formed by the domicile, kitchen, and bodega.
Some aspects of the archaeological record that seem puzzling when viewed through conventional models are clarified by application of the House Society model. These include evidence for extended family [or multi-family] residence, as with the six metates in active use in household cluster 1 [four in the smaller patio group alone] suggesting more than one woman prepared corn in that household.

**Group 9N-8 in the Sepulturas District of Copán**

The residential area known as Sepulturas at the site of Copán in the Copán Valley of Honduras was excavated from 1981-1984 by the Proyecto Arqueológico Copán Fase II (PAC II) under the direction of William T. Sanders. Several residential groups in the Sepulturas district were excavated, ranging in size from the single-patio group 9M-24, to the large group 9N-8. Archaeological survey has identified 15 patios in Group 9N-8, but its original extent cannot be determined as a portion of the household has been washed away by the Copán River (Figure 1.25).

Unlike the structures of Aguateca and Cerén discussed above, residential groups in Sepulturas were not rapidly abandoned. However, what makes these remains extremely useful for this thesis is the careful analysis by Julia Hendon of remaining...
utensils and their distribution, suggesting functions both for the objects and the spaces in which they were found.

**Architectural arrangement and artifact distribution**

Patio A is the largest and by far the most formally arranged of the patios of 9N-8 (Figures 1.26-1.27). The largest and most elaborate building, House of the Bacabs [Structure 82], was the dominant residence of Patio A (Figure 1.28). The structure included three rooms, with flanking rooms opening to the side and the central room opening onto a broad terrace with a stairway leading into the formal courtyard. Not only was the façade decorated with sculpture, but the central room also features a large carved bench decorated on the front edge with an elaborate full-figure hieroglyphic inscription [dated to A.D. 780] that records a relationship between the head of Patio A household and the Copán ruler, Yax Pasah (Hendon 1987: 545). As at Aguateca and Cerén, these "administrative" rooms or domiciles, respectively, had fewer associated artifacts than other structures. What was present, however, indicated that these spaces were probably for meeting, sleeping, food consumption and ritual but not food preparation (Hendon 1991: 906-907). A small food preparation area was instead located below and behind dominant Structure 82 (Hendon 1987: 493-494).
Structure 82 sits at the center of a U-shaped platform arrangement on which are located the secondary residences of Patio A. Unlike the symmetrically planned and elaborately decorated Structure 82, secondary residences were generally asymmetrical in plan and either lacked façade decorations or had comparatively simple ones. In one of these secondary residences, Structure 81, ball game equipment (one "yoke" and two "hachas") was stored (Hendon 1987: 493). Adjoining Structure 81 is the only platform space not occupied by a masonry structure. This area was probably covered by a ramada, or open-sided perishable structure, since here were also found utensils associated with food preparation (1987: 492-493).

Finally, the north side of the patio is occupied by the ritual structure or shrine, Structure 80, which as expected rests on the highest superstructure.

The superior construction and greater decoration of all the structures in Patio A suggests a higher social rank for their occupants (Hendon 1987: 906). By contrast, overall the architecture of adjoining Patio E is less elaborate than Patios A with a higher preponderance of perishable materials used in the construction of the superstructures. Structure 97, the dominant building of Patio E, is the only vaulted
structure, and compares with the secondary residences of Patio A in its asymmetrical plan (Figure 1.27, 1.29).

In contrast to Patio A, which lacked any interior spaces for food preparation, this function was more widely distributed in Patio E, in various interior and exterior locations [patio, terrace, room] for most of the residential structures. Tools related to weaving [bone picks], spinning [spindle whorls], and sewing [bone needles] also occurred frequently in room and terrace contexts throughout this patio. Their distribution indicates that activities related to cloth production were equally widespread. By contrast only two bone picks were recovered within the rooms of Patio A (Hendon 1997: 43).

Figurines were found on or near small platforms attached to the front of residences in Patio E. While Hendon allocated a ritual function to figurines (Hendon 1987: 377-379), their typical association with areas of food and textile preparation, rather than with shrines, argues against such a function.

The smallest structure in Patio E is Structure 94, a platform built into the center of the courtyard. While there were no associated artifacts, Hendon suggests that it served a ritual
function, in part based on a similarity of placement [mid-patio] to shrines in Post-Classic households such as those at Mayapán, Yucatan (Hendon 1987: 202, 541).

Burials

The two forms of evidence that have been noted for women's presence at Aguateca were artifacts associated with women's labour [food preparation and textile production] and females in burials. David Webster (1989: 14) reports the high number of female burials in the residence 9N-8 at Copán. However, the privileged burials in tombs associated with the main Patio A and dominant Structure 82 were all of men, while most women's burials were secondary in construction, furnishing, and location (Hendon 1991: 909-10). Significantly, of the sexable burials [67 individuals] of Patios E and F only two were males (Webster 1998: 14). All the rest were females and children too young to allow adequate sexing (1998: 14). Additionally, a large quantity of human bone was found in midden (i.e. trash) contexts associated with Patios E and F.

Segregation of male and female activities by patio group

What is most significant concerning the comparison of Patios A and E is their pervasive and dramatic contrasts.
Patio A was clearly superior in scale, construction, and decorative elaboration. Most buildings in Patio A were vaulted, the only exceptions being the shrine [Structure 80] and one of the secondary residences [Structure 81], and several [including structure 81] featured sculptural decorations. In contrast, Patio E is smaller in scale, lower in elevation, and contains only a single vaulted structure and no evidence of sculptural decoration. Several structures in Patio E also contain raised platforms on the front terrace that were clearly workspaces.

Distribution of food preparation also differs. In Patio A, food preparation is limited to two exterior locations, whereas in Patio E this activity took place in several rooms and terraces and particularly on the raised platforms. Evidence of textile production is also abundant and widely distributed in Patio E but rare and restricted in Patio A. Figurines are also widely distributed in Patio E but absent in Patio A.

These differences argue for a gendered articulation of space at least partially analogous to those of Aguateca and Cerén. As in those sites, evidence of women's labour is clearest, and in Patio E the association of cooking and textile implements
accords with the preponderance of women and children among the recovered burials. Indeed, David Webster has argued that:

This extraordinary sexual imbalance suggests that these courtyards [Patios E and F] had very specialized functions, perhaps serving as residential zones for women and their offspring attached directly to courtyard A (1989: 14).

This evidence demonstrates both that gender was a crucial status determinant, and that status differences are in some cases explainable as gender difference. It further emphasizes the close relation between gender and labour that makes it not only possible but also advantageous to separate individuals into gender-based groups within multi- and extended-family households.

Hendon refutes this suggestion of gender segregation in her 1997 article "Women’s Work, Women’s Space, and Women’s Status Among the Classic-Period Maya Elite of the Copan Valley, Honduras." She argues that differences in the distribution of artifacts and burials as seen in Patios A and E "cannot be used to define a symbolically meaningful segregated ‘women’s space’" (Hendon 1997: 44). While I agree with Hendon that gendered segregation of space was not absolute in 9N-8, I disagree with her conclusion that institutions supporting social hierarchy based on gender existed at the polity level and not within the domestic sphere. Hendon’s interpretations
appear to be based on a nuclear family model that many have noted is inconsistent with archaeological evidence. As we have seen, in house societies the rights and needs of members were differentially invested and supported, constructing status differences among the various labours that contribute to the household economy and the spaces in which these labours were carried out, and thereby resulting in observable differences in individuals' status.

I suggest the definitions of space within 9N-8 were intimately related to social relations based on both conflict and cooperation. Thus, the spatial organization of the relations of production and redistribution would have taken many forms. While some activities involved the differentiation of male and female spaces others did not. So too the position of an individual within the house ranking system whether male or female may also have determined what labours were undertaken and where they were carried out. Thus, the presence of women [as evidence by bone picks for weaving] within the social spaces conceptualized as male arenas [Patio A of 9N-8] does not negate the possibility that gender segregation and hierarchy existed within 9N-8 during the Classic Period.

Differences in the organization of the relations of production
over space and through time must be taken into account in the analysis of ancient Maya household formation.

As Webster argued, Patios A and E thus form a functional unit, differentiated by gender and associated labours. This unit was replicated in Patios C and B of the same group 9N-8, and is analogous to the functional interrelation of the two patios in household cluster 1 at Cerén.

Not all status differences are explainable by gender, however. As noted, some people’s remains were literally thrown into the trash. Such persons were likely of very low status and outside the dominant kin group in the residence. They may have been members of serving families or perhaps slaves captured in raids, who contributed to the economy of the multi-family house society.

Also contributing to this multi-family household economy in Group 9N-8 were artisans, presumably male, who produced ornaments of shell and bone in the adjoining Patios D and H (Hendon 1991: 911). This is the only evidence of male labour that compares with evidence for artisanal activity recovered by Inomata at Aguateca. However, the large number of ceramic remains from the Lake Yojoa and Ulua Valley regions of Honduras that were found in the same patios might argue for
the presence of client families or groups (Noble 1989: personal communication to Cohodas).

**Comparison with Tikal, Guatemala**

While Inomata, Sweely, and Webster, as well as myself (1994; 1996) have all argued for a gendered division of space in particular Maya architectural contexts, this concept has not been recognized as a potential topic of inquiry for archaeological investigation. This absence is all the more remarkable for the ethnohistoric support compiled by Carmack for the great houses of the K'iche' kingdom occupied by heads of the four noble lineages in the pre-Hispanic capital of G'umarcaaj. Carmack reports that:

According to Fuentes y Guzman¹, the several compartments and divisions of the palace complex...were as follows: (1) quarters used for a militia, with patio for training, kitchens for preparing food, and rooms for manufacturing arms; (2) rooms occupied by the princes and close male relatives of the ruler, assisted by servants and slaves (other kitchens and gardens were connected to this section); (3) the residence of the ruler, with its associated court; (4) the two-storied residence hall of the wives of the ruler, with special rooms for cooking, weaving, mat making, and duck raising for feathers (there were sweatbaths in this section of the palace); (5) the residences of the 'princesses' and other female relatives of the ruling lineage (this section had a private passageway that led to one of the temple complexes). As

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¹During the 17th Century, Guatemalan creole Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán came in possession of a detailed map of Utatlán (G'umarcaaj) prepared by the Tamub K'iche' in the 16th Century. He visited Utatlán and described the buildings by combining information from the map with local Native traditions about their identity and functions (Carmack 1981: 9).
already noted, different sections of the palaces had shrines for carrying out private rituals (1981: 196).

These investigations at Aguateca, Copán, and Cerén also demonstrate that gendered division of space varies from different rooms in the same structure [Aguateca], to different structures around the same patio [Aguateca], to different patios [Cerén, Copán]. This differentiation of space may occur on even grander scale in the royal residential group of Tikal. The architectural complex called the Central Acropolis has been identified as the royal palace (Figures 1.30). In its latest stage of construction it consists of six patios or courts surrounded by range buildings of one, two or three stories. Peter Harrison's (1970: 278-280) extensive report on the excavation of this "palace" group confirms that the rooms and interior patios primarily function as a residence. Extraordinarily, during the major occupation in the late Classic period, materials consistent with food storage and preparation were totally lacking within the residential compound of the Central Acropolis and women's burials were restricted to a single structure (Harrison 1971: 299). Investigation has shown that, at the foot of the south face of the Central Acropolis that rests on the north edge of a deep ravine called the "Palace Reservoir", a terrace had been constructed supporting a large scale kitchen with six hearths.
and an extensive midden [Structure 5D-131](Harrison 1971: 303). It appears that women cooked for the large population [estimated at 200] of the Central Acropolis but it is not evident that women lived there. Where then did they live?

**Segregation of male and female activities by group**

A "dike" on the east end of the reservoir conveniently served as a walkway providing access between the Central Acropolis and the group of small buildings that lies on the south side of the ravine (Coe 1967: 72)(Figure 1.30). These buildings are arranged around three patios but include only a single vaulted structure. The relative scale and location of this group suggests that its occupants functioned as a service corps for the residents of the Central Acropolis, analogous to the relationship between Patios E and A in Group 9N-8 at Copán but here on the scale of group rather than patio. While the class [elite/commoner] model might suggest that the occupants of this secondary group were commoner families, and that the lack of evidence of women's labour on the Central Acropolis is due to the leisure of elite women (Kehoe 1993: 267), I would argue that the differences noted are better explained by gender segregation. Without excavation of this secondary group, it is impossible to support this contention, but I would note that although there is considerable evidence that the highest
ranking women also produced textiles, weaving implements were likewise absent from the Central Acropolis.

Conclusion

My concern in this chapter has been to examine the ways in which gender, knowledge and power are linked, to show how ideological discourse is produced within a given set of material conditions. In the preceding sections, I have been concerned to show that the construction and organization of ancient Maya residences took their forms from the social relations of its members. By linking the idea of space as an historically-specific form of representation with the house-society model of ancient Maya social organization, it has been possible to investigate the relative position of women. Women's lives and activities are crucial here for two reasons. First, the primary archaeological evidence for residence in any ancient Maya household consists of the tools of women's labour; evidence of men's labour is contrastingly rare. Second, the identification and interpretation of women's spaces relates specifically to the topic of this thesis. I will argue both that women produced Maya figurines and that these objects were integral to their activities of child-care and child rearing.
The segregation of women and men's social space would have been an important means of constructing notions of sexual and social difference. According to Bourdieu (1990:145), "the more the conditions of the production of dispositions resemble the conditions in which they function to produce ordinary practices, the more socially successful, and therefore unconscious, these practices will be". Such a view directly relates spatiality to the social and to power. The attempt to secure the establishment of boundaries through social practices, like food preparation, can in this sense be seen to be an attempt to stabilize the meaning of particular gendered identities. Moreover, the differential access to and use of various materials within the conceptual and physical spaces of the house also partially defined relations of gender hierarchy.

On this basis we need to ask: how did the individuals living within the differentially valued spaces of the residential compounds understand their social world? How did this knowledge establish meaning for bodily difference? Knowledge about the body, sexual difference, has been invoked and contested as part of many kinds of struggles for power.
We cannot escape the fact that the spaces identified as those of female labour and probable residence, when occurring in structures separate from those of men's labour and residence, are secondary in construction and elaboration. Gender hierarchy, while not the only form of gender relation applicable in this time and place, is nevertheless evident in the architectural disparity. Such inequality was ideologically supported through the "official" languages of patriliny and patrilocality that reiterated and perhaps even exaggerated the significance of such practices taking place within the domestic environment. The gender hierarchy that existed in ancient Maya society was also by necessity a relation of power. It is important to recall Foucault's (1972; 1977; 1979) revolutionary analyses of power relations and apply them to this new information on Maya household society.

Recall three points. First, that power circulates through all levels of society through myriad forms of interrelationship, within and between groups identified on the basis of age, gender, status, etc. Second, in order to refute a top-down model of domination, Foucault argued that power comes from below, demonstrating that all persons learn to internalize value systems and thereby enable the power relations that connect them with those both above and below. Clearly ancient
Maya women participated in a system that carried both advantages and disadvantages, in some cases differentiated according to their position in the course of their life [i.e. the contrast between a newly arrived bride and a respected matriarch]. As a result, women were also apparently ranked within their own hierarchies, as suggested by the presence of a dominant residential structure in Patio E of Group 9N-8 or the vaulted structure in the service group at Tikal. It may be argued that the organization of women’s labour occurred primarily through these relations of both heterarchy and hierarchy among women, rather than through imposition by men.

Finally, Foucault’s conceptualization of the workings of power as a continual process rather than an imposed constant allows for a possibility of shifts and changes in relations. Although I continue to offer “evidence” which suggests that the ancient Maya stressed the imposition of boundaries and the counter-position of one identity against another in the construction and definition of space within the household, I would like to offer an analysis that conceptualizes space and one’s place within it in terms of constantly shifting relations. Just as personal identities are argued to be multiple, shifting and possibly unbounded, so also, are the identities of place (Massey 1994: 70). The concept of place depends crucially on
the notion of articulation that recognizes difference and potential solidarities.

There are, of course, many ways to interpret a representation, and the organization of domestic space was only one representational form among many produced by the ancient Maya. To interpret one form of representation is always to read it in relation to others. Individuals and groups of men, women and children in negotiation over interests produced these varied forms of representations. Thus they often take a form of disputation; they contain contradictions, ambiguities and reinterpretations. The analysis of these varied representations must not only express and expose the complexity of ancient Maya society but must also interrogate the role that domestic politics played in the formation of identity.

What I am arguing is that interpretation of figurines relies on reading these objects in relation to the context of domestic space in which they were produced and consumed. Following the analysis of the archaeological record in reference to figurines in Chapter Two, in Chapter Three I will discuss the production of figurines as a representational medium through which struggles over gender relations within
the domestic environment were articulated, challenged, and, at times, perhaps completely renegotiated.
CHAPTER TWO: FRAMING THE FIGURINES

Chapter Two will discuss the production of different forms of figurines by Ancient Maya artisans, their archaeological recovery, and what archaeological and ethnohistoric sources have said about their function. I will argue that figurines primarily functioned as children's toys within a household context. I will also explore other possibilities of their use within the household such as gift offerings in a funerary context.

Part One: Household context of figurine use

Throughout the Maya area, as elsewhere in Mesoamerica, great quantities of ceramic figurines were produced for domestic use from the Pre-classic through the Post-classic period (Figure i). Mould-made figurine-whistles have been found within every Lowland Classic Maya site so far investigated, and probably within every residential unit excavated. These mould-made figurine-whistles have thus been recovered from household refuse, structural fill and from the floors of domestic structures. In addition, fragments of the figurine moulds were recovered in households at several sites in the Usumacinta region (Willey 1972: 72-74; Willey 1978: 9, 37), Lubaantun, Belize (Joyce 1933: Pl.X, 1), and Aguateca, Guatemala (Triadan 2001: 1). These common hollow figurine-whistles were rarely
placed in burials or caches and are seldom found in overt "ritual" contexts. Those figurines excavated from funerary contexts at Nebaj and Cancuén in Guatemala, Mayapán in Yucatán, Palenque, Chiapas and Jaina in Campeche, Mexico, are usually solid and partially hand-made instead. The conventional association of figurine-whistles with cooking and weaving implements demonstrates their direct connection with women. Several archaeologists have suggested (but not pursued) the possibility that figurine-whistles may have therefore functioned as toys (Rands and Rands 1965; Smith 1972; Tourtellot 1988b) and therefore entered into women's practices of childrearing in ancient Maya households. In this section I will briefly report on exceptionally well documented examples of conventional figurine locations within household space in Aguateca (Guatemala), Cerén (El Salvador) and Copán (Honduras), before turning to the secondary use of figurines in funerary contexts.

Aquateca

Takeshi Inomata, one of three archaeologists directing the Petexbatun Regional Archaeological Project from 1996 to 1999, claims in his 1995 dissertation that all figurines at Aguateca were found in Late Classic household contexts. Most appeared to be mould-made locally and of the same combination of light
orange paste with small temper of calcite or hematite that was used in the construction of Tinaja Red and Pantano Impressed jars produced at Aguateca. The latter were utilitarian wares designed for the storage of food and liquids (Inomata 1995: 548-549; Table 7.7), arguing against the conventional interpretation of figurines as specialized ritual objects. The quantity of figurines recovered and relatively common occurrence of moulds in excavated structures further suggested to Inomata that they were manufactured in numerous households on a small scale (Inomata 1995: 548-549). Figurine moulds were found not only in masonry structures but also in association with two low rectangular featureless platforms [K7-11, M8-19], remains that are normally associated with kitchens and storehouses [bodegas]. Although figurines made from these particular moulds were not found, Inomata suggested that figurines and/or whistles were manufactured in these "ancillary" structures or nearby (1995; 551). Additionally, several full-body figurines made from the same mould were found in both singular (Figures 1.1-1.12) and separate households in close proximity to each other (Inomata 1995: 732).

1 Rands and Rands (1965) also suggest that at Palenque, "both figurines and moulds occur in the same paste as apparently indigenous pottery, indicating a place of manufacture at or near the site" (554). So too Willey (1972) suggests local manufacture at Altar de Sacrificios where "presumably the same range of pastes and tempers is to be found in the figurines as in the contemporaneous pottery" (14).
Excavations in most households at Aguateca revealed an assortment of figurine imagery including both warriors (Figure 2.1) [the most common male representation] and women, many seated, with stepped coif and a double-strand pendant necklace. Of the structures excavated at Aguateca, Structure M8-10, the "House of the Scribes," is the most fully published to date.

The majority of the 32 figurines from structure M8-10 were recovered from the small rooms added to the north and south of the earlier structure [Figure 1.5]. Inomata (1995) has argued these were the same spaces that women carried out the activities of textile manufacture, food storage and preparation. There were also two figurines recovered from those designated by Inomata as men's spaces. The point that I would like to stress here is that the floor assemblage of the House of the Scribes demonstrates that the context for the use of figurines was domestic and closely associated with the women's work areas. Furthermore, the quantity of figurines [far greater than the excavated burial remains] suggests that figurines were used in multiples.

The fact that figurines in Mesoamerica are found with tools of women’s labour and thus were associated with women is well
recognized (Marcus 1998; Tourtellot 1988; Smith 1978; Willey 1972; Rands and Rands 1965). This recognition has led Joyce Marcus (1988) in her publication Women’s Ritual in Formative Oaxaca: Figurine-making, Divination, Death and the Ancestors to conclude that figurines functioned specifically as women’s ritual objects. However, evidence of ritual use of figurines at Aguateca is negligible. I would argue that since the fragment of a figurine found in a child’s burial in the south room of M8-10 was already broken, that its use predated the burial and thus cannot be demonstrated as primarily ritual in function.

However, excavation of structure M8-17 (Figure 1.2) prompted Inomata to suggest figurines may have functioned as ritual objects (1995: 550-551). Indeed, M8-17’s architectural arrangement with three rooms back to front is typical of those designated as temples at Tikal (Inomata 1995: 195). Stingray spines and a possible incense burner were recovered from the interior of this structure that further suggested to Inomata that the building functioned as a “shrine.” However, ceramic sculpture fragments found within this structure appear to be appliquéd parts of incensarios. Figurines were indeed found behind Structure M8-17 on a low platform that functioned as a kitchen with a nearby midden (Inomata 1995: 194). The dense
material recovered from this locus of excavation included grinding stones, storage vessels and as suggested by Figures 7.14, 7.4, 7.15 an abundance of figurines (Inomata 1995: 626-627). It is difficult to tell from the data provided by Inomata’s dissertation if figurines were also recovered from the front terrace of M8-17. Therefore, the available evidence for association of figurines specifically with shrine architecture and therefore ritual function is inconclusive.

That figurine toys [1 animal, 1 warrior] were also found within the “administrative” room of M8-10 associated with male activity does not argue against their association with children’s play. Rather, it serves to substantiate ethnohistoric and ethnographic accounts of Maya men’s active engagement in the care of children.

Cerén

As at Aguateca, figurines were found in situ at Cerén due to its rapid abandonment during a volcanic eruption around A.D. 600. Although the number of figurines recovered from Cerén is not large [eight in total thus far] they were, as expected, associated with women’s food preparation (Figures 1.14-1.24). In Structure 1 of Household 1 a broken human figurine head was stored on a rafter over-hanging an exterior maize grinding
area (Sheets 1992: 39-46)(Figure 1.16). A second was found resting on top of a metate that was mounted on horquetas on the east side of the building (Simmons 1996: 270). The other four figurines of Household 1 were all fragments found on the ground surface to the west of the domicile porch apparently discarded (Simmons 1996: 270). Two figurines—a human painted black and red, and the broken head of an animal figurine painted white—were recovered from the niche under the bench in the North Room of Structure 12 (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 114-115)(Figure 1.20). The presence of a mano and metate, service wares and ceramics for food storage suggested to Sheets and Simmons the presence of female activity (Sheets and Simmons 1993: 114-115). While these are standard contexts of female labour, one other find might argue for a specific association with children's activities: the miniature pot and 20 "counters" found on the porch of structure 1 adjacent to a food preparation area (Sheets 1992: 44)(Figure 1.16).

On this same porch, in association with the miniature pot and "counters," as well as a spindle whorl, was recovered a lump of clay (Sheets 1992: 44; Simmons 1996: 137-145). Analysis of this clay revealed that both the mineral and major oxide composition of the sample was most similar to Guazapa Scraped Slip ware, a utilitarian form of ceramic possibly manufactured
and used in Household 1 (Simmons 1996: 139). That the lump of clay was located on the porch where children’s playthings were located and next to a women’s textile production area suggests that women may also have made the household’s utilitarian ceramics, as they do in the Maya highlands today. This association, combined with the use of the same clay body for figurines and utilitarian ceramics at Aguateca, suggest that women made the figurines as well. Analysis of the paste composing the figurines of Cerén was not available. However, ethnographers working in the Yucatán have observed that even when ceramic production was favoured as a male occupation the women of the village produced the figurine-whistles and figurine-rattles (Thompson 1958: 136). Thus, an important working hypothesis for my thesis is that figurines, through their production and interpretation, functioned as a woman’s visual discourse.

Copán
Both imported and locally manufactured figurines were recovered at Copan (Hendon 1987: 379). Solid hand-made and hollow mould-made figurines and whistles resembling types diagnostic of the Ulua Valley, Central Honduras around Lake Yojoa, and those typical of Lowland Maya styles were both found. Based on macroscopic inspection, Hendon notes that the
majority of figurines, those hand built that usually took an animal form (81.4%), were made locally of the same paste as Surlo plain wares, while those mould-made were imported (Hendon 1987: 378-380). Jointed figurines and pendants were also found in the usual contexts in buildings, on terraces and in midden deposits. Figurines were found in widespread household context in Patio E of 9N-8. This was the patio most closely associated with food preparation that also had the highest percentage of women and children's burials. There were no figurines recovered from "dominant" Patio A.

Figurines from Group 9N-8 were unequivocally assigned a solely ritual function by Hendon in her (1991: 909) publication. A more cautious allocation is offered in her dissertation.

Some burials included whistles in their offerings. In a few cases, figurines or whistles were found in situ on terrace or room surfaces suggesting their presence in the buildings. The associated material does not indicate manufacture or active use of any kind. In short, although it is apparent that these items were available and in circulation, their precise purpose is uncertain. However, the burial data suggest their importance and possible ritual significance (1987: 379).

Figurines are located on the terraces and in rooms where food preparation and storage took place. Those were the spaces most likely used by women and children as burial evidence corroborates. That figurines were also found in burials of children and adults suggests to me that children participated
in funerary activities as should be expected given their location within the floors of rooms, terraces and patios of ancient Maya households. I will discuss this possibility further in the section on secondary use of figurines.

I suggest further that Hendon’s interpretation of figurines as ritual objects seriously limits our understanding of the functions of production, sharing and redistribution of goods, including exchanges between households and communities and the transmissions of information, knowledge and materials. In considering the possibility that figurines functioned as children’s toys I find it interesting that a percentage of the figurines recovered in 9N-8 at Copán were imported from outside the Maya region (Figure 2.51). Might this suggest that trade networks specific to women’s industry of weaving, cooking and childcare existed? Certainly the trade of cotton from the lowlands to the highlands as well as a variety of pigments and dyes specific to women’s industry of textile production was undertaken. In addition to the exchange of products there were exchanges of knowledge specific to women’s lives. Cooking technologies, such as the making of tortillas, as evidenced by the introduction of the comal for their cooking disseminated from the southern boundary of the Maya region during the late Classic period.
That figurines are still understood within an entrenched ritual framework is evident not only from Hendon's work on Copan but also from recent publications on the "royal court complex" of Calakmul, Campeche. William J. Folan, Joel D. Gunn, and María del Rosario Domínguez Carrasco demonstrate a consistent presence of figurines from the Classic through the Terminal Classic period (2001: 245). Figurines are abundant on the stairs, terraces, and rooms of the large pyramidal Structure II and on the terraces and in rooms of "Dynastic Palace" Structure III, areas that also included abundant evidence of food preparation. However, the authors assume a ritual use of the figurines and therefore argue that the spaces where figurines were abundant were specialized ritual spaces, citing as evidence that Structure III held "ancestral" burials in some rooms (Folan, Gunn and Carrasco 2001: 239). They suggest that like the figurine whistles produced for various religious festivals in the Campeche area today [see below] figurines were so used by the ancient Maya. However, the evidence from Aguateca, Cerén and Copán, as well as many other sites, argues against separating women's work areas from spaces of figurine usage.
**Whistles**

That additional time and materials were spent in order to create a whistle rather than a figure alone suggests the function of mould-made figurines as noisemakers was important. The majority of figurine-whistles played one or two notes although ocarinas [the addition of stops permits the production of additional notes] were also produced at most sites (Figure 2.18). While a simple tune could be produced with an ocarina I suggest that most figurines functioned as simple noisemakers and not musical instruments. Flutes were produced of clay for that purpose in the Puuc (Rands and Rands 1965: 554) and at Aguateca, Guatemala (Inomata 1995: Fig. 8.3) where three were found in the “administrative room” of Structure M8-10 and one, along with the majority of figurines, in the north addition or kitchen. Six clay drums were also recovered from M8-10 that suggests the inhabitants engaged in the making of music (Figure 1.5).

Ethnographic sources offer some possibilities for use of ancient Maya figurine-whistles. Silvia Rendón recorded that men working in the fields used whistles for calling each other (1948a). Pendant figurine forms were common at Lagartero (Ekholm 1985), evident at Altar de Sacrificios (Willey 1972: 50) Piedras Negras (Schlosser 1978: 166), Copán (Hendon 1987: 50).
379) and Zaculeu (Rands 1965: 159). I could also imagine pendant whistles served as a means of communication between children and their caregivers in Prehispanic times.

Several authors have viewed whistle-figurine function within the ritual framework. Ancient Maya figurines have commonly been interpreted as having functioned in a spiritual or ritual capacity (Schlosser 1978; Goldstein 1979; Sears 2000; Triadan 2001). Assumptions have ranged from shamanic connection with the supernatural as ancestral spirit helpers to guardians of disease in curing rites. Indeed such practices are recorded in ethnohistoric and ethnographic documents but their connection with figurines is dubious.

Sixteenth century sources mention clay and wooden "idols."
These objects are described by Fray Landa as playing a role in birth-giving, curing and burial ceremonies (Tozzer 1941: 153-154) and in the festival dedicated to Ix Chel, the Post-classic Yucatan Maya moon goddess, deity of childbirth, medicine and divination. Landa (or his informant) claims that:

...the physicians and the sorcerers assembled in one of their houses with their wives, and the priests drove away the evil spirit. Which being done they opened the bundles of their medicine, in which they kept many little trifles, each having his own little idols of the goddess of medicine whom they called Ix Chel. And so they called the festival Incil Ix Chel (153).
Furthermore, a "sorceress" placed a figurine representing Ix Chel under the bed of a woman giving birth, and "idols" were placed beside the dead in burials (Roys 1967: 667). However, Landa failed to give a clear description of these wood, stone, and clay "idols," or "statues of the demons," which are more likely to have resembled incensarios than figurines (Figures 2.11-2.12).

In his ethnographic study of Yucatecan Maya pottery making Raymond Thompson observed that the production of whistles was greatest just before important fiestas and especially in the fall in preparation for the All Souls' Day and All Saints' Day celebrations when they served as both offerings to be placed on graves and as playthings and noisemakers for children (1958: 136). In Calkini, Campeche, small anthropomorphic and zoomorphic whistles, ocarinas and flutes are given to children to blow during Chac Chac and Catholic Semana Santa ceremonies to petition for rain (Folan, Gunn and Carrasco 2001: 245). Similar practices take place on the Day of the Dead in Calkini, and Ticul, Yucatán (Folan, Gunn and Carrasco 2001: 246). The whistles and other instruments in Calkini are discarded after breakage and new ones acquired, and at Ticul they are also discarded (Folan, Gunn and Carrasco 2001: 246). Beyond the potential ritual functions, this ethnographic
evidence supports a strong association between figurines and children that accords with their recovery in Classic Period contexts in association with implements of women’s labour. This association has been understood to mean they were used by women, and specifically for women’s ritual as Marcus postulates. That children have not been seriously considered as the primary users of these figurines is further evidence of the well-documented disappearance of children from archaeological reconstructions of ancient lifestyle (Moore and Scott 1997).

Figurine-whistles may have been produced for children’s use during important festivals in ancient times as well. Participation in festival activities and other celebratory events may have served to unite communities by providing individuals with collective experiences and identity. Whistle-figurines of birds and animals, or supernaturals (Figure 2.50) given to children at such festival events may have encouraged participation thereby reinforcing a sense of community belonging; they may also have served as mementoes of attendance. However, unlike the ethnographic examples of ritual use, Classic Maya figurines continued to be used after breakage even though they no longer functioned as whistles and despite presumed inappropriateness for ritual in this damaged
condition. This would suggest that the use to which children put figurines is more general, mundane, or everyday than a specific ritual function would allow. The most parsimonious explanation for this consistent set of archaeological evidence is that figurines primarily functioned as children's toys in a manner somewhat analogous to present use of dolls.

**Part Two: Funerary contexts**

Support for the interpretation of figurines as ritual objects has also derived from their occasional recovery from funerary contexts. During the Classic period it was common practice for the dead to be buried within the residential group, under the stairs or floors of rooms, terraces or patios, and in benches. In more elaborate residential groups special shrine structures were constructed for funerary use and ancestral homage. At Tikal these often took the form of a square pyramidal platform topped by a single-roomed superstructure located on the east side of the primary patio of the residential complex (Becker 1979). These shrines represented the ongoing presence of formerly living members of the patri-lineage that possibly lived on the house platforms (McAnany 1995). In discussing the significance of ancestral platforms in house societies, Rosemary Joyce clarifies that although the land itself holds the names and titles that make up house identity, it is the
dwelling platform, where the ancestral spirits remain, that physically marks the association of the members with this land (2000a: 192). Thus funerary practices literally linked the deceased to the physical household or "soil" and created an eternal bond of blood with surviving members. The deceased retain their individuality and influence on the lives of surviving household members, sharing food as offerings on ritual occasions.

Examining some of the occasional finds of figurines in burials supports Gillespie's thesis of a living connection between deceased and surviving household members. We find, for one thing, that those burials containing figurines are frequently children. For example, A. Ledyard Smith and Alfred V. Kidder carried out an excavation at Nebaj during the field seasons of 1946 and 1947 for the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Ten tombs and five burials were excavated in Mound 1 and 2 of the principal Group A of the site. Figurines were included in the furnishings of Tomb IV and Burial 1 of Mound 2. Tomb IV, vaulted and stone-lined, contained seven individuals (Smith and Kidder 1951: 24-25)(Figure 2.2). The main personage was an adult [B] surrounded by one other adult [C], two young adults [E, F] and three young children [A, D, F]. The remainder of the burial furnishings included ceramic vessels and objects,
costume ornaments, jade, amazonite and shell jewelry, quail bones and several pyrite encrusted plaques or mirrors. A lancet was associated with the principle male burial in Tomb IV: often in high status male burials, bloodletting paraphernalia was placed near the genitals of the deceased. For example, a mould-made figurine representing a standing male holding a rattle in each hand and wearing an elaborate headdress [87,e] was placed near child known as individual D (Figure 2.3).

Burial 1 of Mound 2 contained the remains of a single individual—a child (Figure 2.4). A figurine representing a seated male was placed with this child, combining a mould-made head and elaborate headdress with a hand-modeled body [87,a] (Figure 2.5). Other furnishings include a brown bowl, small vessel or cup elaborated with a handle and modeled human face on the opposite side [74,q], and a plaque or pyrite mirror (Smith and Kidder 1951: 26). Available excavation data from Classic period Nebaj not only affirms the close association between children and figurines but also suggests that this association was not terminated with the child’s death.

Recent excavations at the site of Cancuén, Guatemala [1999-2000] have recovered some figurines from Structure D-1 of
Group D (just south of the administrative or ceremonial centre [Group C] of Cancuén) (Sears 2000). The mound supported the single-room perishable Structure D-1 (personal communication Kovacevich 2002). Burial 2/7 was located on the central north/south axis of a large earthen mound surrounded by a stone retaining wall (personal communication Kovacevich 2002). This burial contained the remains of a 5-8 year old child (personal communication Kovacevich 2002) along with three ceramic vessels and four complete and one partial figurine, which together essentially encircled the burial (Sears 2000: 18)(Figures 2.6-2.10). All five of these figurines were at least partially mould-made with appliqué additions, and all five represented male individuals (Sears 2000: Fig.16-20). Two were mould-made whistles [CANF 465, 468], while the other three combined mould- and hand modeling [CANF 464, 465, 468]. Of these latter three, CANF 464 was completely hand built except for its face, and CANF 467 was a mould-made fragment of a head.

Two of the four complete figurines represented standing warriors. CANF 466 wears a long shirt-like garment over loincloth [maxtlatl] and removable mask-headdress of a jaguar (Figure 2.7). He holds a circular shield in his right hand. CANF 465 holds a large rectangular shield on his left arm and
a mace [macahuitl] in his right hand (Figure 2.8). He also wears an unusual conical headdress, scarf and fringed vest [xicolli]. A third standing figurine wearing a scarf, fringed vest [xicolli] and removable “ten-gallon” hat would have held an object now lost in his raised arms (Figure 2.6). The ballplayer figurine, CANF 468, holds onto the protective yoke around his waist (Figure 2.9). He wears a loincloth tucked into his yoke, over which is worn a belt [faja] and a kilt. He also wears a protective kneepad and an elaborate bird headdress. The fifth, CANF 467, was a partial figurine of a head with deer headdress [generally associated with the ballgame, hunting and warfare, all male activities](Figure 2.10).

Clearly the arrangement of figurines surrounding the body is not accidental. Sears suggests that the ballplayer and warrior figurines placed near the body of the child “...assist[ed] the deceased in passing into the underworld by taking on particular roles of transformation...” (2000: 19). Sears’ coherent narrative interpretation of the figurines’ subject matters and arrangement within the burial fails to fully consider the social context of the funerary event. It ignores evidence of prior use: one of the figurines was a broken fragment while all the others show usage wear. That the
combination of techniques suggests they were not specifically made for the burial, or even as a coherent group, but were instead re-used in an ad hoc fashion. Arjun Appadurai has demonstrated that material objects have "life histories" dependent on the complex intersection of temporal, social factors (1986: 15). Interpretation of human activity marked by material objects is always problematic especially when the occurrence is unusual as it was in the case of this particular burial at Cancuén. Perhaps the relation between the objects, their arrangement and the deceased was spontaneous or held a particular meaning only for the participants at the funerary event.

The city of Mayapán is located some 40 kilometres southeast of Mérida, the capital of Yucatán, Mexico (Figure i). There is probably no ancient Maya city that is more frequently mentioned in the native literature and early Spanish writings of Yucatán than Mayapán. According to one colonial chronicler, Fray Antonio de Ciudad Real, Mayapán was the seat of what was apparently a centralized government exerting control over much of northern Yucatán. American archaeological interest in the walled city of Mayapán has been continuous from the nineteenth-century. The Department of Archaeology of Carnegie Institution of Washington mapped and excavated the site under
Institution of Washington mapped and excavated the site under the direction of H.E.D. Pollock from 1949 to 1955. In the following discussion of figurines placed within a funerary context at Mayapán I rely on A. Ledyard Smith’s publication of the burials located in the residential and associated structures (1962: Part 3, 166-319).

As at all other Maya sites, figurines were ubiquitous within residential structures at Mayapán (Smith 1962). Burials at Mayapán were excavated under the floor of residential rooms and terraces, within oratories, shrines or platforms located within the courtyard or under the floor of the court (Smith 1962: 251). It was not the custom to bury people under the back rooms of dwellings that were generally used for sleeping (Smith 1962: 251). Most of the burials were multiple (Smith 1962: 252). However, in many burials the skeletal remains had been disturbed possibly to accommodate additional burials and were in poor condition making it impossible to make a determination of age, sex or original position of the bodies (Smith 1962: 252). Furniture found in graves associated with dwellings at Mayapán was generally sparse and consisted of utilitarian household objects that showed usage or were even broken such as: spindle whorls, chipped flint or obsidian blades, manos, smoothing stones, choppers, ceramic cups or
bowls, figurine-whistles, effigy censers and objects of personal adornment like beads (Smith 1962: 253).

In contrast to the more generalized offerings of ceramic censers and food vessels found with the remains of persons of different age and sex, figurines are particularly associated with children's burials. Of the 40 burials excavated by the Carnegie Institution of Washington project, 10 included figurines in the furnishings. Of the 10 burials containing figurines, 7 included at least one child or young adult [Bu. 3, 4, 15, 17, 25, 26, 35, 38, 39]. The skeletal material in the remaining three burials containing figurines [Bu. 4, 17, 32] was in such poor condition that age and sex were impossible to determine. Burials 5, 7, 28, 31 and 36 all contained children but not figurines or other recognizable toys.

Burial 15 was located under the central bench of the front room of residential Structure Q-62. The irregularly shaped stone-lined cist contained the remains of three children. Included in the burial was a fragment of copper, 2 small effigy censers, 2 ceramic cups, one of which was spiked, 4 small shells, 3 fragments of obsidian blades, 22 shell beads and various pot sherds. The 7 whistle-figurines recovered from
this burial included an iguana, two jaguars, a dove, a woman, a monkey head, and a bird-head. A. Ledyard Smith suggested that much of the furniture with the children's remains was in the nature of toys (1962: 237). Burial 25 held the remains of four children, along with the 3 mould-made figurines, one of which is a whistle in the form of a spider monkey. Articulated figurines often called "dolls" were included with the children of Burial 35 and the adolescent of Burial 38.

By contrast, exclusively adult burials did not contain figurines although many of them were furnished with effigy censers. 510 of the 795 sherds found in Burial 10 of an adult male were of censers (Smith 1962: 235) as were 1059 of 1876 in Burial 16 containing three adult skeletons (Smith 1962: 257). However, child burials also included effigy censers. Burial 25, mentioned above, included not only the three figurines but also 3 pottery vessels with effigy faces, 5 copper bells attached to each ankle of the infant by a cotton band and some 1800 censer fragments piled "indiscriminately" above the remains (Smith 1962: 240). Two types of late Post-classic period effigy censers from Mayapán were common (Figures 2.11-2.12). Those described as Chen Mul Modelado represent frogs, turtles, birds, people, and deities in different positions. Often a human head emerges from the mouth of a fantastic being
part lizard or alligator and part turtle or shell (Proskouriakoff 1962: fig.1-5; Schmidt 1998: Cat. 302-303). This deity may be a late representation of God N or Pahuatun who is characterized by the carapace of a turtle that he sometimes wears in Classic Maya imagery (Schele and Miller 1986: 54). The other characteristic censer from Mayapán was a cylindrical vessel censer with an effigy attached to the front. These effigy censers were made by assembling different mould-made body parts then hand modelling other traits or attributes to identify them as a particular deity. They were then painted in two colours: blue and reddish brown. Apart from burials, effigy censers were most often found near domestic shrines of large houses, or near altars in shrines in the ceremonial centre of the city or with those buildings designated as having a religious purpose such as colonnaded halls (Proskouriakoff 1962: 331).

Not all figurines found in ancient Maya burial contexts are limited to the graves of children. Once again the archaeological record suggests a strong association between women and figurines. According to Ángeles Flores Jiménez (2000: 45) on the few occasions that figurines were included in funerary offerings at Palenque they were placed in women's burials. For example, a group of super-fine solid hand-
modelled figurines were included as burial furnishings in the tomb of two women in the residential court known as Group B (López Bravo 2000: 40-41)(Figures 2.13-2.16). Under the floor of the central room of Building 3, facing onto the main patio of Group B, two adult females were interred on stone slabs supported by pedestals to form a long bench. A single flat-bottomed bowl rested on the north bench. Six other bowls of various shapes, a lidded cache vessel containing a piece of "meteorite," and five hand-modelled figurines were placed on the floor below the two benches on which the women lie.

All five figurines were seated with legs crossed in front of the body. The most elaborate figurine was seated on a bench and wore a removable avian mask identified by Schele as an oscillated turkey (1997: 91) (Figure 2.15). Three other figurines of similar size are represented in an identical posture with the left hand touching the right forearm. A fifth figurine is smaller and different in style. López Bravo (2000: 41) identifies this figure as a female based on fitted jacket, large collar and toque-like hat. However, another Palenque figurine, wearing a similar fitted jacket, is identified as a male deity (Ángeles Flores Jiménez 2000:44), and several others with the same headgear are identified as male (Ángeles Flores Jiménez 2000: 44-45, 48). Unfortunately, the area where
a loincloth would have occurred on a male figure is broken on the fifth figurine in Tomb 1 so a final determination cannot be made.

It is interesting that material associated with domestic activities was recovered from all structures of Group B (López Bravo 2000: 41). Furthermore, the patio group called Group B appears to be the lower court of a possibly much larger group, of which the major portion is known as the Bat Group or Los Murciélagos (Figure 2.15). Building 1 bounding the west of the Group B court included a steam bath (Ángeles Flores Jiménez 2000: 41), a facility directly connected with women's usage (Evans 1991: 88-89). Perhaps Group B, like Patio E of Group 9N-8 in Sepulturas, Copán, served as a space of women's activity adjoining a larger court associated with men's activity. The single vaulted structure in Patio E of Group 9N-8 appears to have served as the dominant residence, perhaps of this household's matriarch. Similarly, Building 3 of Palenque's Group B may have been a matriarchal residence, judging from the building of its most elaborate tomb for the remains of women. Their social importance, as ancestors as well as when they were "alive," is further demonstrated by the elaborate, hand-modelled incense burners with figurative sculptures [both males wearing elaborate masks and
headdresses] that were found in caches below the central doorway and the entry to the sanctuary-like niche of the room over the tomb.

Did these unusually elaborate figurines found in the women’s tomb in Group B function more like small decorative sculptures used for display purposes by adults rather than dolls or whistles to be played with by children? The materials, time and creativity that went into their manufacture suggest a higher value was placed on these objects than the common whistle-figurines. Were the participants of the funerary events negotiating their social positions within the house structure of Group B through the production and presentation of these objects? Were the women interred in Tomb 1 ennobled or transformed into revered ancestors partially through the offering of such “valuable” gifts? Were these objects made by one of the deceased women close to the time of her death and thus buried with her? Or perhaps it was customary for women to give figurines as gifts to other women. It is important to examine many possible explanations and to avoid fastening on a single one without sufficient evidence.

Clearly gifts of figurines and other objects were more than tokens of respect or remembrance when offered by participants
of ancient Maya funerary events. Those who were to inherit the material and non-material resources left by the deceased member of the community needed to be determined in order to maintain the household estate from one generation to the next (McAnany 1995: 113; Gillespie 2000: 14-21). Participants in these funerary events would have partly reaffirmed or re-negotiated their affiliation and allegiance to the house through the gifting of objects and other ritual performances. Children as members of the house would have necessarily participated in these events. Indeed, attendance and participation at these events may have been the performance of expected duties related to deceased members of the house (Joyce 2000: 192) as well as invited guests.

Similarly the elaboration and possibly the duration of funerary events and the presentation of gifts [including figurines] by household members and guests alike increased the reputation of the house. In this context the presentation of funerary offerings [whatever their previous use] may have been a means of increasing house members' social capital. Participants may have visually articulated their social or economic status through the rarity and/or elaboration of the offerings. In the negotiation of status in ancient Maya society, the control of material and non-material goods would
have served as validations of each other. Material displays at funerary events may have been evidence of the rights to the immaterial property claimed through such display (Joyce 2000: 211-212). Participants in funerary events might even have made economic sacrifices in order to gain social capital in the presentation of luxury or exotic items of shell, bone and jade or fancy ceramics.

The presentation of goods at funerary events may also have participated in the negotiation of gender relations. Women’s products of food, textile [and presumably basketry] were essential items in funerary assemblages as they were in tribute payments and feast preparations. This is an important point. While ancient Maya narratives of patrilineal descent were clearly integral to the social identity of the house they did not entirely produce it. The corporate identity of the house was derived from the collective labours of its members that generated house wealth partially through domestic activities that defined it as an economic unit (Marshall 2000: 74). For the ancient Maya, women’s domestic products placed within the burial would have acknowledged the quotidian activities that related directly to household maintenance and symbolic definition as a house society. In contrast to the valuable objects brought to the funeral as gifts, the majority
of objects placed with the deceased are thus utilitarian, domestic products which archaeological evidence suggests were produced by members living within the same household (Inomata 2001; Hendon 1987). That mould-made figurines found in burials were made and used within the household, and elaborate handmade figurines were brought as gifts, makes more sense within the context of such assemblages than singling out figurines as designed specifically for "ritual" use.

A specialised practice at Jaina

Only on the island of Jaina did the practice develop of systematically placing figurines in burials of both male and female adults as well as children. The majority of figurines produced at Jaina were in the large part hand modelled [with mould-made additions], comparable to the figurines placed with deceased women in Group B at Palenque (Figure 2.17). Although the reason this practice developed cannot be ascertained with certainty, it may have been through a trading connection with other communities along the Gulf Coast of Tabasco and Veracruz, where ceramic sculptures of human and animal figures were standard tomb furnishings.

The residents of Jaina built a central plaza with a tall pyramidal platform at each end and residential or
administrative platforms at the sides by carrying in stone and calcareous earth [saḥcab] from the mainland (Piña Chan 1998: 387). The dwellings of the surrounding lower status residential area were constructed of the more readily available products of wood, mud and thatch. By far the majority of burials were located in the lower status residential area (Piña Chan 1998: 387). Archaeologists for the Mexican Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia [INAH] have excavated sporadically from 1940 to 1975: one hundred and fifty burials were exposed during Moedano’s work in 1941-42; Piña Chan (1948) reported seventy-six burials from his 1947 season on Jaina; Cook de Leonard (1959) reported four hundred burials were opened in 1957; and Sergio López and Carlos Serrano excavated another eighty-nine burials for INAH in 1973-74. An uncounted number of burials opened by looters must be added to these excavations (Mansilla etc. 1990: 395). The majority of the thousands of figurines in the private and public museums of Mexico and the United States of America are from Jaina institutional and unauthorized excavation (Goldstein 1979: 22).

Many kinds of funerary offerings were found in burials at Jaina, including various ceramic vessels, jewelry of shell, bone, stone and clay, feathers, bird and animal bones, manos
and metates, and implements of imported obsidian, pyrite, jadeite and serpentine (Goldstein 1978: 23). These are standard funerary furnishings for much of the Lowland Maya area in the Classic Period. In contrast, two features of Jaina burials are unusual. First, in nearly every instance, a tripod ceramic bowl was inverted over the head of the deceased. Second, and of most concern to this thesis, was the common practice of placing one to four ceramic figurines in their folded arms (Piña Chan 1998: 387).

A recent study by Mansilla et al (1990) of eighty-nine Jaina burials excavated during the seasons of 1973 and 1974 has shown that 86% were furnished with locally produced material including forty-five figurines. Like the figurines occasionally placed in burials at Palenque, many of the Jaina figurines were entirely or partially hand-modeled. Of the figurines placed in female burials, 75% were gendered male. Only one female figurine was recovered from a female burial and a single animal figurine was found in another. Represented in male burials without perceptible difference were both male and female figurines. Sixty-five percent of children’s burials were furnished with figurines gendered female. Another 34% were male and zoomorphic. A single child’s burial contained a male/female couple. The majority of animal figurines were
associated with children's burials. The zoomorphic figurine recovered from a female burial was the single exception. Similarly children's burials contained the majority of figurines that functioned as rattles or whistles. A few were found in female burials. No whistles or rattles were placed in male burials (Mansilla et al 1990: 401).

Clearly gendered relationships were represented through the placement of figurines in Jaina burials. Almost exclusively male figurines accompanied females while both males and females surrounded men. Children held women and animal rattles and whistles in their arms. On occasion male figurines would accompany these. These conventions beg explanation. One possible interpretation based on the supposition that figurines stood in for persons and their everyday relations is that the burial arrangement was possibly a representation of kinship that privileged the heterosexual family and larger patronymic group. Variation in numbers and types of figurine offerings would have expressed both "fictive" and real relations between individuals. If this were so, then what appeared in a funerary context may have repeated and mimed the legitimating norms of house membership. The placing of figurines in a male's burial may have represented his relations with both the male and female members of the
“family”. They may also have symbolically represented the mating of male and female that assured his successful rebirth. Whereas the male figurines may have represented patrilineal descent or his inherited rights by virtue of his bloodline, the female figurines implied the sexual relations by which he would be reborn. In contrast, a woman’s membership and “legal” protection in the house depended on a sexual or other alliance with a legitimate male associate whose inherited rights to land, labour and material resources represented her interest (Restall 1997: 581). In this scenario, the deposit of male figurines in females’ burials served to “naturalize” those relations. Pohl (1991) has argued that the rearing of children and animals were viewed as the responsibility of women in ancient Maya households. Figurine-whistles and figurine-rattles of animals and women placed in children’s burials may have reiterated the stereotypical nurturing mother and dependent child relation. It would be interesting to know if the few male figurines found with children were placed in female children’s burials thus conforming to the practice for adults. Of further interest in the analysis of Jaina figurine placement in burials would be at what age individuals were considered to have moved from childhood to adult.
In the above analysis I offer but one possibility of interpretation in order to demonstrate that the information from Jaina provides evidence that, under a specific kind of burial practice, the identity and function of a figurine can become an important consideration in composing a burial offering, and that in this context this identity and function may further be related in particular ways to the social identity of the deceased.

That only a mere handful of figurines have been recovered from a funerary context outside of the late Post-classic sites of Mayapán, Yucatán, and Jaina, Campeche, suggests that the placement of figurines in burials could have involved spontaneous action on the part of a few individuals rather than conventional practice with associated symbolic or religious meaning—in other words, a ritual. Indeed if figurines functioned primarily as children’s toys then one can easily imagine a child offering such an object to the funerary assemblage of another child or adult. An adult offering a toy to the assemblage of a deceased child is equally plausible. The figurine might have belonged to the child with whom it was buried as well as having been offered by another child or adult, in some cases the maker.
Part Three: Forms of figurines

During the Pre-classic periods [1200 B.C. – A.D. 200] Maya figurines mainly represented seated or standing humans and were solid and hand-modeled (Clark 1991). Significant changes occurred in figurine assemblages during the Early Classic periods [A.D. 200 –600] in the Maya region. During this time the development of regional stylistic distinction and widespread innovation in ceramic technology fostered a diversity of solid figurine forms. The majority of figurines produced during the Late Classic period [A.D. 600-900] were hollow, mould-made and for the most part whistles between 5 and 20 centimetres in height. Mould-made ceramic technology provided an efficient method of production of figurines although it also restricted the possibility of forms compared to hand modeling. Moulds could be used over long periods of time as at Calakmul, Campeche, where Classic moulds were used during the Terminal Classic (Folan, Gunn and Carrasco 2001). A slab of wet clay was pressed into a small single-face type fired clay mould (Willey 1978: 37; Willey 1972: 72-74). After removal from the mould, a hand-modeled piece of clay was attached to the mould-impressed piece to form the back and base of the figurine where a whistle mouthpiece was then fashioned. Sometimes pellets placed in human-figurines to produce rattles before front and back were joined substituted
for the usual whistle structure (Rands and Rands 1965: 542). After air-drying the object was fired and after firing it was painted. This technology allowed for intricate detail and may also have resulted in both widespread usage and consistency of forms.

Hand-modeled or combination of mould-made and hand-modeled figurines capable of no musical production continued to be produced in the Classic period but in lesser quantity than the mould-made whistles and rattles. Judging from their appearance, construction and context, the functions of these statuettes was probably different than whistle-figurines (Willey 1972: 7).

Figurines were likely produced and used at all Late Classic sites\(^2\). The themes of mould-made figurine whistles produced during the Classic period were remarkably uniform given their

\(^2\)Excavated examples have been published from Jonuta, Comalcalco, Tabasco (Smith 1958), on the Island of Jaina (Piña Chán 1968) north along the coast of Campeche, Mexico (Goldstein 1979; Folan, Gunn and Carrasco 2001) and north into the Puuc region of Yucatan (Brainard 1958). Figurines were also recovered in the central depression of Chiapas at Chiapa de Corzo (Thomas Lee 1969) and Lagartero (Eckholm 1985), along the Usumacinta River at Palenque (Rands and Rands 1965; Ángeles Flores Jiménez 2000), Yaxchilán (Garcia Moll 1996), Piedras Negras (Schlosser 1978), Altar de Sacrificios (Willey 1972) and Seibal (Willey 1978). Sites in the central Peten with excavated figurines include Uaxactun (A.L. Smith 1950), Tikal (Haviland 1963; Becker 1973) and in Belize, Lubaantun (T.A. Joyce 1933; Hammond 1975), Altun Ha (Pendergast 1979) and at some Highland Guatemala sites, Nebaj (Smith and Kidder 1951), Aguacateca (Triadan 2001) and Cancún (Sears 2000). Figurines were also recovered in the southeastern regions as at Copán, Honduras (Hendon 1987) and Cerén, El Salvador (Sheets 1992).
geographic diversity, although the volume and variety of each subject category produced varied by site and region. The subject categories include animals, men, women and children, deities and/or super-naturals. In the following discussions I will offer some general observations on the various themes taken for representation by the producers of figurines. Excavation monographs that include the types, forms and provenience of figurines recovered from the Usumacinta River area including Altar de Sacrificios (Willey 1972), Seibal (Willey 1978), Piedras Negras (Schlosser 1978) Palenque (Schele and Matthews 1979; Ángeles Flores Jiménez 2000) and Yaxchilan (García Moll 1996), offer a good comparative sample for this purpose. However, the above sample does not include all available forms. In order to further understand the representation of male and female identity in ancient Maya society, I will firstly compile and compare the subjects of figurine representation from the above monographs. This compilation will function as a core of representation to which additional figurine forms not recovered from the Usumacinta region will be added and discussed.

**Animal figurines**

The depiction of animals in hollow, mould-made figurines, or figurine-whistle constitutes the majority of all figurine
representation (Figure 2.18). Of these, birds, especially owls were most prevalent. Owls, turkeys, toucan, parrot and other non-raptorial and raptorial birds were represented at most sites (Altar de Sacrificios, Willey 1972: 24-27; Seibal, Willey 1978: 17-19) perhaps for their musical association. Holes for suspension were especially common on bird whistles and those objects may sometimes have been worn as pendants around the neck where they could be readily used.

In addition to birds, substantial repertoires of animal forms were created in figurines although not all forms were represented at all sites. The most common were reptiles [frogs, turtles, crocodile, lizards], felines and monkeys that sometimes have human attributes such as clothing, canines [dogs, foxes or coyotes], Pisotes or Coatimundis, peccary, deer, bats, rodents and possibly insects. The archaeology bodega at Tikal, Guatemala houses a particularly good collection of animal figurines, especially monkeys (no. 17-1-1-10203).

Human representation in figurines

Generally the second most prominent subject matter was the human form. Both male and female identities were recovered

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3 Numbers given for figurines of Tikal, Guatemala correspond to the bodega filing system.
from all sites. Visual representation in all media suggest that social categories were marked out on the body by symbolism of body modification, cosmetics and clothing, decorations, ornaments, attributes and practices. The ideological embodiment of the social order in such a "fashion" served to construct power relations between individuals through an association with markers of status that perhaps symbolized access to socially valued resources. First and foremost, costume allowed not only for an identification of gender but also of status and sometimes activity in ancient Maya figurine representation.

The design of Classic period Maya clothing as portrayed in figurine and other media was generally based on the rectangular shape of cloth produced on the loom. The simplicity of the designs for basic clothing portrayed in figurine and other media maximized the piece of cloth while importantly representing and maintaining the sexes as distinct social categories. Women were represented wearing elaborately patterned textiles that included a wrap around dress or skirt [corte] that usually covered the chest. This garment can be partially covered by a short or long huipil that reaches the waist or ankles, respectively (Figure 2.19).
Men's costumes were generally simpler in textile pattern but had more complex combination of garment forms that possibly increased with social status. Men were depicted most often in ancient Maya representation wearing a loincloth [*maxtlatl*] (Figure 2.20). To this basic groin covering could be added a hipcloth [*rodillera*] that may be worn under or over the loincloth, a kilt of cloth or animal pelt [multi-layered for dancers] and belt [*faja*]. A shoulder cape [*perraje*] sometimes worn draped over the front of the body, a cloth [*tzute*] worn as scarf, across one shoulder or over one arm may cover the upper body. Several men's garments required more construction than the basic rectangular shape of cloth produced on the loom. These included a fitted jacket with fitted sleeves or flaps instead of sleeves, vest without sleeves [*xicolli*] and fitted suit with sleeves and legs. Some men were portrayed carrying a bag [*morral*].

Although the specific meanings communicated by the style and representation of design on clothing in figurines are lost to us, the complexity of these meanings may be inferred through examination of other forms of evidence. The representation in ceramic and mural painting of folded pieces of cloth as tribute offerings, as wrappings for important objects and as household furnishings indicate that textiles held social
importance that went beyond costume. Through elaboration of figurine clothing, their patterning and style was potentially able to visually communicate both membership and difference. Although the significance of represented difference in ancient Maya costume has been the subject of study for archaeologists and art historians for over a century, only recently has gender difference been explored (Joyce 2000). Dress related to seasonality, social belonging, life changes and marital status must be assumed although only partially recoverable in the archaeological record. By comparison, a diverse and nuanced accounting of individual involvement in the communication of social roles through the variability of appearance is well documented for contemporary Maya (Hendrickson 1995).

Elaborate textile patterning in figurines (Figure 2.21) may even have communicated gender categorization at the level of manufacture, for spinning and weaving are among the most strongly gendered of activities cited in ethnographic (Wilk 1991) and ethnohistoric sources (Carmack 1981; Landa in Tozzer 1941) in Mesoamerica. Furthermore, description and representation of female deities associated with these productive tasks are numerous (Codex Madrid; McCafferty and McCafferty 1988; Sullivan 1982; Sahagún 1953-1982, Book 4: 4; Codex Mendoza, Vol. 3: 56v-57r; Tozzer 1941: 159). The Maya
patron of weaving was a goddess represented in pre-Hispanic codices and known in Yucatán as *Ix Chel* (Cogolludo 1867-1868, Bk. 4, Ch. 8). Some ancient Maya vase painters represented old women with a spindle of thread stuck into their headband (Reents-Budet 1994: Fig. 1.8). In addition spinning and weaving tools have been archaeologically recovered from women's food preparation areas in ancient Maya residences (Ruscheinsky 1994, 1996; Hendon 1999).

The consideration of costume as a communication of social roles is central to an analysis of figurines since the addition of a single element to a costume assemblage may greatly expand or change its implied message. For example, the replacing of the helmet-like headdress of a male figurine recently excavated at Cancuén [CANF 472] with the accompanying mask transformed the figure from a possible youthful warrior or ballplayer to an old man [CANF 510](Figure 2.37). Thus, differences in appearance must be appreciated as an active communication by individual producers of figurines directed towards a complex of social roles.

Figurines probably did not represent actual persons but rather generalized narrative types with a repertoire of activities, postures, clothing and other accessories that were considered
suitable. Most clothing elements were not interchangeable in figurines. These generic types would have enabled a variety of role-playing activities where the narrative was supplied by the actions of the user. The possibilities of creative play may have been further enhanced by the addition of removable helmets, headdresses and masks and the rare examples of articulated figurines.

The representation of women in figurines

Significantly, at many of the excavated sites the number of recovered representations of women in figurines outnumbered those of men (Ekholm 1985: 174). Choice of women's costume elements, headgear and hairstyle were possibly localized for the makers of figurines. For example, centre-parted hair [with or without terraced bangs, or wide-brimmed hats], ear-flares and necklace, high-waist skirt opening at the side or single dress-like garment [corte] with huipil were chosen hair treatment and costume for the representation of women in figurines at Altar de Sacrificios, Seibal, Piedras Negras and Palenque. The single dress-like garment that falls from shoulder to ankles was preferred at Altar de Sacrificios over which a huipil or a fringed shawl was sometimes worn (Willey 1972: 45). At Seibal there was more variety in hair treatment and headgear that included an elaborate form that may have
been an indicator of high status or other social distinction (Willey 1978: 24). At Piedras Negras a turban type of headdress is common and only a few figurines display a necklace (Schlosser 1978: 108-135).

Distinction in costume is followed closely by deportment in determination of gender, status and activity in ancient Maya figurine representation and may account for some of the standardization of forms. Deportment implies movement while the addition of attributes to clothing suggests activity. However, because the majority of individual figurines do not appear in scenes, we sometimes have to rely on narrative scenes on ceramics and stone monuments and in murals to speculate on the particular activity. Of exception to the "standard" of individual figures are the mould-made figurines of narrative scenes produced at Lubaantun (Joyce 1933)(Figure 2.22) and the few hand-modeled scenes from Jaina (Miller 1986) (Figure 2.23).

At Altar de Sacrificios women [with one exception] were represented standing and most carry some object in one or both hands (Figure 2.24). For example, one female figurine is depicted holding a fan in one hand and a cylindrical vessel in the other (Willey 1972: fig. 34,e), others a child and a fan
(fig. 34,g), a child and a vessel (fig. 34, b) a dog and what appears to be a vessel (fig. 34,f) and a dog and unidentified object (fig. 33,c). Similar examples have been recovered from Palenque (Ángeles Flores Jiménez 2000). The association of these attributes with gender specific occupations like food service, animal husbandry and childcare may further aid in the determination of gender for the viewer. When no object is held in the hand, the arm and hand is usually held close across the body at waist level.

Both standing and seated women were represented in figurines at Seibal though perhaps the latter posture is most common. A few hold an unidentified object in their left hand but most hold their hands in their lap if seated or across their waist if standing (Willey 1978: 26-31).

According to Schlosser, all mould-made female figurines from Piedras Negras were "very similar in costume and pose" (1978: 120). The hands, usually empty, were placed in the lap of the kneeling woman although two exceptions exist. One holds a child (fig. 19,c) the other a dog (fig. 19,b). Women seated with their hands in their lap were the most common posture at Tikal (no. 17-1-1-1 1865.1-9), Aguateca (Triadan 2001: 3) and sites in the Alta Verapaz, Guatemala (Guatemala Museum
Dieseldorf Collection). However a standing female figure with arms held close to the body was also produced at most sites.

While the activities and labours of womanhood were referenced through objects the overall representation of womanly deportment in the above examples is one of repose.

Physiognomy or facial feature was another means by which status and age were represented in figurines. Generally it is difficult to distinguish gender on the basis of facial features alone. Facial features including high brows, straight eyes with a heavy upper lid, long straight triangular nose that often extends into the forehead region, short closed mouth with emphasized upper lip, triangular or square shaped jaw and small ears appear to be conventional in figurine representation. Some regional variation occurred. For example at Altar de Sacrificios a slightly open mouth exposing teeth was standard. Women were sometimes represented with head slightly tilted forward suggesting an averting of the gaze in the figurines produced at Jaina (Schele 1997: 30-32, 35-39, 43-44) (Figure 2.25); otherwise they sit or stand erect.
Female social hierarchy

Head deformation practiced by the ancient Maya was represented in figurines of females at Piedras Negras (Schlosser 1978: 111-112). It is interesting that two figurines were without head-dress but have rare hand-modeled additions that created distinctive costuming perhaps indicative of distinctions in rank or status among women. Female figurines that exhibit head deformation were found in household assemblages at many other sites and perhaps were most common at Palenque and Jaina (Figure 2.35). In many of these figurines the hair was swept back from the forehead with little adornment emphasizing the head shape (Schele 1997: 26, 28-31). Several have a slot cut into the head that suggests the past existence of de-attachable headdress (Schele 1997: 28-29, 40-41, 43, 45; Ángeles Flores Jiménez 2000: 47).

Scarification, tattooing or face paint may be represented by a pattern of raised dots or lines that surround the mouth of several female figurines from Piedras Negras and the Tabasco-Campeche region (Schlosser 1978: 115; Schele 1997: 21-23, 28, 31, 42-43). These patterns were often produced in association with head deformation or elaborate costume and headdress.
Old age

One figurine from Piedras Negras represents an old woman with deeply wrinkled face, sunken cheeks and a twisted roll around her bald head⁴ (Schlosser 1978: 114)(Figure 2.27). In addition to this physiognomy, old age in women was represented by the depiction of pendant breasts (Schlosser 1978: fig. 17,a). In most examples from the Usumacinta region women were represented of childbearing age. The maternal aspect of womanhood is fore-grounded at Altar de Sacrificios where several figurines of women with children were recovered.

Childcare

There were figurine examples of women nurturing children from other regions as well. I introduced this thesis with the example from the Museo de Jonuta where a woman is depicted holding the hand of a young child that in turn holds a figurine (Figure ii). In other examples women were shown nursing (Schele 1997: 36-37)(Figure 2.25; 2.28) or with young children asleep in their lap (Schmidt 1998, cat. 101; Schele 1997: 39) (Figure 2.29). A figurine recovered from residential structure M8-10 at Aguateca, Guatemala portrays a woman with a young boy wearing a loincloth seated beside her (Inomata 1995,

⁴ Schlosser identifies this head fragment as male. I suggest an old woman is a more appropriate identification. More recently excavated examples suggest that old women and not old men were portrayed with the twisted roll headdress (Schele 1997, Pl.31-34).
The seated woman and child configuration was also produced at Tikal, Guatemala (no. 17-1-1-1-1-1865.9).

Old women were also represented in roles as caretakers for children (Schele 1997: 48). For example, a young child is shown strapped to the back of an old woman figurine housed in the American Museum of Natural History (Figure 2.27). Another example from Jaina has a young boy held by an old woman (Figure 2.30). A figurine of note from the Guatemalan highlands represents an old woman seated with her legs extended out in front of her, where a baby lies face up. The child clearly displays the cranial deformation practiced on newborns. A wooden board is visible on the forehead, tied with two cords at the sides (Figure 2.31).

**Foodservice**

Generally, makers of figurines in the Usumacinta region limited the activities of women to roles in childcare and animal husbandry. Foodservice may have been referenced through the vessels that many of the figurines hold. In contrast, examples from Jaina made the activity of food service explicit. In one, an elaborately attired woman with ear-flares and bead necklace apportions food from two large vessels balanced by her lap into small bowls held in each hand. A
small animal sits on her left leg (Figure 2.26). A fragment of a figurine from Lubaantun portrays a small child grasping for a round food object held in a bowl carried by a woman wearing a corte over her breasts (Joyce 1933: Pl.IV, 8).

In addition to the above activities figurines from Lubaantun, Belize, portrayed women’s domestic labour of food preparation. In one particularly illustrative example a woman appears with a child strapped to her back as she kneels grinding corn on a raised metate (Figure 2.22). A hand-modeled figurine in the collection of the Art Museum at Princeton University, possibly from Jaina, portrays a woman in a posture consistent with corn grinding. She leans forward with her weight balanced over her arms. Her curved hands resting at knee level are placed in front of an object that resembles a mano or grinding stone. It is possible the metate that accompanied this figurine was lost (Figure 2.32). Another hand-modeled figurine from Jaina was explicit in depicting food preparation. An old woman simply dressed in a corte and turban has an infant strapped to her back as she grinds corn on a raised metate. An older child standing at the opposite end of the metate assists her by scooping the ground masa into the collecting bowl below (Figure 2.23).
Vessels held in the arms of female figurines would have referenced women's roles not only in food preparation but also in ceramic production. Raymond Thompson records both Maya men and women as producers of pottery in Modern Yucatan Mexico although it was more common for all the potters of a village to be of the same sex (1958: 146). Thompson indicates that the tendency for potters to specialize in the making of certain shapes may have been greater in the past (Thompson 1958: 146). The most pronounced specialization Thompson observed was the making of figurines and whistles that were produced almost exclusively by women (Thompson 1958: 136). In the case of male potters their wives and daughters ordinarily made and decorated the figurine wares (Thompson 1958: 136). I suggest that a similar gendered division of labour operated in the Prehispanic period.

Weavers

The combined techniques of hand-modeling and mould-impressing were used in several examples to portray women as weavers in the assemblage of figurines from Jaina (Figures 2.33-2.34). The technology of spinning and weaving, as represented in figurines and recovered through archaeological research closely parallels the traditional equipment and methods used in the Maya region in colonial and modern times (Hendon 1999: 141)
Women were depicted seated, working on a back strap loom tied to a small tree or post (Schele 1997: 40-41; Schmidt 1998, cat. 182). Birds were shown sitting on the post or on the shoulder of the weaver (Kerr Clay Database: 6000) or under the loom (Kerr Clay Database: 2019). The association between birds and weaving in ancient Mesoamerica was common. The only representational pattern incised into the spindle whorls from residential contexts at Copán, Honduras was that of a bird; all other patterns were geometric in design (Hendon 1997: 38). In addition to the countless number of spindle whorls excavated at Copán, Honduras, were bone needles, pins and picks used to lift warp threads when creating brocade design (Hendon 1997: 38).

While doing research in Antigua, Guatemala in 1998 I witnessed birds descending from the trees of the market square to retrieve stray threads from the women gathered quietly weaving in the shade below. I assume the birds used the thread to weave their own nests. Zoila Ramírez, a contemporary weaver from Guatemala, confirmed my observations but also suggested that some of the birds may have been pets (personal communication with Cohodas, June 21, 2002). Perhaps the large macaw sitting under the loom of a Jaina hand-modeled figurine was the representation of a pet (Kerr Clay Database: 2019).
Ramírez also informed Cohodas that hummingbirds especially were common visitors because they were attracted to the colours of the weaving, thinking they were flowers (personal communication with Cohodas, June 21, 2002).

Although the labour of weaving was not directly represented in figurine at Lagartero, located on the Chiapas-Guatemala border, the majority of human figurines were portrayed wearing elaborately patterned costumes (Figure 2.21). Portrayed in figurine are cotton garments with various types of decoration including embroidery, brocade, appliqué, pulled thread and dye technique that Ekholm speculates may indicate a great textile craft specialization at Lagartero (1985: 185). Female figurines at Lagartero are similar in pose and attitude to those of the Usumacinta region. The majority of female bodies wear a long dress with elaborately decorated shawl or long huipil over the shoulders (Ekholm 1985: fig.10-3, a-f; Schmidt 1998, cat. 129). Some are seated cross-legged with hands placed on their knees or with one hand gesturing at waist level (Ekholm 1985: 183). Others stand and appear to be more elaborately attired in several layers of skirts (Ekholm 1985: 184). The preponderance of female figurines [about 60 percent] is intriguing in relation to the suggestion of women’s textile industry at Lagartero (Ekholm 1985: 174). For textiles as well
as pottery, figurines reference both construction and use as a distinctive characteristic of the female gender. This relationship between production and use is further extended if we consider that women likely made the figurines for use in child-rearing.

A female figurine from Jaina exhibiting head deformation and wearing *huipil* and elaborate jewelry sits with one hand on her knee while the other rests on a folded object in her lap (Figure 2.35). The figurine has been interpreted as representing a scribe or *Na Ah-K’ul-Hun*, "Lady of the Holy Books" an occupation often depicted for men but never otherwise for women in ancient Maya imagery (Schele 1997: 43). *Codices* [Maya folded books] are often depicted in ceramic painting as having a hinged jaguar patterned cover (Reents-Budet 1994: 2.1-2.4) and/or a halved conch shell and brush resting on the lid (Reents-Budet 1994: 2.15). A figurine interpreted as a male scribe rests his right hand on such an arrangement of implements and book (Reents-Budet 1994: 2.14). A male scribe deity represented in stone from Copán holds a halved-shell paint container in one hand and a brush in the other. He also has conch shells in his headband to mark his identity (Reents-Budet 1994: 5.57). The female figurine interpreted as a scribe has none of the iconographic
identifiers of her male counterparts. Perhaps the folded object in her lap is better interpreted as a piece of folded textile that may identify her as a weaver or cloth merchant (Figure 2.35).

**Attendants**

Another complex of figurines from the Campeche region including Jaina depict elaborately attired women standing, holding a twisted scarf and/or bib (Schele 1997: 22-23; 44-45) (Figures 2.36). Other images portray women holding a fan or a mirror (Schele 1997: 18,20). These costume elements were associated in ceramic painting with the exclusive male practice of enema or emetic that cause intoxication and hallucination (Stross and Kerr 1990). For example, elegantly dressed women, often attended by simply dressed women holding a fan and a mirror, were represented assisting the old and feeble God N in the taking of an enema and/or emetic in ceramic painting. Another version depicts numerous old men (God N) seated before a male authority (masked as a supernatural) and aided by young women while others assist by fanning, holding a scarf or mirror (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K530.00).
While the preponderance of female figurines found in a residential context during the Maya Classic period suggests a dignity and importance was afforded female persons and their contribution of goods and labour to the house economy, the narrow range of activities represented may have served to circumscribe gender identity. Further interpretation of figurine imagery in relation to the construction of gender identity will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

The representation of men in figurines
Although there were fewer male than female figurines produced at some sites, the diversity of costume types, poses and activities as indicators of male identity and status were often far greater. As in other representation, the most significant costume for the identification of male identity in figurines was the loincloth [maxtlatl] (Figure 2.20). Also appearing are a heavy belt [faja], a hipcloth [rodillera], cape-like garments [perraje], animal pelts, ballplayer garb [may include a large protective belt, kneepad, hand guard, helmet or ball] and perhaps quilted armour. Jewelry included a heavy necklace or collar with central pendant element and large ear-flares. Sometimes a beard or artificial beard was depicted. Simple headdresses were conical or cap-like and also turban type. Elaborate headdresses can incorporate a Maya mask
element [animal or supernatural] as well as fan-like feather arrangements and plumes. Sometimes masks and headdresses were removable (Sears 2000).

Differences in the physiognomy of young men and women were negligible in figurine representation. Young men, like women, were represented with head deformation, high brow line, straight eyes with heavy lid, long nose and well formed mouth. Perhaps more male than female figurines were produced with the square-jaw shaped face. Males usually look directly at the viewer with open eyes. Sometimes they were represented with their head tilted forward and arms clasped across the chest (Schele 1997: 29-30, 32, 34, 44). Facial tattooing or scarification was common on male figurines from Jaina (Schele 1997: 29, 34-39) and far more elaborate than portrayed for women (Schele 1997: 21-23). Small beards or larger false beards also aided in the identification of male identity (Schele 1997: 29-39).

Differing somewhat from their neighbours, figurine makers at Palenque created miniature solid figurines of males in addition to the typically larger solid-type examples (Ángeles Flores Jiménez 2000)(Figure 2.16). As at Jaina many of the solid Palenque figurines combined mould-made and hand built
technology (Ángeles Flores Jiménez 2000). Makers of figurines also depicted men with smaller head proportions than at Jaina, narrower faces, accentuated noses or additional nose ornaments and ears with small earrings rather than large ear-flares. Also in comparison bodies were more slender with back curvature. Stylistic similarities to Tabasco and Campeche were strong in Palenque figurine imagery that include the abundance of free-limbed humans, high nose passing onto the forehead, and a row of circles or ornament above the nose (Schlosser 1978: 174; Rands and Rands 1964: 556, for comparison fig. 25 and 40).

A distinctive example of Palenque solid figurine manufacture is a masked warrior recovered from Tomb 1 in Building 3 of Group B (López Bravo 2000)(Figure 2.15). A young man appears dressed in loincloth, beaded necklace and mosaic cuffs and seated cross-legged in the centre of a bench (Schele 1997: 49). His left hand rests on his left knee in a posture of authority as he gestures with his raised right hand. While his head has not been recovered, he wore an extraordinary bird mask: According to Schele, the knob on the head of the bird and the wattle on its beak identify it as an ocellated turkey, called kutz by the ancient Maya (Schele 1997: 91).
The sample of male figurines from neighbouring Yaxchilan available for study is tiny but according to Schlosser the "figurines show no obvious differences" from those of Piedras Negras (1978: 171).

Male figurines from Lagartero are similar in form and identity as those from other regions. Of special note, however, are their elaborately patterned garments (Figure 2.21). The most common man's garment at Lagartero is the loincloth [maxtlatl] over which is worn a short decorated cape [perraje] that may be worn tied at the shoulder or worn hanging down in the front only (Ekholm: 1985: 183). Some of these capes had a glyph band at the top edge and a monster mask on the front and back (Ekholm: 1985: 183). Males are represented seated with one arm positioned across the chest in a posture of deference while others stand with their arms and chest completely covered by the cape (Ekholm: 1985: fig. 10-4, a-e).

**Warriors**

An abundant image at Altar de Sacrificios was a standing male with arms placed on belt, wearing an elaborate headdress (Willey 1972: 27-34). Here and elsewhere male figurines may have additional attributes by which male-gendered activities can be identified. Of these, the most common are weapons and
armor identifying warrior activities, which represent the single category with the greatest variety of forms expressed through a wide range of costume (Figure 2.1). This may include a short "quilted" jacket, cape or full body armour or "feathered" suits (Willey 1972, fig. 27-28), helmets or other head protection (Schele 1997: 60), that often incorporates animal imagery (Schmidt 1998, cat. 114), shield and/or hand held weapons such as atlatl, club, axe, quiver of arrows or darts, and spear (Schmidt 1998, cat. 113-115; Schele 1997: 56-63). Warrior figurines tend to be represented in active poses. For example, a figurine from Chipal, Alta Verapaz portrays a warrior about to decapitate a prisoner who he holds by the hair (Rands and Rands 1965: fig. 36). There is a similar example in the Museo Regional de Campeche (Schele 1997: 63). Many of the figurines of warriors produced at Jaina where hand-modeling technology was utilized, lunge or gesture with arms outstretched.

**Hunters**

An alternative function for weaponry was its utility in hunting. A figurine from Lubaantun portrays a male hunter bending over a fallen deer into which he plunges a knife with his left arm. In his right hand he holds a spear while he carries a pack of some kind on his back (Figure 2.38).
Although hunting was rarely depicted in figurines it was a favoured subject for ceramic painting. Within that media, the activities of hunting, combat and the ballgame, which would have been undertaken exclusively by able-bodied males, were interconnected. All three activities encouraged competition among subordinate males vying for elder approval in the form of the recognition of valour, and the bestowing of honour and prestige, which made these activities a fitting subject for male representation. Similar to those depicted in figurine was the image of four hunters on a painted plate from eastern Campeche or Quintana Roo (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K4805). Two carry deer on their backs with spear in hand while the other two carry packs of rolled up nets used in the capture of the deer. One of these blows a conch-shell trumpet the other hunter's hangs from his belt. A third deer lies dead in the centre as three carrion birds hover at the edge of the scene.

Bird hunting was not represented in figurine as it often was in painted scenes on ceramics that portrayed young men using a blowgun (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K4151).

5 Combat and the ball game would have involved training that could have taken place in the context of the residential compound. Thorstein Veblen (1973, orig. 1899) in his Theory of the Leisure Class discusses the ways in which the activities of sport, hunting and war are interconnected. Applying Veblen's theory, sports like the ball game would have encouraged competition among subordinate males vying for elder approval or, helped keep up a juvenile aggressive readiness in case of the advent of war. Aside from sport, it has been suggested that these activities may have functioned within a broader-spectrum of political and economic activities (Santley, Berman, and Alexander 1991), in the acquiring of products and territory (20) or the carving out of tributary domains (23).
Ballplayers

A common activity for young men in ancient Maya imagery was the ballgame. The ancient ballgame is known from all areas of Mesoamerica although the rules of the game differed from region to region. Generally the rules of the game did not permit the ball to be touched with the hands; it had to be struck with the hip that was protected by padding or a wooden yoke. Hands, elbows and knees that came in contact with the ground when attempting to strike the ball with the hip were also protected (Cohodas 1991: 251). The game could be played in an open field or in a masonry court specifically built for that activity. Ballcourts dating to the Early Formative [1550-850 B.C.] through the Late Postclassic Period [900-1521 A.D.] have been excavated. At Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico, courts were built as part of residential structures perhaps near "young men's houses" as at the Monjas (Ruscheinsky 1994) and in the civic or ceremonial precinct of the city. The game was played both for sport and ritual purposes and the same court may have had both functions. Many categories of artwork reveal aspects of the ballgame: carved panels on benches and markers of some courts, tenoned heads and rings on others; presumed ballgame paraphernalia preserved as stone objects [yokes, palmas, hachas, handstones]; stelae and other bas-relief carvings; depictions on ceramic vessels and figurines.
Additional information comes from Aztec and Mixtec painted codices.

The post-conquest written descriptions of the Aztec and Maya ballgames have provided much of the information on the symbolic themes and ritual significance of the game (Gillespie 1991: 318). Perhaps the availability of this information influenced many scholars of the Mesoamerican ballgame to concentrate their interest in the game as a ritual rather than as a sport. However, the Classic Maya also associated ballgame imagery with a change in personal status, the accession of a king (Schele and Freidel 1991), inter-polity warfare or boundary conflict (Schele and Miller 1986: 250), acquisition of wealth and territory (Santley, Berman and Alexander 1991) and intra-polity competition (Fox 1991). I have argued elsewhere (Ruscheinsky 1994: 101-102) that the ballgame would have: encouraged competition among young men vying for social recognition, honour and prestige within and between competing houses; helped keep up a juvenile aggressive readiness; and maintained fitness and group loyalty among men who might be called upon for warfare at any time.

The most influential written description of the Maya ballgame for the study of the mythical underpinnings has been the *Popol*
Vuh (Tedlock 1985), a cosmogonic narrative from Highland Guatemala (Gillespie 1991: 318). A symbolic theme proposed for the ballgame was the daily and seasonal journey of the sun and other celestial bodies. Their cyclical descent through the Underworld and ascent into the sky is linked to agricultural fertility and human reproduction. The ritual ballgame concluded with the sacrifice of the losing captain symbolising the death and eventual rebirth of the sun, the planting and re-growth of corn, and the death and reincarnation of the player (Cohodas 1991; Schele and Miller 1986: Ch. VI).

The ancient Maya most often represented the form of ballgame played in a masonry court (Schele and Miller 1986: Ch. VI). Figurine producers were very specific in the representation of ballplayer’s costume (Figure 2.39–2.40). There appear to have been two styles representing the Maya and Mexican hip-ball games. The Classic Maya ballgame costume portrayed bulky torso protectors of cloth, leather and/or wood and headdresses (Cohodas 1991: 253–254; Schele 1997: 123; Schele and Miller 1986: Ch. VI). Coastal Lowland players were shown with yoke-type hip protectors, hacha- or palma-type stomach protectors (Schele 1997: 120), kneepads (Schele 1997: 125) and purse-shaped hand protectors (Schele 1997: 122). Players could be shown with a latex ball held in the hand (Schele 1997: 125).
The juxtaposition of the Mexican and Maya costume appeared on the relief of the central marker at Ballcourt II-B, Copán providing an ethnic contrast that may have symbolically referenced north and south respectively. Cohodas (1991: 259) has argued that the depiction in this scene of a sporting event was unlikely, "the sculptures represent the symbolic importance of the ballgame ritual rather than realistic action...perhaps re-enacting a cosmogonic myth."

Another men's contact sport was a favoured image in the whistle-figurines of Lubaatun (Joyce 1933: 1,3). Narrative examples show two men engaged in pseudo-combat (Figure 2.41). They wear a helmet that covers their face and neck but for the eyes, a padded chest and shoulder protector, and a large padded glove on one hand. Other figurines from Lubaatun depict single figures similarly costumed although some of these have added elaboration to the helmet (Joyce 1933: Pl.VII, 1-22, Pl. VIII, 2-4). A hand-modelled figurine from the Petén depicts a male seated cross-legged with arms raised and the left hand gesturing a thumbs up. This figurine has a similar removable helmet (Coe and Kerr 1996: fig.13; K2824 ). This game is also depicted on El Baúl Monument 27 (Parsons 1969: Pl. 52,d) and at Dainzú, Oaxaca (Bernal 1973). A figurine in the Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City
was similarly depicted wearing a winged helmet, padded chest protector with the addition of cape-like body armour and shield has been interpreted as a warrior (Schele 1997: 98). Perhaps, like the hip-ball game, the more violent ball game was symbolically interchangeable with the male activities of warfare and hunting.

**Male social hierarchy**

The second most common male identity represented in figurine was associated with authority or status. Costume was the primary means by which rank or status was represented in both monumental and figurine sculpture where it often overwhelmed the male figure portrayed (Figure 2.42). At Altar de Sacrificios several elaborately attired male figurines are portrayed seated or kneeling with left hand resting on left knee (Willey 1972: fig. 31,a). In ancient Maya monumental sculpture and ceramic painting that concentrated on the subject of male homo-social relations the artistic convention of authority was represented by this posture (Schele 1986, fig. v.8; Kerr Maya Vase Database: K558.00). Males of authority were also represented in figurines seated on elaborate benches (Willey 1972: fig. 45; Schele 1997: 89-93) or ornate litters (Schele 1997: 73-74). Examples of this form
from Altar de Sacrificios, Palenque, Jonuta, Campeche region, Jaina and Alta Verapaz have been recovered.

In contrast to the elaborately costumed figurine representations of men standing or sitting were the more simply attired males with arms crossed at chest level (Willey 1972: fig. 30). Some of these figurines, like some figurines of women, were portrayed with their gaze averted by tilting the head slightly downward (Schele 1997: 70, 72, 75)(Figure 2.43). This pose was sometimes used to describe the hierarchical relations between house and/or community members in audience scenes painted on ceramics (Reents-Budet 1994: 3.20-3.21). In most of these scenes a male on a seat of authority gestures to other men seated below with their arms across chest and eyes downcast. Texts recording the names and titles of the participants in the events portrayed often accompanied the visual images. The figure "enthroned" often held more titles associated with political and ritual authority in contrast to the others, suggesting the pose of crossed arms and downcast eyes was one of respect, salute, allegiance or deference. In other scenes the guests will share in smoking with their host (Reents-Budet 1994: 321). Similarly, a figurine from Jaina depicts a young man smoking
and wearing an elaborate deer headdress also associated with ball game and hunting imagery (Kerr Clay Database: 3694).

**Scribes**

In contrast to the elaborately adorned male personages there were a variety of simply attired male figurines produced. One type of these represents a seated man of portly stature wearing only a loincloth. However, his associated attributes may mark him as a scribe. In one example, the man's right hand rests on a rounded object placed on a folded codex (Figure 2.44). A figurine in the Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, depicts a man wearing a simple conical shaped hat and loincloth with a book resting in his lap (Schmidt 1998, fig.455).

Archaeological studies (Hendon 1987; Webster 1989; Inomata 2000) have confirmed data from historical sources referring to the social importance of Maya artists and scribes in charge of recording tribute and other administrative functions in codices, drawing and painting polychrome ceramics, murals and masks. Very similar to the two images of scribes in figurines was the large-scale architectural sculpture of a scribal deity recovered from the fill of the final construction of Structure 9N-82 at Copán, a building whose subsequent façade displays
other sculpted scribal images carved into it (Webster 1989). The scribe statue has shell paint pots inserted into the headband above his ears while in his left hand he holds a sectioned conch-shell inkpot, and in his right a paint brush (Schmidt 1998: 634, fig 457). The importance placed on the scribal profession in association with this building has led to the conclusion that it was the residence of scribes for several generations (Webster 1989). Images of scribes or artists in the process of writing and painting abound in scenes on ceramic vases and plates (Coe and Kerr 1996; Kerr Maya Vase Database: K5824; K717.00).

**Old age**

Another type of seated male simply dressed figurine is that of a bald old man with sunken cheeks and eyes, wrinkles, a markedly protruding chin and partially toothless grin when open-mouthed (Willey 1972: fig. 42; Willey 1978: fig. 39-40; Schlosser 1978: fig.15,c; 1616,c). Old men figurines are also found at Palenque (Rands and Rands 1964, fig. 15), Jaina (Schele 1997: 133, 136), Cancuén (Sears 2000, fig. 6), and Alta Verapaz region (Guatemala Museum Collection). The size of the jaw and protruding chin is the facial feature that distinguishes old men from old women in figurine representation. Two examples of old men from Jaina are
portrayed wearing the striped and twisted scarf (Schele 1997: 133). They also hold an object that resembles a rattle in their right hands and have an unusual lip ornament. These figurines have been interpreted as representing monkey-men or howler monkeys rather than old men even though they have human bodies and elaborate male clothing (Schele 1997: 132).

Explicit enema images were produced in figurines at Esquintla and Tiquisate areas on the Pacific Slope of Guatemala. For example, an old bearded man lying on his right side and using his left arm to insert a conch shell syringe into his buttocks was produced (Kerr Clay Database: 4035). Another portrays a younger man with strangely smiling face engaged in the same activity (Kerr Clay Database: 5078). Old men [sometimes identified as God N] are clearly represented in scenes on painted ceramic wearing the same twisted scarf. Young women assist these old men in the activity of enema or emetic (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K530.00). Old men are represented at Jaina emerging from flowers (Schele 1997: 169, 171-173). In one example a young woman emerges from a second flower on the same stem (Schele 1997: 172-173). The young Maize God is also represented in such a manner (Schele 1997: 168, 170).
Prisoners

A few figurines of seated simply dressed men have the added attribute of a rope tied around the neck or have their arms tied behind their back that may identify the individual as a prisoner (Willey 1972: fig. 30f). Ethnohistoric accounts describe the taking of prisoners in war (Tozzer 1941). According to these accounts captives could look forward to humiliation and slavery if not sacrifice (Schele and Freidel 1990). Prisoners were represented as tribute offered to authority figures by attending warriors in audience scenes depicted on ceramic vessels and in relief carving (Reents-Budet 1994, fig. 6.34; Schele and Miller 1986 pl. 86-87). In the Bonampak murals, warriors captured in battle are stripped of their weapons and armour and forced to let blood from their hands in public humiliation before the presiding patriarch. Others are sacrificed by being beheaded (Miller 1986; Miller 1995: National Geographic, Vol. 187, No.2. pp. 50-60). This too is shown in figurines. A group of figurines of unknown proveniences have been considered to describe the gruesome practice of torture and death. Two of the figurines in this group depict naked men with their hands bound behind their backs. These captives are represented grimacing in pain for they apparently have been beaten as their eyes and faces
appear severely swollen (Schele 1997: 115-117). Two others hang limply by the neck, bodies bloated in decay (ibid.).

**Bloodletting**

Self-sacrifice or bloodletting could also be a privilege or honour that marked important ceremonial occasions such as heir designation as depicted in the Bonampak murals (Miller 1986; Miller 1995: National Geographic, Vol. 187, No.2. pp. 50-60). The blood sacrifice of captives in Room Two of the Bonampak murals (pp. 65-67) were juxtaposed with the public celebratory dance that included bloodletting from the penis depicted in the scenes of Room Three (p. 56). The public performance of bloodletting may have been a means of proclaiming allegiance to the new heir and future leader of the Bonampak house. Depiction of these events may have served as historic documents of those alliances and affiliations. However, depiction in Jaina figurines of bloodletting from the penis was generic rather than historic. A young man wearing a conical headdress and kilt has a twisted cloth or rope loosely tied around his necks as he sits stoically perforating his penis (Schele 1997: 134). A similar example from the Art Museum at Princeton University also has strips of cloth with dots of "blood" on them laced through the lobes of his ears (ibid: pl.12). The scarf or cloth around the neck may be a
costume piece specific to bloodletting although Shield Jaguar is depicted wearing such a necklace on Lintel 26 of Yaxchilan (Tate 1992: fig. 15). Not all representations of bloodletting in figurines depicted men stoically enduring the associated pain. A particularly dramatic example from Balancán depicts an old man squatting with one knee up as he holds his perforated penis. His other hand is raised to his head as he screams in pain (Schele 1997: 136).

**Dancers**

Rituals and festivals were a favoured subject of Maya imagery produced during the Classic period. Dance was represented as at the centre of many of these celebrations. In most contexts, the ancient Maya depicted their dance by raising one heel of the dancer’s feet and showing hands in formal position if empty. A dancer figurine with raised foot from Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, holds an ear of corn in each hand (Figure 2.45). He wears an elaborate head adornment and a feathered backrack. Very similar is the male dancer figurine with one foot raised and hands in formal position in the American Museum of Natural History Collection. He was also represented elaborately dressed with calf and ankle “tinklers,” an elaborate headdress that included a patterned cloth, mosaic band and “flower” component and a feathered backrack (Schele 1997: 126). The
costume described above is similar to those depicted for dancers in countless images painted on ceramics (Reents-Budet 1994: 7.3-7.4), in the mural painting of Bonampak (Miller 1986) and in the lintel sculptures of Yaxchilan. The amount of artistic energy lavished on the depiction of dancers' costume suggests that dance and/or dancers may have been considered an important component of household and community events. Participation in festival activities and other celebratory events associated with agricultural and social renewal may have served to unite communities by providing individuals with collective experiences and identity (Tilley 1987).

Musicians and dwarves

Narrative scenes on ceramics and in the murals at Bonampak show dancers accompanied by musicians playing various instruments (Reents-Budet 1994: fig. 5.5). A whistle-figurine of an elaborately dressed male with a feathered and bird mask headdress holding rattles in each hand was recovered from a burial at Nebaj (Smith and Kidder 1951: fig. 87, e) as was a seated male blowing a long horn at Jaina (Miller 1975: title page) a second with the trumpet resting over his right shoulder (Kerr Clay Database: 4801) and third with a large drum held at his side (Kerr Clay Database: 656). In another Jaina figurine the drummer is elaborately costumed in
feathered headdress, loincloth, sleeveless vest, twisted rope around neck and cloth cords in his ears. He also had large dots impressed into his cheeks. He stands with his two hands folded over the top of a three-legged drum (Figure 4.46). Dwarfs were commonly portrayed as musicians in painting and figurine. In a figurine example from Seibel the dwarf has a small drum tucked into his waistband (Willey 1978: fig. 37,b).

Other figurines portrayed dwarves with a rope tied loosely around the neck (Willey 1972: fig. 44,c) or holding a fan in one hand (Schmidt 1998, cat. 99). In ceramic painting dwarves are often represented as attendants or servants in audience scenes (Reents-Budet 1994: 5.52) or assisting young men into elaborate dance costumes (Reents-Budet 1994: 2.31, 3.12). An image of a dwarf with a large round object carried in his two upraised hands may represent his participation in some form of the ball game (Kerr Clay Database: 8237). Kerr (2002) suggests the dwarf is carrying a large stone that were reportedly moved from village to village marking the katun or period ending.

Grotesque or fat-face male
The so-called grotesque or fat-face type of male figurine wearing a feathered or padded full body suit with fitted sleeves and legs has often been identified as a dwarf
sleeves and legs has often been identified as a dwarf (Schloesser 1978: 123) although most do not exhibit the facial or body deformity associated with the depiction of dwarves in ancient Maya imagery. A figurine in the collection of Yale University Art Gallery that wears such a feathered costume is tall and youthful in appearance (Schele 1997: 149). He holds a large round shield in one hand and the other is in a posture consistent with holding a staff/spear of some kind, now lost. He appears to be represented as a warrior. By contrast, a small dwarf-like figurine with swollen cheeks and slit eyes wears a very similar costume but holds a fan in his left hand (Schele 1997: 149).

Women and Men

Sexual relations between men and women were seldom expressed in ancient Maya imagery. One of the rare examples was produced in a complex of figurines at Jaina and elsewhere that implied the sexual relation between a toothless old man and a young woman (Figure 2.47). The couple is portrayed in an embrace either sitting or standing with one arm around their partner's back (Schmidt 1998, fig. 366-367; Schele and Miller 1986, pl. 53). Often the woman's other hand will reach up and touch the old man's face while he reaches down to lift her skirt as he passes his right leg over her left. This scenario is by no
means unique to figurine imagery and has been interpreted as the mating of the young Moon Goddess with the Old Sun God in the Underworld of ancient Maya mythology (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K5164). In an alternative figurine representation of male/female sexual union from Jaina a rabbit or coyote wearing a loincloth was substituted for the old man (Figure 2.48). Like the old man the animal’s leg crosses over the young woman’s as they embrace. The Moon Goddess was often portrayed holding a rabbit, whose shape can be seen in the grey patterns on the surface of the moon, especially when it is full (Schele and Miller 1986: 55). Old God N of the Underworld as the patron of scribes was also associated with rabbits and monkeys, their fur was possibly used in the making of brushes (Schele and Miller 1986: 54). Young women holding rabbits or other small animals in their lap were also represented in ceramic painting (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K559). Another alternative from Jaina for the old male and young female pair is the double figure of young woman and anthropomorphic saurian. The saurian, another Underworld denizen, with long upturned nose, large round eyes with heavy brow ridge wears a conical hat, pendant necklace and simple loincloth. He embraces the young woman with his right arm while his left three fingered or clawed hand reaches into her lap. His feet also have three digits (Kerr Clay Database: 1926).
Figurine couples of old men and young women were produced at Jonuta (Museo de Jonuta, INAA#’s J1126 and J1127 in Sears 2000) and Cancuén (Sears 2000, fig. 12). A non-sexualized couple showing young man and woman is known from a private collection. In this rare example, the man and woman are represented equal in size. Each embraces the other about the waist. Similar to this was the non-sexualized male-female figurine produced in central Honduras and imported to Copán during the Late Classic period that was found in Plaza D of Group 9N-8 in Las Sepulturas (Figure 2.51). In this non-Maya example the couple are portrayed as of the same age (Schmidt 1998, fig. 368).

A curious figurine from the Jaina/Campeche region depicts a young woman carrying on her back a "fat-faced" man or dwarf costumed in feathered or quilted armour (Schele 1997: 53).

More common is the figurine and ceramic image of a man carrying a woman on his back, as in the American Museum of Natural History collection (Schele 1997: 52). In this example, the woman wears a pair of large earflares, necklaces and an ankle-length huipil that almost covers the tumpline that supports her from her bearer's forehead. He is naked but for a simple loincloth, earflares and single bead necklace. Ceramic
painting clearly depict women, perhaps those of high status, carried in such a manner (Kerr Vase Database: 5847)(Figure 2.49). Similar were the men depicted carried in litters by several male bearers in the figurines from Lubaantun (Joyce 1933: Pl. VI: 5, 7, 11; Kerr clay Database: 7822). This scene was also reproduced in painting on ceramics (Kerr 1989: File No. 594; Kerr Vase Database: K594, 5534, 6317, 7613).

**Supernaturals**

This designation is reserved for half-animal and half-human or curiously costumed beings. In some cases an animal was given a human head (Willey 1972: fig. 40) in others mask-like faces, animal or deity, were added to human bodies that may suggest either the depiction of actual supernaturals or impersonators. A recent excavation at Cancuén retrieved a standing youthful male figurine with removable mask that transformed the figure into an old man (Figure 2.37). A second male figurine with removable jaguar mask was also excavated at Cancuén (Sears 2000, Fig. 16). At Altar de Sacrificios and Piedras Negras, the Sun God, with an old face, wrinkled around the mouth, large square eyes, and heavy brow-ridge with four raised dots in a diamond pattern has been identified in a figurine (Willey 1972: fig 43; Schlosser 1978: fig. 27,b). The depictions of old men with teeth in either side of their mouth and the
“dwarves” have tentatively been associated with God D (Itzamná) and the Mesoamerican Fat God respectively. Many other anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms were represented (Figure 2.50) Willey 1978: fig. 41). Generally supernatural beings have been interpreted as gods or beings that inhabit the Underworld of ancient Maya mythology.

What is not represented in figurines
There were of course many activities that were not represented by ancient Maya artisans. Perhaps the most obvious omission in the visual arts, including figurines, was the representation of agricultural labour, probably undertaken by both men and women. Was farming so “universal” that it did not serve to construct identity, whether on the basis of gender, age, or status? In the next chapter I will suggest that such choices in subject matter may correlate with access to the means of representation. This may also explain the absence of imagery relating to house construction or, indeed, of houses. Other everyday labours conspicuously absent include the gathering of water and firewood.

While women’s physical labour is suggested through the use of pottery and wearing of textiles, it is rarely narrated in figurine imagery. Male physical labours were also
significantly limited. The few exceptions include images of women grinding corn from Lubaantun and Jaina and women carrying children or a dwarf on their back. For men: the figurines from Lubaantun describe a male hunter carrying a deer, and elsewhere we see men carrying a man seated in a palanquin, or carrying a woman on their back. Deer and bird hunting are more commonly represented in ceramic painting, with only one deer-hunting example known, again from Lubaantun where a narrative approach was distinctive. Similarly at Jaina a young male with weapon but no shield might suggest a deer hunter. While men were portrayed wearing the skin of animals they were not depicted holding domestic animals as women were in figurines. Nor were they shown with children as in mural painting and relief carving.\(^6\)

While women were represented in figurines as producing or serving solid food, its consumption was never represented in figurine or any other media. Consumption of drink, by contrast, appears in ceramic painting, though not in figurines. This is particularly remarkable in relation to the importance that was placed on feasting at ancestral and

\(^6\)A partial figurine from Lubaantun depicts the lower half of a standing figure wearing a loincloth with small figures on either side (Joyce 1933: Pl.V: 1). It is difficult to ascertain whether the small figures are depictions of children, dwarves or bearers. They wear similar kilts to another partial figurine from Lubaantun of bearers carrying a palanquin (ibid: Pl.VI, 11).
marriage celebrations and other community festivals in historic accounts. In figurines, women were not represented participating in bloodletting rituals or dancing. Similarly, in sculpture and mural painting, representation of their ritual activities is limited to interior spaces, unlike men's ritual practices that were also represented as taking place in exterior courtyards.

Elaborate costumes and attributes for both men and women that appear on stelae [and some lintels] in connection with period-ending renewals, and which include the "serpent bar" [for men], the "bundle" [for women] and the jade-beaded skirt [usually for women], are almost absent from figurine representation [Jaina again, as the exception]. These activities associated with the renewal of time focused on the regeneration of the polity as a whole, rather than focusing on individual households.

Women were however depicted holding the scarf and bib associated with the performance of enema and emetic as in ceramic painting, although these objects may have marked them as attendants rather than practitioners. Even though elaborate burials and texts on stelae attest to the fact that some women
became significant ancestors they also were not depicted as such in figurines.

I also find noteworthy that in figurines, as in all other representation infants and young children were never portrayed as independent subjects. Children were always portrayed accompanied by an adult. The evident focus in figurine subject matter on "domestic" labours for women and prestige activities for men argues not only for a primary concern with construction of gendered identity, but also with negotiating the complex intersections of gender, status and representation.

Conclusion

Despite detailed taxonomies and ad hoc iconographic interpretations of specific assemblages, there has been little systematic attempt to interpret Maya figurines as a representational complex. The noteworthy exception is the work by Rosemary Joyce, in several articles that aim to clarify ancient Maya gender relations. Joyce claims in her 1993 paper entitled "Women's Work: Images of Production and Reproduction in Pre-Hispanic Southern Central America" that, "[w]ithin the household the image of woman as mother, spinner, weaver, and cook is celebrated as counterpart in this unit of social
production and reproduction to man as warrior and ritual practitioner" (Joyce 1993: 263).

According to Joyce, figurines representing men as ideological workers [warriors or ritual practitioners] complements women as material producer/reproducers [weaver, spinner, cook and mother]. Joyce takes her argument one step further by making a direct correlation between figurine imagery and everyday life. Thus, she suggests there was "complementarity" in male/female relations in ancient Maya society.

Joyce also inserts figurine usage into a model of Maya class hierarchy, i.e. an opposition of commoner and elite that has been critiqued in the previous chapter. In her recent (2000) analysis of *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*, Joyce adapts Christine Ward Gailey's (1987) analysis of the transition from "kinship to kingship" in the Tongan Islands to Classic Maya history and society. Joyce argues that the successful centralization of Classic Maya society inevitably produced the erosion of women’s status particularly when potential independence of kinship groups based on women’s production was perceived as a threat to centralized political authority (2000: 89). Joyce claims that small-scale figurine imagery recognized women’s production and could reflect a
higher status for "elite" women in non-ruling noble house compounds, the only context, she believes, where women could claim credit for the products of their labour (2000: 89). "Figurines made women's production a topic for social reflection, a permanent commemoration of fleeting action" (2000: 89). Thus her argument suggests that figurine imagery although found in "commoner" house compounds (2000: 68) "reflected" the interests of the non-ruling noble class thereby marginalizing and undervaluing subsistence and the everyday activities of the majority of people. Finally, the omission of a discussion of manufacture and use of figurines leaves Joyce's argument unclear as to whether the interests of the "noble" class were presented as universal or "commoners" adopted those interests as their own by acquiring figurines.

While this understanding makes some important strides there are also several problems with Joyce's interpretation. First, Joyce's formulation of the complementary contrasts between female and male images maintains a dichotomy of private and public space that is linked to the dichotomy of commoner and elite class in a model that is difficult to support on the basis of archaeological evidence. Second, I would argue that this imagery does not merely reflect social hierarchies but is designed to actively negotiate these social relations.
Further, the relations between genders, presented as entirely complementary, is likely to have had important hierarchic characteristics as well, as we have seen with the comparison of men's and women's residences at Copán and Tikal. I would argue that gender hierarchy is in fact more pertinent to figurine imagery than class hierarchy, making the function of such representation as a negotiation of relative status all the more crucial.

Finally, Joyce's argument is hampered by her neglect of the production and use of the figurines, without which the argument becomes overly theoretical and general, pertaining to any society rather than specifically to Maya practice. In the following chapters I will extend the arguments presented here that Maya women produced these figurines for their children's use, and thereby offer some possible interpretations of figurines as a means or strategy of intervention within the specific contexts of ancient Maya social relations.
CHAPTER THREE: MAYA WOMEN'S DISCOURSE ON GENDER RELATIONS

Introduction

In Chapter One I explored the conception that individual and collective members of Classic Maya households were bonded not by "blood" alone but by joint localization and a shared domestic economy, a crucial tenet of the house society model. I also noted that because within this context, houses were marked by competition over rights and resources, the welfare and transference of the house estate from one generation to the next would have been accomplished in part by strategic exploitation of the languages of kinship and affinity.

While all members would have had some ability to renegotiate their relative status within the house society through discourses on rights and needs, access to authority was governed by categories of age, gender, and birth status. Indeed, historical records indicate that ancient Maya women were normally restricted from holding political office and did not generally own the lands they worked. Due to tribute demands, they also lacked complete control over all the products of their labour.

At the same time, exchange networks, ostensibly economic in purpose, were the mechanisms through which women and those men
restricted from, or uninterested in political leadership may have competed for prestige and power (Hendon 1999: 260). Economic networks through which valued resources were produced and/or obtained would have been politically significant (Hendon 1999: 260). In a few early Colonial Yucatán cases Maya women are revealed through their testaments to have been not only wealthy but also economically independent and financially active (Restall 1997: 586). It is therefore possible that the market place enhanced house wealth yet at the same time challenged the tribute system that supported the political system. Hence, men with ambitions within the house political and economic structure may have attempted to create a sense of “common male interest” (Hendon 1999:260) and “gender complementarity” in order to convince other men and the majority of women to contribute resources to “community” events at the expense of their exchange networks.

Furthermore, women and other subordinate members would not have been silent on issues that concerned their welfare and that of their children. Women could have participated in power relations within the house and community by several means. One of the means by which women may have negotiated for status and control would have been through the production of visual discourses: textiles, of course, which also had a
crucial economic value in market exchange and tribute, but also, I would argue, figurines.

At Aguateca, Cerén, Copán and other sites (see also Willey 1972; 1978), figurines along with the clay moulds used in their manufacture were primarily recovered in the spaces identified as women's work areas. Ethnographic observation of ceramic manufacture in the Yucatán and in the Guatemalan Highlands demonstrate that the manufacture of storage and cooking ceramics for household use is undertaken by women even when ceramics produced for the market place were made by men (Thompson 1958; Blake 2000: personal communication). More often than not when one of the members of a household was a potter, most other members of that household would engage in some aspect of its production at some time (Thompson 1958). The exception is in the manufacture of figurines. According to Thompson (1958: 136) and Rendón (1948a: 109-111) even when ceramic production was preferred as a male occupation their wives and daughters produced figurine whistles and rattles. Evidence presented in the previous chapter that figurines were made locally, within the household, and from the same clay body as the utilitarian ceramics found therein, suggests that in the Classic period women made both types of object.
Understanding figurines as a form of women's production explains their unique range of imagery among Classic Maya figural discourses. No other medium represents women in equal frequency to the representations of men, and no other medium focuses on women's domestic labours, particularly child-rearing and the preparation of meals.

I have argued, and in the next chapter will extend this thesis, that the figurines were made by women for use as toys by Maya children. But as a form of visual discourse these figurines would have had many functions involved in the negotiation of social relationships through the construction of meaning. Of course, there could never have been a single, unified meaning intended or received through the production and interpretation of figurines, nor do I offer my own interpretation as "truth." Like the ancient Maya women producers of figurines I enter the discourse on gender relations through my interpretations of the material and social world and reproduce these viewpoints through the writing of a positioned history.

**Figurines as Maya Women's Discourse**

The issue of figurines entering into the negotiation of social relationships is particularly important considering the strong
evidence that figurines represented a woman's visual discourse. In addition to heterarchic sharing of knowledge and labour, the figurines discourse would also have been involved in hierarchic negotiations of status.

Previously, Hendon has analyzed ancient Maya textiles as an hierarchically structured woman's discourse (1999). Hendon adopts Ortner and Whitehead's (1981) model of prestige structures. Ortner and Whitehead define prestige structures as "the mechanisms by which individuals and groups arrive at given levels...and overall conditions of reproduction of the system of statuses" (1981: 13). Thus prestige structures represent a form of social evaluation that uses ordering to articulate differences in value for some set of elements of the environment of concern to the participants (Hendon 1999: 258). By imposing an hierarchic order, people set priorities among the alternatives that become the basis for their actions (Hendon 1999: 258). These judgments create opportunities for differential control and manipulation that must be analyzed in terms of their specific histories, because they "may be short-lived, very localized, and entirely dependent on the situation, or ... may be successfully maintained and reproduced over a long term" (Hendon 1999: 258).
Ortner and Whitehead's understanding of multiple prestige structures created and sustained by a "particular line of social evaluation" (1981: 13) allows us to rethink relationships among the many Classic Maya visual discourses. Perhaps the most obvious prestige structure for the ancient Maya was political authority. The discourses of art [sculpted or painted scenes of people dressed in elaborate clothing, displaying symbols of authority, engaged in warfare, dancing, playing ball, performing rituals or bloodletting], text [statements of genealogy and entitlement] and ritual action offer insight into the resources that Maya house society stakeholders during the Classic period valued in the construction of prestige and the acquisition of power (Hendon 1999: 262).

Prestige structures designed to support the transference of power and prestige through patrilineal descent and patrilocality necessarily supported a gender hierarchy. Such structures "worked" in favor of some men: they supported the domination of women, portrayed some men as superior to all others; and misrepresented the relations of production in such a way that women, children and the majority of men's contributions were alienated or undervalued. Such structures have an obvious bias in favor of the status quo. Since they
did not in any "real" way represent the contributions of the majority of individuals in ancient Maya society, it makes sense that women and other members that were affected by these claims would have entered into the discourse of gender and other power relations. They would have done so through the development and use of autonomous prestige structures that included production of visual imagery. The exclusions and disjunctions that characterize any representational discourse would have been shaped by these differing positions. I suggest the manufacture and interpretation of figurines by women functioned as an independent discourse through which some women articulated viewpoints on gender and other social relations.

When women in Classic Maya house society asserted their voices through the production of figurines they would have attempted to alter their own social and economic positions within the prevailing power structures of their world. Contemporary feminist scholarship has shown that women’s participation in the dominant structures of meaning and practice, while different than men’s, are equally constitutive (Butler 1993; McClintock 1995; McNay 2000). In other words through figurine production, Maya women would have participated in the social and symbolic relations of gender, sexuality, production and
reproduction in which they as gendered individuals were involved. However, it is important to acknowledge that although these representations by women were different from those articulated by individuals supporting the status quo of male privilege, they were equally ideological and certainly no more “real”.

Figurines, like all objects, certainly had the ability to convey different meanings for different creators and audiences. The historically specific context of their production and use, the age or gender of the agent or actor, and the relationship between knowledge, power and the body must be considered if we are to speculate how figurines might have operated in ancient Maya society. That children were the primary intended audience for figurines would certainly have affected the social value accorded those objects and the statements they made in relation to the dominant discourse that favored the social position of men. The common whistle-figurines would have held little value for men of status. Yet there were perhaps millions of figurines produced during the Classic period. They may even have been the most prominent visual form [other than costume] for the majority of people carrying out their everyday activities within the spaces of the house. Significantly, figurine representations of women at
some sites outnumbered those of men. Women's persistent
insertion of themselves as subjects of representation into the
consciousness of their viewers may imply a conscious use of
power.

Representation is of importance not as mere presentation, but
because the subject attempts to reproduce the world in the
image from which it is to be understood and apprehended. In
the following sections I shall continue to envision the
position of the majority of ancient Maya women and what they
may have said and done through their particular forms of
practice and discourse, situated among the multiple discourses
and practices that articulated ancient Maya social relations.

Figurine discourse clearly contrasts with and perhaps
contravenes the ideology of male privilege perpetuated through
the predominantly male prestige structures in which men
competed for status, and from which the majority of women
would have been excluded. These include ceramic and mural
painting, figurative and textual sculpture on public
monuments, and architectural design. Monuments of stone and
ceramic have preserved the represented interests of those who
held political authority in ancient Maya society. Their views
continue to be compelling to some contemporary observers who
maintain that these representations articulate communal interests and reciprocity. But such representations would not have been the only visual articulation of positionality during the Classic Maya period. Indeed, figurines as a representational system appear to have functioned autonomously, affording women opportunities for the differential evaluation and manipulation of social relations.

I shall also investigate women's positions on production and reproduction within the household by examining the representations of gender identity in figurines and their differences from those portrayed within the prestige structures produced primarily by men. The closest comparisons of figurines as women's discourse are to the men's discourse of painted ceramics, likewise portable objects of clay that involve figurative imagery and are made and used within household settings. I will suggest that women producers singled out for representation those labours which were not necessarily economically valued despite their social significance (labours of food preparation, animal husbandry, and child rearing) in order to demonstrate, articulate, and even enhance the value of their labours within the gendered political economy of the household, with this viewpoint contrasting with the focus on prestige, hierarchy, and "non-
productive” activities in the painted ceramic scenes (see Kerr Maya Vase Database).

While the figurine depiction of individuals may have conformed to “normative” gender roles for both men and women, at the same time they may also have served to negotiate or even contest the hierarchic system of differential rights and needs afforded those identities (Hart 1992). This would suggest that women resisted subordination by exploring and extending the limits of their expected roles. In this respect, the “politics of identity” was intimately wedded to power. Using the medium of figurines for analysis, I want to explore this relationship between gender and power. I will argue that figurine production as a discourse may have emphasized the contributions of women to society, expressed competition and contested relations within and between prestige structures, and offered alternative perspectives on political activities and rituals even when women were restricted from participation.

Understanding figurines as a gendered discourse may be approached by looking at gender differences within the figurines, particularly in the kinds of activities in which men and women are shown as engaged. Men appear in similar
roles to their representation on painted ceramics: they play ball, dress as warriors, hunt, sit on benches, bloodlet, prepare for enemas, paint masks, and play music. These activities are distant from economic forms of production, whether agricultural activity or house construction. Instead, they appear in those activities that construct male valour and honour as a competitive striving towards hierarchic status. Women appear with men in some of these ceramic scenes, seated in audience or dancing, as well as assisting men in taking the enema, the latter point to be discussed subsequently. But, there are women's activities shown commonly in figurines that are rare or absent in painted ceramics. The point here is that whereas for the representation of men in figurines women basically adopted the models available in other media, especially ceramic painting, representations of women in figurines involved their construction of a new vocabulary, and one that particularly privileged women's domestic labours. Women portrayed themselves in figurines generally as the producers of material resources and as providers of services: weaving, grinding corn, serving food, rearing animals and caring for children.

Women were rarely represented as producers or presenters of food and textiles in scenes of economic exchange painted on
ceramic vessels\(^1\). Instead, painted scenes on ceramics depict economic and social exchanges of women's products between men. As a case in point, the Fenton Vase (Figure 3.1) portrays a relationship between subordinate and super-ordinate males. The subordinate males are portrayed as exchanging bundles of textiles and a bowl of food with the super-ordinate male that acknowledges the tribute and bestows esteem or future status in exchange. The bundles of textiles and bowls of food offered in audience scenes are the products of women's labour that are transformed through presentation into the markers of male status relations.

I am suggesting here that the images created by women in figurines of their productive activities served to make visible the relations between their physical labour and socially valued goods that were alienated or completely omitted in male prestige structures yet fundamental to exchange networks, such as barter\(^2\) and marketing, that historic accounts tell us were generally controlled by women (Tozzer 1941:127). It is significant that above all other industry, child rearing, the weaving of textiles, animal

\(^1\) Of the countless paintings of audience scenes a single late (Tepeu III) example excavated at Tayasal on the shores of Lake Petén-Itzá depicts two women seated before a man and presenting him a plate of food (Kerr MS1491).

\(^2\) Barter would have involved not only exchange of product for product, but also labour for labour and labour for product.
husbandry and the production and serving of food have been singled out for figurine representation. The representation and possible meanings of each of these industries will therefore be discussed in some depth.

Child rearing

Figurines emphasized women's role in childcare. Images of women with children were produced at most sites. Women portrayed themselves carrying children in their arms, on their backs, holding sleeping children in their lap, holding young children by the hand and nursing.

It has been suggested that the childcare role of women is fundamental to the adult division of labour in human groups (Goldberg 1974). Such earlier anthropological overviews of human relations averred that women became absorbed primarily in domestic activities because their role as mothers constrained their political and economic activities (Rosaldo 1974: 24). Such assertions serve to reify and "naturalize" the political, economic and social relations between individual women and their distinctive societies. In regards to imagery, this view would see figurines representing child rearing as a static reflection of women's innate role. In contrast, I argue that figurines constituted a dynamic form of social practice.
that entered into negotiations of the value accorded women's child-rearing labours, whether identifying with or rejecting the status quo.

There is a payoff for women conforming to a status quo that constructs them as secondary persons within the household, because of the higher status and influence they can achieve as elders, in part through their responsibility in directing the labour of younger women. This relation was rarely depicted in Maya figural representations, but one unique vase that depicts an elder woman in the privileged posture of sitting on a stone bench, also shows her holding a baby while younger women nurse (Figure 3.2). Elder women who achieved a measure of power in this way may have in turn encouraged or even chastised younger women into assuming established positions as mothers within the patriarchal order (Moore 1986: 184). Conversely, the possibility of changing the social and economic conditions accorded the identity of mother may have been strategically re-evaluated or even rejected by other women.

Rosemary Joyce (2000b: 82-89) has argued that the discourse of monumental sculpture placed a high value on women's relation to childbirth, even if secondary to the male line of inheritance. The evidence for this assertion is found not only
on monuments that record both parents of an important individual, but also through the paired portraits of royal parents on the stelae of Yaxchilan and wall panels of Palenque. In contrast, figurines focus on the labours of child-rearing, rather than on genealogy or women's biological ability to procreate, and thus they depict the nursing and care of children but do not represent either pregnancy or childbirth. This contrast in representational themes provides strong evidence for the different viewpoints and agendas articulated in men and women's discourses.

Figurines entered into the labour of child-rearing not only in representational theme but also in the function of the objects, as playthings for children that could have entertained them, stimulated their imaginations and served to pass on knowledge of gendered labours and concomitant social roles. As Sofaer Derevenski (1997) demonstrates, inculcating gendered roles is an investment in the child's current and future labour. As Sofaer Derevenski also argues, an individual's childhood gender development and understanding of their position in the social organization of their world was produced in part by interaction with material objects and their associated practices. In ancient Maya society, it appears that girls lived in the women's quarters and engaged
in gender specific labours at a very early age (c.f. Tozzer 1941). Probably around age six or seven boys entered the spaces of men and were schooled in the practices of manhood (Schele 1990: 236). Girls and boys are, therefore, gendered differently, and when the future role of child-nurturing for girls is considered, the figurines become particularly self-referential, because the child's caring for and play with a figurine can inculcate roles of child rearing that will be needed as an adult. That this intricate relation between form, function, and meaning was conceptualized may be demonstrated by the Jonuta figurine with which this thesis began, that shows a mother holding the child as the child holds the figurine (Figure ii). Imagine then, an actual mother holding the hand of a child who holds this figurine.

Textile production

Figurines of women weaving on back-strap looms produced at Jaina called attention to the technical ability and labour of that activity. Ethnohistoric documents relate that women wove in or near the household, created clothing for household use, as well as finely woven mantas destined for gifts or tribute in the political economies controlled by men (Tozzer 1941: 127). These lengths of cloth represented a substantial labour investment (McAnany 1995:140). During the Colonial period, the
standard manta was thirteen meters in length by sixty-three centimeters in width and was woven of fine cotton thread (Barrera Vásquez 1980: 633). McAnany (1994: 140) suggests that the obvious importance of cloth to the ancient Maya hierarchical economy of the household served to physically organize and manage the labour of wives, daughters and other female relatives, servants and slaves. The hypothesis of gender segregation within some Classic Maya households provides a more detailed picture of how such labour organization might have worked. Such segregation allows for more efficient organization of gendered labour tasks. Furthermore, evidence for a dominant structure within the "women’s patios" [Patio E in Group 9N-8 at Copán and Group B at Palenque] argues for women’s labour being managed by higher ranking women rather than by men.

By taking age into account, figurines provide further evidence for the organization of women’s labour. Older women are shown caring for young children more often than younger women: indeed, this is their most common figurine representation. On painted ceramics, older women appear with a spindle in their headband as a mark of their identity (Kerr Maya Vase Database: R5451.00). In contrast, all of the figurines that show weaving in progress are of young women. Spinning allows mobility in
contrast to the stationary position and prolonged concentration required for weaving. These images might be read to suggest that older women's participation in child care and spinning freed younger women to devote more time for weaving as well as other forms of production, including gardening, meal preparation, marketing and services for men of the household.

I argue that women figurine makers presented the communal organization of their labour as an efficient and effective use of their resources. I further suggest this organization was represented as a preference and not an imposition. Diego de Landa informs us that "[women] help each other mutually in their working and spinning...and while at this they ever have their jokes and tell their stories, at times with a bit of grumbling" (Gates 1994: 77). Perhaps the communal organization of women's labour afforded the shared acquisition and preparation of weaving materials as well as those for other crafts. It may well have enabled the creation and teaching of designs and technical knowledge among the women of each

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3 Anthropological studies of African societies have shown that within extended family structures both pubescent females and elderly women are responsible for the majority of childcare while the mothers are engaged in agricultural or other activities outside the home (c.f. Moore 1986: 60-62).
household thereby distinguishing their products from those of their neighbors.

Women also wove products for their own use. According to historic sources, in the Yucatán Maya women owned four times as much cloth and clothing than men (Restall 1997: 587). Interestingly, the majority of those items were non-tribute products but rather included clothes for sale, for their immediate family, or even for future family members such as daughters-in-law and unborn granddaughters (Restall 1997: 587). Perhaps as with Aztec women, the production and accumulation of non-tribute items by these women not only afforded them some financial independence (Sahagún: Bk.9-10) but also provided currency [gifts] with which they could negotiate benefits for themselves and their children within the political and/or social spheres of influence. The figurine from Jaina of a woman wearing elaborate jewelry with a folded object in her lap that I have suggested may represent a weaver or cloth merchant is significant in relation to the representation of women's control over of the products of their labour (Figure 2.35).
Food preparation, animal husbandry and feasting

Figurines from Jaina (Anton 1973:89) and Lubaantun (Joyce 1933: Pl. IV, 8) portrayed women bent over metates laboriously grinding corn with heavy stone manos while young children were strapped to their backs. Other Jaina figurines describe women apportioning or offering prepared foods, while in the simpler mould-made whistles of the Southern Lowlands women often appear holding a ceramic vessel. These figurines, like that of a weaver presenting a folded cloth, represent women in control of the products of their labour. Such depictions may have challenged images produced by men on ceramics wherein men claimed authority over women's products. For some viewers these figurine images may have instead referenced women's management of trade and barter networks.

On the other hand, recall painted imagery of men presenting plates of food and textiles to other men, as depicted on ceramic vases, objects which were themselves gifted by men to other men. In comparison, figurines represent women presenting cloth, ceramics, and food, perhaps as gifts, on objects that may have themselves been gifted by women to children, or even other women. By analogy with these ceramic images, it is possible that the figurines referencing women's presentation of the products of their labours were likewise intended or
interpreted to represent gift-giving as a politicized strategy of status enhancement. Children certainly could have interpreted these figurines in many ways and perhaps even used them as "action figures" to express a multiplicity of identities in imagined narratives that also allowed for social change.

In figurines, women were also portrayed carrying dogs, young deer or monkeys in their arms or holding them sleeping in their laps. Ethnographic accounts and historic inheritance records of the early Colonial period in Yucatán suggest that Maya women's control of the products cultivated by them on house plots may have been an ancient practice (Martínez Hernández 1929; Ximénez 1967: 57-66; Tozzer 1941: 127). They also monopolized ownership and inheritance of domesticated deer, dog, pig, fowl and bees (Restall 1997: 587). Mary DeLand Pohl (1991), argued that women in the Formative and Classic Periods likewise played a significant role in the domestication of deer and dog for food, hides and other products in ancient Maya society (also Pohl and Feldman 1982). Recent excavation at Cerén, El Salvador, further corroborates her claim. A duck was found tied to the back wall of a kitchen and a rope that appeared to have been used to tie up another
animal was attached to a maguey plant in the adjoining garden (Sheets 1992: 51).

Ethnohistoric data also indicate that meat was considered essential to a proper meal, especially one presented to men (Pohl 1991: 392). Furthermore, eating meat was central to feasts marking special occasions such as the affirmation of political allegiance, house membership, marriage alliance, significant calendric events, victory in war and ancestral rites. Perhaps food preparation and service singled out for representation in figurines may have referenced women’s contributions not only to everyday nourishment but also specifically feasting.

According to Landa’s account, feasting knit the political and economic spheres together with the ideological in a way that few social practices did (Tozzer 1941: 92; McAnany 1994: 20). So important was feasting that the title “head of the banquet” [hol pop] was sometimes attached to titles of lineage authority (McAnany 1994: 31). Landa [or his informants] claim that,

...they often spend on one banquet all they have made by many days of trading or scheming. They have two methods of making these feasts: the first of these (that of the chiefs and leading men) obliges each guest to return an invitation to his host; to each guest the host must give a roast fowl and cacao and drinks in abundance, and after
the banquet it is the custom to present each with a mantle to wear, with a small stand and a cup, as fine as the host can afford" (Gates 1994: 57-58).

These observations are important for three reasons. First, they clearly demonstrate the contribution of women's labour to feasting, especially the consumption of fowl raised by women on their house plot. Historic sources maintained "women sacrificed much to be able to provide meat for ceremonial gatherings...that even if they had many fowl and needed them for their illnesses...they would rather let themselves die than kill a chicken" (Relaciones de Yucatán 1989-1900, II: 193-194).

Second, the gifting of mantas and ceramics that served to materially record the event were "as fine as the host can afford" implying that mantas and fancy ceramics were highly valued products that represented the status and/or wealth of the host and at the same time obligated the receiver to return in kind. Although it appears from Landa's account and through Classic period male representation of these events that women were often excluded from participation [or their contribution presented as secondary], the products of their labours were essential to the community relations of the house in which they were invested.
Third, male competition for status through feasting and prestation may have enhanced demand for women's products and thereby increased the value of these products not only for men's tribute or gifting but also in the independent economic networks of the market place and barter systems in which women were important. As women were at times engaged in negotiating a re-evaluation of their labour and products in the political economy, they would logically be concerned with promoting themselves within the networks over which they had a measure of control.

Comparison with male roles in figurine representation

Images of men in figurines reiterated conventions of male status and identity represented in other media. Males were represented as warriors, ball players, hunters, dancers, supernatural impersonators, and prisoners. They appear sitting on seats of authority, performing bloodletting, or as the sexual partners of women. Figurine makers seem to have rarely portrayed men as producers of, or contributors to food stocks or craft materials essential to the market place. The exception involves a single figurine from Jaina and one from Lubaantun (Joyce 1933: fig.12) that portray men involved in the act of deer hunting, a theme that is characteristic of the painted ceramics (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K4151; K4805.00).
On ceramics, deer and bird hunting appear to participate in the general theme of men's striving for status and prestige, although some viewers may also have interpreted these scenes as depicting men's contributions to food resources. However, the general contrast between men hunting deer on painted ceramics and women nurturing deer in figurine representation articulates differing and gendered relationships to the provision of meat for consumption, whether at feasts or everyday. This contrast is partially analogous to the opposition discussed previously between men presenting textiles and food on ceramic painting and women presenting these same products in figurines.

Perhaps women exploited the association of deer with valour/value in their own representation. It is possible that figurines of women raising deer valorized their own animal husbandry. Landa's account demonstrates that not all the animals women raised were small and easily managed (Gates 1994: 77) and Pohl (1991: 393) reminds us that "[d]eer can be fierce, especially during the mating season, and they require large quantities of food." Thus the strategies of domestication employed by women, which Landa tells us included suckling them as fawns, and training them to return when allowed to graze in the woods, may have been presented as
significant effort through figurine representation (Gates 1994: 77).

To summarize so far, ethnographic and historic sources have shown that women's weaving, cooking and animal husbandry skills were vital to the house economy and its position within the greater community. Women were primarily responsible for the production of tribute items yet redistribution of those goods supported some men's dominance in political relations. Women were secondary and infrequent in male representations such as ceramic paintings. According to Henrietta Moore (1994: 104) to have control over the redistribution of goods and their apportionment is to have the power to define the rights and needs of persons and thereby the social value attributed to those persons. Representation acts in much the same way. I have argued that within the male discourses [architecture, ceramic painting] of the ancient Maya household, women and subordinate men were represented as supporting super-ordinate men's claims to the control of the redistribution and apportionment of goods. In contrast, I suggest women figurine makers fore-grounded their contribution of labour and goods to the household political economy. I argue further that this emphasis constituted a re-evaluation of their worth as producers of socially valued products in direct relation to
their exclusion from representation in male status events. Figurines enabled women to make their relation to these household products visible and topical. In these figurines, women appear to demonstrate the value of their labours and their ability to exert some control over their products, whether within the household or in exchange practices of marketing and barter.

**Figurines as an assertion of value**

I contend in this chapter that the production, viewing and use of figurines enabled women to assert the social value of their labours and products in order to gain an advantage in the relations of production and redistribution. This argument may be clarified by comparison with male artisans who likewise represented themselves in relation to their labour and its products, primarily in ceramic painting but also at times in stone sculpture and mural painting as well as, presumably, painted books.

Like the women producers of figurines, male artisans had the resources available to claim importance for themselves and value for their products. The male painters of ceramics represented their activities of carving and painting masks and of painting in codices (Reents-Budet 1994: 36-71). A few painters of ceramic cylinder vases even signed their works
(Reents-Budet 1994: 46-48). Masks constitute an informative example since they are represented on painted ceramics in all three processes of production, exchange, and consumption. In consumption, masks were clearly integral to dance rituals, and were worn only by men though in the company of women. Exchange is depicted through the presentation of the mask, which in a notable example from a woman's tomb in the Mundo Perdido group of Tikal, features a woman as presenter (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K2695.00). Production is particularly privileged through the representation of divine scribal patrons in the act of carving and painting (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K717.00).

On a ceramic painted in the same hand as the Mundo Perido vase, two supernatural scribes are represented. One is seated on a bench, painting a mask, while the other, seated on the floor, positions his brush above a codex topped with a conch shell inkpot (Figure 3.3). Their importance is articulated not only by their supernatural status but also by the complex headdresses, patterned textile loincloths, and fancy jewelry.

4 In comparison, Landa documents that "[a]mong the occupations of the Indians were pottery and wood-working; they made much profit from forming idols of clay and wood, in doing which they fasted much and followed many rites" (Gates 1994: 59, 98).
5 Perhaps the patriarch residing in the dominant Structure 82 of 9N-8 of Sepulturas, Copán partially claimed his authority by association with the creative power of the patron deity of artists and scribes represented on the structures façade.
Scenes such as this that portrayed groups of men engaged in artistic activity may have promoted a sense of "common male interest" while at the same time affording recognition of individual contribution. Such visual and textual statements would have been valuable to the prestige of male artists within the house system and the value of their products in the market place.

These self-referential representations of painters by painters may be compared with the only clear representation of a scribe in the figurine medium. This object thought to be from the Palenque Region of Mexico, depicts a corpulent middle-aged or elderly male with codex, inkpot and brush at his knee (Figure 2.44). Unlike painted ceramic images of scribes the figurine scribe was represented with little adornment: he wears a simple loincloth and no necklace. The simplicity of the image suggests that the activity of writing in a codex was unremarkable for the figurine maker who would not herself have pursued scribal practice in paper, ceramic painting, or sculpture, even though women did include texts in figurines [as on the images of figures seated on hieroglyphic benches, and the clothing patterns on Lagartero figurines]. I argue, therefore, that just as male artisans asserted the value of

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6 Breakage precludes knowledge of whether or not this figure wore a headdress.
their productive labours in ceramic painting, women asserted the value of their productive labours in figurines.

One important contrast between men and women as promoters of the value of their labour deserves mention. Evidence suggests that scribal activity was not common to all males, but instead represented a part- or full-time specialization. In contrast, it is possible that most women produced figurines, just as most women also produced textiles. This means that while women almost universally had access to the means of representation, and therefore could use such practices to assert claims for status, most men may have lacked this avenue of negotiation, and would need to have their interests represented through alternative means.

Archaeological data from Aguateca and Copán dating to the Classic period provides evidence that the organization of craft production was at the household level (Sheets 1992; Inomata 2001). I suggest that artisans would have both competed and cooperated within and between households for the recognition of ability that may have had both economic and social rewards, for time dedicated solely to their craft, for access to socially valued materials, for acquisition of raw materials and for control over the products of their labour.
In addition to production of commissions, painted ceramics may have been some of the commodities offered within the open market place and as such possibly competed with textiles and plainer ceramic wares for consumer interest. Such competition may have encouraged some artisans of both genders to advance their prestige and status and to raise the value of their products through visual means of self-promotion. For example, Ekholm (1985: 185) relates the unusually complex clothing patterns represented on figurines at Lagartero, Chiapas, to a potential local textile industry, as the Grijalva Valley area near Lagartero is an important cotton-growing zone today. As Lagartero women made both figurines and textiles, Ekholm's argument would suggest that they used one medium to promote the other.

Female-male interactions in figurines

Some themes in figurine representation, particularly from Jaina, involve a narrative interrelation between men and women. As a representational strategy, narrative allowed for a multiplicity of different interpretations or a series of alternative readings. But for our purposes, a focus on these images of interaction allows us to investigate some of the ways that status and age interact with gender differentiation,
especially by comparison with related scenes on contemporary painted ceramics.

Perhaps the most common form of relationship between men and women in figurines is the liaison of an old man and a young woman. The old man is frequently associated with animals, and may have an animal headdress [deer, jaguar], an animal head or mask [vulture], or entirely replaced by an animal [rabbit, coyote] or deity. Most of these examples are mould-made and represent a conventionalized sexual relationship between the two figures. Handmade examples tend to be more innovative and explicit: in one the woman is dancing although embraced by the elder male, and in another the woman stands behind the older man to assist in the enema/emetic practice that resulted in intoxication and perhaps hallucination (Figure 3.4). There are also individual Jaina figurines in which a woman holds the "enema bib" and sometimes a fan, and figurines in which a man wears the bib, in one example holding the bundle of reeds involved in taking the emetic or sitting in front of a bowl (Figure 3.5). Perhaps these two types of enema/emetic figures were to be juxtaposed.

In comparison, ceramic scenes relating old men and young women most commonly represent the taking of an enema and/or emetic.
In these ceramic paintings of the enema/emetic practice, the women's embrace of the male elder suggests a strongly sexual content. In some cases, additional women are involved. In one, God N is attended not only by the woman assisting him, but also by subordinate women who hold a fan and a mirror (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K530.00), and in another an elderly female deity holds the bowl into which the male deity vomits (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K6020.00).

Other sexualized scenes on ceramics include the representation of the youthful Maize God with one or more nude women (Kerr Maya Vase Database: K3033.00), and the representation of young women attending any of the aged male gods [God D or Itzamna, God N or Pauahtun, whose counterpart is a deer, and God L, whose counterpart is a rabbit](Kerr Maya Vase Database: K511.00).

One point of comparison between these images would involve the contrast of labour and leisure. Elderly males in both ceramic paintings and figurines are shown in what appear to be leisure activities, indulging in sexual relations and enema/emetic practices. In contrast, older women in both media are shown in labour activities, tending children and [on figurines] preparing food. In both published ceramic representations of
young women nursing infants, elder women preside\textsuperscript{7}. In the enema scenes, it may also be argued that the woman’s labour facilitates the elder male’s leisure activity.

I have argued that some men in Classic Maya society not only recovered the products of women’s productive labour over their lifetime, through a tribute system that privileged males, but that they also gained authority and prestige in part through the accumulation of those goods, as they aged. Hence, the representation of the male privileges that came with age in figurines and painting may have signified a measure of some men’s success as fathers and administrators, or of their authority and wealth even though old men are not represented wielding political power.

In making figurines, women did not choose to reverse these gender relations, for example by portraying women engaged in the drinking of alcohol or taking of the emetic/enema. Rather I suggest some women had a stake in claiming participation in male prestige structures and may even have attempted to re-assess the value attributed to their contribution by asserting female prominence in figurines. This interpretation

\textsuperscript{7} One of these was discussed previously, while the other depicts the infants as rabbits (Kerr K626.00).
emerges when the painted ceramic scenes are compared with figurines in terms of the relations of authority between male and female.

As we have seen, women appear as attendants to the male on the painted ceramics, assisting with the enema, or undressing [?] the Maize God. In contrast, care is taken on the figurines to show women with greater authority. Indeed, in some cases her male partner is shown small, perhaps feeble, and sitting in her lap. This portrayal of women’s status also extends to a second common example of male-female interaction, where the man, perhaps a servant, carries the woman on a tumpline.

If women’s assistance in men’s taking of the enema and emetic is to be considered a form of labour, then these representations also argue that the young women’s sexual relationship with elder men were also considered a form of domestic labour. In both activities, women are shown providing a service to men. As shown in other labours, the women who fashioned these figurines brought a different perspective to such scenes elevating their status by choosing to portray the female role in sexuality, whether human or supernatural, as pre-eminent. Their depiction of women as physically dominant in such scenes would have again served to increase the value
of their labour contributions to the household economy and society.

While I therefore argue that the scenes of old men and young women in figurines represent another means by which women elevated the value of their labours, one cannot discount interpretations that concern women's contribution to reproduction as likewise worthy of prestige and power. The sexualized images of old men with young women could be understood as elder male control of young women's sexuality, a common aspect of patriarchal relations in house societies. In male prestige structures, emphasis on genealogy and marriage alliance are elaborated in visual and textual statements, perhaps to mask underlying tensions resulting from the differential claims on children, their potential labour and inheritance of house resources (Gillespie 2000: 30). Thus imagery portraying aged men engaged in sexual encounters with young women in ceramic painting may have been interpreted as a proclamation of the elder's authority over the physical and symbolic property of the household.

Reference to the supernatural realm in representation may have further naturalized the claims of old men to control reproductive resources in ancient Maya society. But this is
not to say that female interests in conjugal relations were always in conflict with the lineage as represented by men. On the contrary, it is possible to imagine individual women’s interests were best served by reaffirming a patriarchal system, as for example when they sought advantageous marriages for their younger children. However, as I have argued, there was a significant difference between the construction of gender relations by men and the “real” relations of dependence on the reproductive capacity of women.

Conclusion
In this chapter I have argued that the differing viewpoints of individuals on a variety of subjects including gender relations could be understood as arising from the clash of power relations within the household that were mediated through the production and interpretation of visual imagery. I have argued that women negotiated and even resisted attempted subordination by exploring and extending the limits of their expected roles and through a re-evaluation of their contributions, as presented through competing prestige structures that privileged male participation. Furthermore, I argued that some women vied for status, power and economic benefits through the development and maintenance of exchange networks that were independent of, yet parallel to, political
institutions that competed for their time and materials. Thus, figurines created by women emphasized their productive activities including weaving, food preparation and service, animal husbandry and childcare. I have argued that the representation of these women’s products and practices in figurines was a form of social evaluation that attempted to benefit women’s lives.

Some women may have reproduced relations of hierarchy in figurines through representations homologous to those present within their society. Others may have chosen to create categories of identity that offered alternative or imaginary perspectives in an effort to negotiate status and/or offer new possibilities for themselves and their children, respectively, although, not all interpretations would have been equal. Ultimately, convention and the social and historical conditions of the reading determined whether or not certain interpretations would be deemed appropriate. Certainly figurines would have said many things at once.

That Maya women negotiated their positions within the everyday order through figurine production is probable, but whether or not they consequently made change in that order rested on the relationship between authorizing language and the group that
acted on its authority. How dominant interpretations and representations could be undermined, and ultimately overthrown through re-signification and embodiment and the factors that could allow for the possibility of social change will be investigated in the following chapter.
Although not all societies create, define or elaborate on notions of masculinity and femininity in the same way, all children must be regarded as learners and practitioners of gender. Even very young children know a great deal about socially defined gender stereotypes through observations of the social relations and behaviors of others interacting with material objects as well as their own differing interactions with their social world (Sofaer Derevenski 1997: 194-195). Children living within an ancient Maya residence would no doubt have observed that adult women wove and cooked in different spaces than young men played ball. They also could have learned that different objects were used to carry out those activities. Thus the child having made these observations would have learned to ascribe gendered meanings to spaces, behaviours and objects.

According to social learning theory, children imitate behaviour for which they are differentially rewarded (Bussey and Bandura 1992). Children’s anticipations of the favorable responses of others guide their individual actions with objects and people that serve to produce gender (Bussey and Bandura 1992). Following Candace West and Sarah Fenstemaker
it is argued here that the anticipation of reward for appropriate behaviour does not end with childhood but is a life-long process that reproduces gender statuses in daily activity. Thus we must speak of the ongoing engendering of children rather than a time-limited process of socialization.

A child’s view: the graffiti of Tikal

Before moving on to a consideration of figurines as children’s playthings there is a group of representations that may further an understanding of the engendering of children in ancient Maya society. These are the graffiti found scratched into the plaster surfaces of room walls and benches at Tikal (as well as other sites, primarily in the Petén and Rio Bec regions; map Figure i). The subject matters of many of these images appear to be representations of events taking place in the rooms and in the plazas before these rooms. In support of this suggestion is the elaborate ballgame scene scratched into the south wall of Room 1 of Structure 5D-43 where the north-

1 Candace West and Sarah Fenstermaker in “Power, Inequality, and the Accomplishment of Gender An Ethno-methodological View” (1993) reject the notion that gender is the result of internalized social norms that are learned early in life and change little thereafter. Rather, they argue that gender as a role or status is accomplished through ongoing interaction with others (154). They distinguish between sex, one’s biological given determined by anatomical, hormonal, and chromosomal factors; sex category, the ongoing identification of individuals as male or female in everyday life; and gender, which they define as conduct that is accountable to normative conceptions of appropriate attitudes and activities for particular sex categories (155-56). As we interact with others, they believe that we are “held accountable” by others to display gender in conformity with our sex category.
facing doorway looks directly onto a ball court in the East Plaza (Figure 4.1).

Like the images on monumental public sculpture and polychrome ceramics, most graffiti represented the sporting and ceremonial events concerned with the public proclamation of men's status, prestige and honour. Male persons were often clearly distinguishable in graffiti by the depictions of loincloth, attributes such as spears and the activities they performed in the drawings by older children. However, representations of women and labour are completely absent from the published graffiti of Tikal.

Landa claimed that boys resided with the men after the age of six where they observed and learned the expectations of manhood (Gates 1994: 67-72). Perhaps only boys were witness to the events depicted and thus were responsible for these renderings. Moreover, according to cognitive development theories children often display a preference for their own gender-typed activities and display more knowledge about their own gender (Golombok and Fivush 1994). As children grow older and acquire more complex, problematic and ambiguous knowledge they incorporate this into their gender schemas (Sofaer Derevenski 1997: 197). In cross-cultural studies of children's
drawing, below the age of about 5 years there is virtually no attempt to denote the sex of a figure. Thereafter children’s use of sexually differentiating features, gender-specific items and activities increases with age (Cox 1995: 95; Figure 4.8). The change of graffiti subjects from animals and stick-like humans of indeterminate gender chosen for representation by young children to the more clearly gendered activities of the all male ballgame and the presentation of prisoners drawn by older boys may describe developmental differences in gender related knowledge.

Fantastic animals, some that resemble large jaguars were the favoured subjects of the young children in Tikal structure 3D-40, a structure defining the east side of a large plaza in the North Zone where the Maudslay and the Maler causeways meet. The majority of the engraved drawings in the Rooms of 3D-40 are naïve (Figure 4.2). The uneven length and width of arms and legs of these feline creatures, their odd numbers of claws and disproportionate head sizes are consistent with the drawing capabilities of 7- to 8-year old children (Cox 1993: 49-66).

2A closer examination of the graffiti of Tikal and that of other sites is a subject for future research that might consider whether graffiti was created within those spaces of women’s activity and if so were they substantially different in subject matter from those in buildings overlooking public plazas and male residence.
In addition to their naiveté, most of the simple graffiti were located within the reach of young children, on the doorjambs and walls of the rooms where daylight would have been available. Some of the more sophisticated imagery, where the proportions of the human body was rendered more accurately, costume details were added and figures were drawn in action poses, were located higher up on the east wall of Room 2 in 3D-40 (Figure 4.3) within access of older children. Of further interest on this wall were the two drawings of stepped pyramids placed side-by-side that resemble the structures of the Twin Pyramid Group that could be viewed from 3D-40 (Figure 4.4). Other subjects represented by young boys in Tikal were “Warrior” seats [5D-65: Rm.9; Figure 4.5], presentation of captives [5D-2-1, Rm.3; Figure 4.6] and procession [5D-46; Figure 4.7], to name a few. Various game boards were also scratched into the top surface of benches within rooms [5D-38, 5D-54, Rm. 1]. These graffiti may therefore represent some of the activities engaged in and viewed by children, or at very least the animals, individuals and activities of enough interest to the children to represent.
Figurines and the engendering of children

I have argued that women who understood their world in particular ways produced figurines for their children's use as play things. In doing so what also needs to be considered is that they may have attempted to pass on individual views informed by their understanding of their social world. I would argue that the relationship established between viewers (children and other individuals within a Maya residence) and objects (figurines) operated much like the relations between individuals, involving social complexity, contradiction and alterity. Consider the ongoing identification of individuals as girls and boys and women and men in everyday life. According to West and Fenstermaker, in order to make an identification we treat the visual (deportment, dress and bearing) as indicative of "sex" category (1995: 156). We assume on the basis of visual signs that individuals "belong" to one of only two sexes. I suggest such was also the case in the interpretation of figurines. The identifications of male and female by viewers of figurines were largely based on socially defined differences in costume and performance of activities.

According to Anne Fausto-Sterling, there are biologically at least five sexes (as defined by chromosomes) and hormonally an unlimited number, which re-affirms Butler and many other scholar's arguments that sex/sexuality is socially determined (see Anne Fausto-Sterling 1997; 1993).
According to West and Fenstermaker, the assumption of sex based on visual interpretation allows for the mis-recognition of biological difference; for example when transvestites pass as members of the sex category they aspire to through the conscious manipulation of visual signs. Thus, categorization by sex must be analytically distinguished from sex assignment and both must be further distinguished from "doing gender" (1995: 157). Gender is the local articulation of conduct in relation to normative conceptions of appropriate attitudes and activities for particular sex categories (1995: 157). If visual imagery can serve to reinforce those activities deemed appropriate for particular sex categories then it could be argued that engagement with figurines within the ancient Maya household was implicated in the accomplishment of gender identity.

The impact of figurines on the ways in which ancient Maya social actors understood themselves can only be imagined. This imagining, I would argue, is a necessary endeavoring if we are to move beyond the paradigms of a primitivist evolutionism. We must consider the actors' interpretations of their material world and the creative potential of conscious and non-self-conscious activities they performed in relation to the potential for social change. Perhaps interactions with
figurines allowed for an active participation in the world of contested meanings through a range of possible interpretations and creative responses by individuals.

As I have laid out in the previous chapters, there appear to have been standard conventions for the representation of normative gender roles in the production of figurines, although there are obvious stylistic differences through time and space. The most obvious visual convention or sign that allowed for the identification of male and female in figurine imagery was the representation of distinctive clothing and other adornments including coiffure, body modification, paint or tattooing, and deportment and bearing followed by the gendered differentiation of activity. I suggest that children and other viewers interpreted from figurines what were deemed appropriate male and female body adornment and industry. These identifications most certainly would have had an effect on the ways that individuals identified themselves in relation to their world. However, children interpreted these images within the ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification that partly constituted the child and in turn the child partly constituted the social space in which the figurines were viewed. Thus interpretation of figurines or possibilities of use were potentially open and dynamic within particular
articulations of social relations and understandings (see also Massey 1994).

A high proportion of figurines produced by women for children's use represented animals. Similarly, animals were favorite subjects in children's graffiti. In graffito imagery animals were often depicted engaged in adversarial activities with humans. Thus young children may have engaged in play activities with the numerous animal and human figurines in ways that exaggerated the observed or learned differences between the two.

Although women represented animals, supernaturals and adult humans as individual actors in figurines, they did not create figurines of individual children or infants. This suggests that what was expected of children's doll play was the interpretation of the social and symbolic structure of adult life in their community (see Rossie 1999 for a North African comparison). Children would not merely have undergone the influence of the proposed models of adult life but would have appropriated, adapted, innovated and changed them to their own needs (Rossie 1999). The archaeological recovery of figurines suggests they were primarily used within the spaces of the house defined by women's activities and residence. The
distribution of figurines suggests that doll play was a
collective activity among child peers that was observed by
adult caregivers. Interactions among children and adults from
the same family or neighborhood may have affected individual
interpretation of imagery (Rossie 1999) and the enactment of
"appropriate" behaviour through doll play. That a small
percentage of figurines recovered were located in those spaces
defined by male activity suggests that some boys continued to
play with figurines while under the care of men. Graffiti
produced by boys may indicate some of the play activities boys
engaged in with figurines. Figurines of warriors or
ballplayers, for example, may have encouraged group play that
mimicked the competition and aggression of observed adult male
activities. The interpretations of the behaviours of warriors
and ballplayers by boys may have been differentially rewarded
or contested by other children and their adult caregivers. The
anticipation of favourable reactions may have encouraged the
repetition of warfare and ballgame figurine play over other
choices of activity because they inculcated competition and
aggression as acceptable male behaviours.

The assumption that aspects of material culture act as
repositories and triggers for social meanings and thus aid in
the communication of past practice for future generations
underlies much of the project of an engendered archaeology. What concerns me in discussing figurines is not only their interpretation as media for gendered communication and mediators of ideology from one generation to the next, but also the production of knowledge about the body, that is, how children came to understand themselves as gendered individuals. The visual and functional aspects of figurines not only acted as vehicles of communication for the inculcation of symbolic structures or social values that partially determine the gender system but also could have been instrumental in actively constructing the world of the individual on the most fundamental level of bodily experience (see Sofaer Derevenski 1997).

The ways that women and men were expected to look and act were reinforced through figurine imagery. Children may have internalized those articulations according to their own observations and understandings of their world that in turn influenced their doll play and their own performances of gender. However, the space between expectation and interpretation by individuals differentially positioned within their complex world potentially allowed for variable and ambiguous gender performances. In the remainder of this chapter I will explore that space between what is presented in
Maya figurines as normative gender identity and other possibilities of engagement that allow for greater flexibility and agency.

A consideration of Butler's theory of the performative
Judith Butler's idea of the performative has had an enormous impact upon feminist work on gender identity (Bell et al. 1999; Chinn, 1997) including my own investigation of ancient Maya figurines. I suggest that Butler's thesis of the performative (or the accomplishment of gender in the ethnomethodological language of Candace West and Sarah Fenstermaker, 1993) is particularly useful if we are to understand the impact that our interaction with visual material has on our everyday lives.

Butler's formulation of the performative attempts to move beyond understanding the construction of gender identity as a one-sided process of the imposition of social or symbolic norms of behavior by instead thinking of the accomplishment of gender in terms of the process of reiteration. She argues that the determination of "sex" can no longer be thought of as solely a social construct or be taken as a bodily given on which gender is arbitrarily imposed (i.e. Althusser 1971) but must be thought of as a "regulatory ideal" that compels
regulatory practices (Butler 1993: 1-2). According to Butler, "sex" should be thought of as a process that is materialized in bodies through a reiteration or "performance" of regulatory norms (Butler 1993: 1-2). Thus, the performative expresses both the uncertainty or "performed" nature of gender identity and also its deep inculcation in that every performance serves to re-inscribe it upon the body. In other words, gender is not constructed by a single act, but by a process that only seems stable, a process of citation that is worked through at the internally complex level of motivation and self-understanding to produce the effect of identity. As such, the performance of gender does not refer to a voluntarist process so much as a process of profound bodily inscription of a compulsory and constraining heterosexuality that impels and sustains a fundamentally unstable identity (Butler 1993: 94).

That this reiteration is necessary indicates that bodies never quite comply with the norms by which their materialization is impelled. It is the instabilities opened up by the process of reiteration that "mark one domain in which the force of the regulatory law can be turned against itself to spawn re-articulations that call into question the hegemonic force of that very regulatory law" (Butler 1993: 2). In other words, the identificatory process, the materialization of norms,
allows for the stabilization of the subject who is potentially capable of resisting those norms. Butler claims this process of resistance takes place on the margins of what constitutes the corporeal norm by those who are excluded from a heterosexual regime. Their partial or conflictual identifications can potentially result in a destabilizing process of re-signification (1993: 16). The possibility of agency and change in social/sexual relations arises not through individual practice but rather from the constitutive instability of the symbolic and discursive structures that invest the body with meaning.

Were figurines the unconscious reiteration of gender identity by their producers? Did they serve to make certain kinds of action intelligible as the performance of gender within the heterosexual matrix of ancient Maya house society while excluding others? Did they compel regulatory norms of behaviour in children? Certainly a heterosexual imperative was directly reiterated through the figurines of paired women and men and especially by those of old men in sexual liaisons with young women. Such an imperative was further inculcated through the assertion of woman as mother in figurines while articulations of alternative sexualities were completely omitted. These interpellations in figurines contributed to the
field of discourse and power that orchestrated, delimited and sustained those "bodies that matter[ed]" (Butler 1993) in ancient Maya society while simultaneously providing a forum for alternative interpretations and potential embodiments through interactive play.

Butler's theory of the performative has also provoked debate and criticism particularly by Lois McNay in her recent volume, Gender and Agency: Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory (2000). McNay's criticisms are related to Butler's underdeveloped idea of agency that arises in what some pose as the negative model of subjectification (McNay 2000: 44). According to Butler the construction of gender operates through exclusionary means, such that the human is produced over and against the inhuman through a "set of foreclosures, radical erasures, that are, strictly speaking, refused the possibility of cultural articulation" (1993: 8). Butler claims the "exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings" that do not enjoy the status of subjects but under the sign of the "unliveable" serve to circumscribe the domain of the subject (1993: 3). In this sense, the subject will constitute "the site of dreaded identification" against which the subject will circumscribe its own claim to life.
Therefore, such subjects are constituted through "the force of exclusion" and "abjection", which is internal to the subject as its own founding repudiation (1993: 3). According to McNay, the priority accorded the moment of constraint by Butler and her failure to connect the symbolic construction of the body to other material relations reduces gender identity to the realm of an archetypal psycho-sexual identification (McNay 2000: 44). In addition, her rather formal account of the symbolic order in psychic rather than socio-historical terms sets up a series of dualisms: normal-abject, included-excluded, heterosexual-homosexual, inside-outside, domination-resistance that limits an understanding of agency (McNay 2000: 35, 45). The instability of symbolic systems is the central premise of the idea of the performative which forms the condition of possibility of agency for Butler, but says little about the web of power relations and social practices in which individuals are enmeshed (McNay 2000: 45-47).

**McNay, Bourdieu's *habitus, le sens pratique* and gender**

In order to work beyond the limitations of Butler's theorizing of the "performative," McNay investigates similarities between Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* and Butler's work on the materialization of gender norms. McNay's work elaborates upon some of the temporal implications of Bourdieu's work on
habitus, field and le sens pratique. By linking the symbolic process whereby the body is invested with meaning to surrounding material relations Bourdieu's theory allows for a more dynamic conceptualization of bodily existence than Butler's performative alone (McNay 2000: 36-73).

In The Logic of Practice (1990) Pierre Bourdieu theorizes the bodily inscription of societal norms. He insists that the objects of knowledge—explanations for the social order—are constructed, not passively recorded. Further, he explains that the principles of this construction are that the "system of structured, structuring dispositions," the habitus, is constituted in and through practice and is always oriented toward practical functions (1990: 52). Like Butler's concept of reiteration, Bourdieu's habitus expresses the idea that bodily identity is not a natural phenomenon, but involves the constant inscription of dominant social norms upon the body. Significantly, the concept implies not only the inculcation of these norms upon the body, but also praxis or the living through of these norms by individuals (1990: 52-65). Bourdieu argues that the parameters of personal identity—especially of one's place within a system of social differences and inequalities—are structured into the objective environment.
Accordingly, as I have previously argued, the organization of space in ancient Maya houses and cities, and the organization of time—the rhythms of work and leisure—embody the assumptions of gender, age and social hierarchy upon which that particular way of life was built. Bourdieu argues that while the individual matured, and lived everyday life interacting with specific spatial and temporal forms, s/he came to embody the assumptions of age, gender and social hierarchy, literally and figuratively. The effect was one of near-total naturalization of the social order and the forging of homologies between personal identity and social classification (Bourdieu 1977). Several commentators note that Bourdieu's theory is so skewed toward explaining social reproduction that it is structurally committed to the status quo, foreclosing the possibility of agency emerging from the margins (Moore 1994: 77; Butler 1997: 155; McNay 2000: 50-51).

Applying Bourdieu's argument in a more open manner, I suggest that an infant born female in an ancient Maya household would have been rewarded for "appropriate" gender performances primarily in the spaces created for and defined by women's labour and residence. A young boy would have learned and expected his time residing with women to be temporary. He lived his youth and adulthood in spaces designed for, and
defined by, male activities of administration, craft production and leisure. As graffiti within those spaces suggest boys observed and seem to have non-self-consciously internalized what it meant to be male in terms of all-male activity. This praxis involves coming to an understanding of social distinctions through the body: it is not simply learning societal rules by rote because intellectual rationalizations are always based on incorporated knowledge (Moore 1994: 78).

Thus, the very conditions of the production of the habitus, "the structures characterizing a determinate class of conditions of existence" produces individual and collective practices in accordance with the plans produced by history (Bourdieu 1990: 53). Because all past individual and collective experience within a class of conditions inform current individual and collective practices, habitus is a product of history (Bourdieu 1990: 54). This is a key point. By conceiving of habitus as a temporal structure, the body is accorded greater agency, dynamism and mutability. At the same time, the notion of the habitus also suggests a layering of embodied experience that is not a willed construction of identity. The social actor is thus oriented to behave in a certain way because of the "active-presence" of the whole past
established in the dense structures of the habitus (McNay 2000: 40-41). However, the uncertainties and anticipatory elements or potentialities immanent in Bourdieu's concept of the habitus render this an active, interpretative process rather than merely a repetitive one (McNay 2000: 38).

The habitus is realized at a pre-reflexive level of practical mastery Bourdieu calls le sens pratique (Bourdieu 1990: 52). It is a mode of knowledge or "practical belief" that is learned by the body but cannot be explicitly articulated (Bourdieu 1990: 109). It is a spontaneous and relatively unpredictable response prompted by prior knowledge and practice (Bourdieu 1990: 109). Thus, the acquisition of gender identity in terms of le sens pratique does not pass through the consciousness, nor is it memorized; rather, it is enacted at a pre-reflexive level and lived as a form of "practical mimesis" (McNay 2000: 39).

New understandings of the body suggest in turn that individuals likely interacted with their world in ways that previously may have been unimaginable. This allows for the possibility of change in the articulation of gender identity. It also suggests the manufacture and interpretation of figurines was potentially a spontaneous and dynamic process.
As I have argued in my analysis of the ancient Maya household, socially sanctioned narratives were central to the imposition of hegemonic identities. Emergence of new or contestatory narratives would highlight the relations of power that underlie the politics of identity. Oppositional or newly emerging social groups may have produced, consciously or non-self-consciously, forms of figurines that had not been seen before. For example, the representations of women weaving and as "cloth merchants" in figurines were unique to Jaina although archaeological recovery has shown that weaving was ubiquitous in women's spaces throughout the Maya region. The ball game-related "contact sport" is represented at Lubaantun in an abundance that was also without precedence in figurines. These articulations possibly represented emergent or contesting discourses and practices that coexisted and were subject to power relations within the context of the production and reception of other discourses, which children then may have integrated into their performative responses contributing to the narrative process of self-formation.

For Bourdieu, the somatization of power relations upon the body involves the imposition of limits that at the same time create the condition of possibility of agency (1992: 138). Bourdieu insists that if all social actors operate within a
field, this by definition means that one is capable of producing effects in it. The field is defined as a network or configuration of objective relations between positions (1993: 72-77). The field or configuration receives its form from the relation between each position and the differential distribution of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital. Tension or conflict between the interests of different groups who struggle to gain control over a field's capital thus marks the constitution of power relations in any field. Therefore, each field has a specific internal logic that establishes varied, uneven relations with other fields and renders it irreducible to any overarching dynamic. Thus, the relation between actors—including children—and symbolic structure [that partially defined individuals within their varied social environments] is not one of domination and resistance but a more differentiated concept of "regulated liberties". The pairing of habitus-field allows Bourdieu to tie the symbolic process whereby the body is invested with meaning to surrounding material relations (McNay 2000: 72).

I suggest that an ancient Maya residence conceived of within Lévi-Strauss' house society model operated similarly to Bourdieu's "field" of social relations. As such, the social structure of the house was determined by the individual
members living within and around a particular form of architectural space that was in turn created by, and homologous to the social relations of the individual members struggling for the control of resources within that particular field. As I have argued in Chapter Three figurines produced and used within the varied and dynamic households participated in the shifting power relations of the field especially those articulating gender. The embodiment of normative concepts of gender and other forms of identity were in part regulated within the field, but were never constant. Each field was connected and changed by individual members’ imagination, creativity, countless innovations, inadvertent actions and involvements in other fields within the ancient Maya community. While residential fields were constrained by the symbolic system of the house society each was potentially unique in form and potentiality for individual freedoms. Thus, Bourdieu’s concept of habitus/field, in conjunction with Lévi-Strauss’ “house society” model, clearly demonstrates the ways that knowledge about the body is wedded to power relations and agency.

However, Bourdieu’s concept of habitus has also elicited criticism on the grounds that its strongly socialized and collective view of the body makes it difficult to specify the
consequences of the intersection of sets of distinctions for individuals (Moore 1994: 79). Both the strength and weakness of Bourdieu’s approach centre around his concept of subjectivity. According to Moore, Bourdieu’s concept of positionality is devoid of any notion of a multiple subjectivity constituted through multiple positions (Moore 1994: 79). Thus Bourdieu has been criticized for his inadequate theory of individual experiences and motivations. On the other hand the strength of his approach is his insistence on the materiality of subjectivity; the subject is never free from the material conditions of existence and the world is never free of the representations that construct it (Bourdieu 1990: 122).

Creative interaction with figurines

In the following sections I will attempt to apply Lois McNay’s (2000) re-working of Judith Butler’s (1990, 1993, 1997) concept of the performative and Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977, 1990) theory of practice to ways of thinking about the interpretation of, and interaction with, figurines within the Classic Maya household. McNay’s analysis yields a more open conception of gender identity as a lived set of potentialities rather than an externally imposed set of constraining norms. According to McNay (2000: 44), "[b]y drawing out certain
temporal aspects to the process of embodiment, the ideas of *habitus* and the performative open up a theoretical space for agency and for an explanation of the elements of variability and potential creativity immanent to even the most routine reproduction of gender identity." While ideological formations no doubt play a determining role in subject formation, individuals are actively engaged in a process of self-formation through *praxis* and the interpretation of that experience on a pre-reflexive level (2000: 76).

Conceiving of subjectivity as multiple and dynamic allows a more complex understanding of women's identity in ancient Maya house society. An ideology of patriarchal authority would define women in terms of subordination. The many forms that those "normative" assertions took would have impacted individuals' understandings of themselves and affected their bodily performances. However, as I have argued in Chapter Three, women's articulations of their own identities differed from the contentions put forth by men's representation. Perhaps women's involvements in other fields of action [the market place for example], with differing regulated freedoms influenced their understandings and bodily expressions. The ambiguity created by multiple positioning would have been conveyed to children in various ways, including through the
production of figurines. The articulation of this ambiguity in figurines in turn may have created understandings and reiterations in the form of child's play and gender performances that had not been made possible before. For instance, new articulations in figurines of women weavers [and merchants] at Jaina may have facilitated, if not encouraged, groups of girls to engage in doll play that emulated and interpreted the activities of independent women in the market place.

In recognition of Butler's argument that absence is as important as articulation in the formation of identity, I suggest that the exclusion from figurine and other visual representation of everyday practices such as agricultural labour undertaken by most members of the community or, same sex relations practiced by some, affected the ways that individuals understood themselves within ancient Maya society. I have argued that the representation of various social practices and the absence of others were primarily related to struggles of power, competition for status and concern for the reproduction of the house estate. As I have argued in Chapter Three figurine representations were positioned utterances that participated in social and political issues of concern to some women. However, other members of ancient Maya communities,
especially the slaves, servants or associates of houses responsible for the majority of hard labour and agricultural work may not have had access to forms of representation that have survived to the present day. Whether these individuals were marginalized, refused articulation, or considered “abject” will never be known. Nonetheless, these individuals’ interests and concerns were excluded from figurine representations intended for children’s use. What impact might these omissions have had on an individual’s identity formation or understanding of themselves within the house structure? Did children learn through interaction with figurines that their birth order or gender circumscribed their social worth? Were warriors and mothers deemed worthy role models while agricultural labourers were not? Did the reiteration of heterosexual relations and the exclusion of same sex relations serve to assert heterosexual normativity? Were same sex relations marginalized or were these articulations in figurines an attempt to instill “appropriate” adult behaviour that would help secure the continuation of the house estate? Certainly the gender segregation of space and the careful monitoring of marriage alliances deemed important to the welfare of the house allowed for, if not encouraged, the possibility of “unarticulated” same sex relations in ancient Maya society.
The majority of figurines were mould-made. The constant re-use of moulds facilitated an indefinite number of individual experiences with a specific figurine form, which may also have contributed to a sense of shared experience between individuals over several generations. This method of production could also be seen to support the naturalization of dominant gender norms through the reiteration of these conventionalized forms and one’s engagement through gesture and mimicry with these forms. A key to the naturalization of masculine-feminine differentiation is its insertion in a symbolic system that occludes the arbitrary nature of the sexual division by lending it, according to Bourdieu, a "semantic thickness" or an over-determination of connotations and correspondences (as quoted in McNay 2000: 37). As I have argued, the first connotation of male and female reproduced in figurines was determined through the interpretation of the visual representation of the body. The second correspondence, or over-determination in ancient Maya figurines was the representation of differentiation of activities performed by women and men that mimicked the everyday. Through the representation of the ordinary the producers of figurines anticipated particular interpretations by their viewers.
I suggest that a normative assertion of "being a man" in figurine was partially represented as youthful\(^4\), with physical and social aggression and competition symbolically portrayed through the homo-social activities of hunting, sport, warfare and other male status relations. These all male activities were valorized in other visual and textual media as essential to the reputation and reproduction of the house estate. Thus figurines may have attempted to define "appropriate" gender behaviours that served to encourage particular social and emotional motivations for such practices through their interpretation by viewers. For example, the representations of idealized male warriors or ballplayers in figurines could be seen to instill fraternity in cooperative play among boys, prowess and the use of aggression in the desire to win the game or combat, and the courage to confront their opponent as "appropriate" male behaviors worthy of reward for a variety of viewers both male and female within the Classic Maya household. Hence, the promise of rewards encouraged the perpetuation of those motivations and behaviours in boys engaged with the figurines while simultaneously provoking the expectation of such male behaviour in the minds of girls. The

\(^4\) The representation of idealized youthfulness appears to have been the preferred articulation of the body in the depiction of historic events on stone monuments and ceramics as individuals were often represented in young adulthood regardless of the biological age stated in accompanying texts. This preference may have become an artistic convention in the articulation of gender.

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possibility that adult caregivers may have both witnessed and rewarded "appropriate" play, and its "appropriate" expectation and encouragement by onlookers, would have further served to perpetuate normative gender behaviours. The representation of old men engaged in sexual liaisons with young women suggests that "appropriate" heterosexual behaviour by men would continue to be encouraged and rewarded into old age. However, the articulation or expectation of rewarded behaviours for old men in figurines differed radically from those reiterated for old women.

Feminine virtues for which young and old women could have been held accountable may have been portrayed in figurines representing women as industrious, nurturing and creative. Women were portrayed in figurines engaged in the creative and industrious activities of cloth and food production. Young and old women were also represented nurturing young animals, children and old men. Some children's engagement with figurines, especially those with animal figurines may have mimicked the nurturing behaviours of their caregivers. However, that "baby" dolls were not produced may suggest that "appropriate" behaviours associated with responsibilities of childcare were observed and learned through everyday experience. Perhaps caring for younger children served as one
of the "appropriate" behaviours expected of older girls.

Conceivably, boys and girls were held accountable and differentially rewarded according to their age groups for the gender appropriateness of their doll play and everyday activities. It could be argued that the figurines given as gifts to children and the time spent in doll play among peers interpreting adult life, if viewed as a leisure activity, provided some of the rewards that reinforced the "normative" assertions of "being a woman or man" that influenced the gender identity of girls and boys.

However, while the process of active appropriation that is required to explain certain types of action may serve to inculcate dominant gender norms, the assumption of a direct identification between figurine and agent is problematic. It needs to be stressed that the notion of gender accountability pertains not only to those actions or performances that adhere to normative conceptions but also to those activities that deviate. According to West and Fenstermaker the issue is not deviance versus conformity, it is rather the assessment of the innumerable interpretative activities of individuals on the basis of normative expectations that impel gender performance in social situations that are contextually specific (1993: 156-157). Similarly, for Lois McNay, a critical understanding
of the process of identity must focus on the idea of embodiment as a lived set of potentialities rather than as an absolute submission on the part of the subject who would incorporate all the determinations of normative gender expectation (2000: 29-32). In other words, "doing gender" does not always mean living up to normative conceptions of femininity and masculinity; what it means is rendering action accountable in terms of those constraining norms (West and Fenstermaker 1993: 157).

Importantly, an implication of the performative aspect of identity is that "doing gender" does not require hetero-social situations (West and Fenstermaker 1993: 158). Indeed, I would argue that some of the most extreme versions of "essential" womanly and manly "natures" as portrayed by the ancient Maya are produced in those settings that are represented as reserved for members of a single "sex" category, for example, women's work areas in and around kitchens and bodegas and the male arenas of the ball court.

What I am arguing here is that some women, who entered into the discourse on gender identity through the production of figurines, presented masculinity and femininity as constituted largely through separate practices. "Being a man" with the
exception of sexuality was represented as constituted in relation to other men's activities, seldom in relation to female performance. In other words, the practice of gender segregation was perhaps so commonplace in ancient Maya society that the separation of male and female activities was an expectation in the representation of identity. As I have argued the most frequent subject of ancient Maya representation by men were the homo-social activities related to male status positions. On ceramics, in murals and on monumental sculpture produced by men, women were seldom represented as equals. Therefore it could be argued that women as represented by men had little role in the constitution of the male subject in relation to gendered behaviour expectation in homo-social environments. However, that the women visually represented by men were portrayed subordinate suggests there may have been a direct expectation and accountability of "being a woman" by some men.

Similarly, the producers of figurines may have articulated what were deemed by them "appropriate" embodiment through the countless images of male identity. Indeed, I suggest the emphasis on warriors, hunters and ballplayers in figurines, activities represented as exclusively for men in other media, reinforced the notion in children that men would hold other
men accountable for their gender behaviour. I further suggest that the women producers of figurines articulated expectation of such masculine behaviour and accountability through these representations. When women chose to represent that which was "female" they too relied on normative conventions of "appropriate" gender performance—the activities and labours constituted as feminine in which they were invested. Thus while images of hetero-social activity may have served to highlight categorical membership and make the accomplishment of gender more noticeable, they were not necessary to the enactment of gender.

Hetero-social activity in figurine representations focused on the representation of heterosexuality. To reiterate: even though the representations of heterosexuality in figurines were few, other sexual practices were not articulated. Thus we can speak of a compulsory heterosexuality as a "regulatory ideal" that compelled regulatory practices of the everyday that articulated and informed the symbolic order: in the ways that people dressed and performed; in their roles as mothers and fathers, sisters and brother, daughters and sons; and in the social and spatial structure of the house and city based on a "patriarchal family" model, however fictional. While such practices could have inculcated hetero-sexist behaviours, I
share with many feminist scholars a resistance to understanding the pre-reflexive formation of subjectivity in psychoanalytic terms that privileges psychic-sexual formation. Although Butler and Bourdieu emphasize the priority of originary experiences and both gesture towards potentially unrecoverable elements of embodied experience, they also both claim that psychoanalysis reifies the structures of gender identity—thereby foreclosing an account of agency (Moore 2000: 43).

According to Butler (1993: 103-106), the symbolic order has to be understood as the realm where heterogeneous power relations are partially stabilized through citational practices and not through a ground in the pre-social structure of the psyche. Similarly, for Bourdieu, while an agent may be predisposed to act in certain ways due to primary social experiences, the habitus is an "open system of dispositions" (1977: 92; 1990: 78). In order to permit the possibility of resistance, re-signification and eventual change, the relation between subjectivity and the symbolic realm must be comprehended in more socio-historic terms that account for the myriad of other social power relations through which the body and the world tend to be set in order.
To assure the readability of masculine and feminine characters in figurine it appears ancient Maya artisans relied on, and maintained dominant conventions of gender representation. Artisans may even have attempted to instill such behaviours in others through engagement with those objects. Even so, while performance in accordance with “appropriate” sex category may have been encouraged through figurine imagery the moment of identification by children and other actor audiences could never be fully determined. Despite the “compulsory” nature of heterosexual norms, there seems to be a lack of correspondence between those norms and individual practices (McNay 2000: 77).

It is important to have a sense of the indeterminacy immanent to the process through which hegemonic gender norms are manifested. To return to Butler’s thesis, the ways in which individuals identify with others, objects or spaces is “always beset by ambivalence precisely because there is a cost in every identification, the loss of some other set of identifications, the forcible approximation of a norm one never chooses, a norm that chooses us, which we occupy, reverse, re-signify to the extent that the norm fails to determine us completely” (1993: 126-7). Therefore, the performative or interactive relationship between figurines and their users allows for the misrecognition or transformation of the hegemonic norms that the objects partially represented. If
subjectivity is constituted through the embodiment or re-enactment of gender possibility, what might it do for a girl to take on or identify through role-playing the persona of a male character? Although this role-playing offers little or no liberation from hegemonic constraint of masculine and feminine ideals, it does allow for at least a measure of ambivalence of embodiment. The encouragement of creative play may have outweighed the restriction of gender bias in the approval of such ambiguous gender behaviour that may have at least allowed a space for change in relations. In turn, what role might supernatural characters have played in the constitution of subjectivity? Did girls and boys imagine themselves transformed into powerful superhuman creatures? Or might their engagement with figurines depicting supernatural beings have opened up spaces in which those annihilating norms of male and female identity and behaviour were reworked? Would they not have done many things at once?

Finally, what do we make of the animal figurines that constitute the majority of representations? Could these figures have served as checks on the boundaries of what passed for human? Could they have served to create a relationship between child and nature? If so, would the supernatural figurines have represented a transformative or transitional
space of habitation where gender was indeterminate? While play-acting may not constitute the pre-reflexive moment of identification necessary for subject formation, it does provide a way of considering the ambiguities of the process through which the individual may appropriate gender norms at the pre-reflexive level of identity.

Narrative structure of the self
Lois McNay (2000: 74-116) suggests that Paul Ricoeur's (1974, 1981) conception of the narrative structure of the self may offer a process through which individuals are actively involved in the meaningful interpretation of experience in relation to social interaction. The act of self-narration whereby "experience is organized along the temporal dimension, in the form of a plot that gathers events together into a coherent and meaningful structure that, in turn, gives significance to the overall configuration that is the person," suggests that constraints are both imposed from without and self-imposed (McNay 2000: 81). This suggests that individuals act in certain ways not only because it is "appropriate" for them to do so, but also, because it would violate their sense of identity to do otherwise. Without lapsing into voluntarism the narrative construction of self-identity underscores an account of the active, creative dimensions of agency that
allow for a coherent sense of self that is not exclusively maintained through a suppression of difference or abjection (McNay 2000: 78). Furthermore, the notion of narrative suggests that while identity is open to reconfiguration, it is also constrained and over-determined by socially and historically sanctioned meta-narratives that impose limits of self-understanding (McNay 2000: 93).

Seen in this light, play with figurines could have allowed the ancient Maya child to explore a variety of adult roles, perhaps increasingly self-regulated by a growing sense of gender identity. Yet within these gender categories, many alternatives were still possible, as attested by the variety of figurine imagery found within single households at Aguateca (Inomata 1995: 550-552). Whether consistently or at specific times, a boy may have chosen to play a warrior rather than another male identity such as a ball player. A girl may have preferred the role of a merchant rather than a mother or weaver. Thus, additional considerations must have guided the children's choices among the numerous identities and socially rewarded narratives available to them. Particular choices may have been partially guided by who children believed they were, or would become as adults in relation to their understandings of their world. In turn, other roles may have been rejected as
unacceptable to a sense of self within such worldviews.
Ricoeur's insight into the narrative structure of the self helps explain the perpetuation of norms and the ways discipline is internalized. On the other hand it also allows for possibilities of re-interpretation and potential change in social relations.

We must consider the possibility of narrative interpretation that involves more than the act of identification, but also involves the interpretation of the proposed world that the object projects. The ancient Maya social actors' ability to "objectify" that which they saw allows the potential for critique and autonomous action. Considering Ricoeur's analysis of "distantiation," that is, the identification/dis-identification of the audience (1981: 94-95), figurine imagery may have resulted in "meaningful social action". Actions that were generated from a mis-recognition, reinterpretation, or re-signification in turn underwent a similar process of objectification whereby the action may have been detached from its agent to develop consequences of its own (1981: 94-95). Here, the dimension of autonomous human action in so far as it has effects that transcend the intentionality of the actor may be re-enacted in new social contexts. Therefore, human action as a form of representation opens up new references and

It is part of my argument that the relationship between narrative self-interpretation and the interpretation of objects and meaningful social action is crucial if we are to understand some of the ways that change occurs. Conformity to norms cannot simply be inferred from the existence of norms themselves; it is the capacity for independent or unexpected action that Ricoeur invokes in his notion of distantiation—the process through which individuals invest in hegemonic meanings, that render the symbolic order constitutively unstable (McNay 2000: 108-109). While according to McNay, Ricoeur’s idea of narrative identity provides an interpretative perspective on the creative and potentially emancipatory role played by the subject in the process of self-formation, the political implications of such a concept for the ancient Maya must be situated within the context of power relations within the house and city.

According to McNay (2000: 115), the idea that narrative structure is the fundamental medium through which the temporality of human experience is conceived makes possible a new understanding of the constitution of subjectivity. It
allows us to move beyond the lack of temporal depth, and over-simplified distinctions made between the central and marginal in many social-constructionist accounts of identity that rely on dualist concepts. McNay suggests, "[t]he idea of temporal complexity at the heart of narrative identity offers a way of conceptualizing the mediated mature of gender identity and the uneven and non-synchronous nature of change within gender relations" (2000: 116). An understanding of the narrative dimensions of subjectivity is indispensable to a nuanced account of the way in which gender identities operate. McNay's integration of Bourdieu's logic of practice, Butler's performative agency and Ricoeur's narrative interpretation sheds light on both the intensity of investments in hegemonic norms of femininity and masculinity and the difficulties some women and men may have had in ancient Maya society in maintaining those identities.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have considered the possibility that the ever-present figurines produced by ancient Maya women as playthings provided children with a resource for interpreting their actions by which they held themselves and others accountable for their performances in such gender/age categories as girls and boys, men and women, elder men and
elder women. In this way, children in their everyday activities of play interpreted the interests and concerns of the women producers of figurines. Following Ricoeur and McNay, I have argued that change in social relations might to some extent have arisen as a result of the narrative aspect of self-identity that empowered individual behaviour and interactions with figurines. This is because the self-narratives that partially governed the choices of play with figurines would also have played a role in identity formation and agency/action. Thus, the creation of figurine-whistles as a means by which women conveyed knowledge, opinions, and concerns to their children simultaneously affected a space where changes in gender relations were possible.
CONCLUSION

Although thousands of figurine-whistles have been archaeologically recovered from ancient Maya households throughout the Lowlands since the mid 19th century, highly valued objects such as decoratively carved objects of stone, jade and shell, painted murals, fancy ceramics and hieroglyphic writing have been given far more extensive treatment and coverage in interpretation. As well, judgments based on modern 19th or 20th century aesthetics, on value of materials and the significance of written as opposed to visual texts, have resulted in a clear hierarchy in Maya studies that has served to affect interest, indeed downplay the value of mould-made figurine-whistles. [Interest in food preparation and storage ceramics have also been affected by this hierarchy.] Another factor influencing the lack of attention given figurine whistles is that the published photographs of figurines from excavations are frequently poor in quality, in contrast to those reproducing painted ceramics or inscribed objects. Yet these figurines were made with extreme care and sensitivity and were clearly one of the most important and abundant forms of material object for ancient Maya [textiles being the other most abundant form].
The published monographs of excavated figurine fragments have focused on their size, weight, paste, head-type, body-type, and stylistic category. These de-contextualized taxonomies are still standard procedure for the analysis of figurines despite the fact that they have not provided any real information for interpretation of figurines in the context of their location within the household.

The majority of archaeologically recovered figurines, often broken or eroded, have been from household contexts. In contrast, the vast majority of figurines selected for private collections, public museums and published photographs are those recovered from the burials at Jaina and the rare examples from burials from other ancient Maya cities. These well-published examples have provided a readily available corpus in which to judge the more common mould-made figurine-whistles prevalent at most Classic Maya cities. However, as I have argued in this thesis, these funerary contexts represented a secondary use for figurines at most sites. Thus, the privileging of well preserved "figurine-treasures" from burial contexts has skewed interpretation of the archaeological record by archaeologists and art historians.
Our contemporary fascination with individual innovation or "artistic genius" has resulted in a privileging of hand-modeled forms and perhaps even a denigration of the more common mould-made figurine-whistles produced in most Maya households. Furthermore, the practice at Jaina of placing animal figurines in the burials of children and human figurines with children and adults has resulted in the preservation and publication of more human forms than animals. This occurrence at Jaina, coupled with an art historical canon that privileges representations of the Classical body, may in part account for the judgments made by individual archaeologists, art historians, curators and collectors in their choice to exclude or under-represent animal figurine-whistles in collections and scholarly monographs even though these often represented the majority of recovered examples from household contexts. Most importantly, the practice of placing figurines in burials at Jaina has influenced the interpretation of them as primarily ritual objects. By contrast, I have argued that figurines need to be discussed in the context of their location [spatial and social] within the household.

In this thesis I have chosen to examine the primary context of figurine manufacture and use in Classic Maya residences. I
have argued that women made figurines as playthings for their children. While the use of figurines as toys and their making by women has been suggested elsewhere, this is the first study to investigate the ramifications of such an interpretation.

I have argued that the social structure of the Classic Maya household in which figurines were produced and used can be usefully assessed in terms of a current model that has been based on Lévi-Strauss' "house society." While ancient Maya social organization appeared to privilege the rights and needs of men within the household, not all members of the house would have supported this apparent inequality. I have suggested that images in all media represented investments in certain identities and not others as a strategy in the creation, maintenance and negotiation of such status relations. Specifically, through the production of figurines women appear to have attempted to re-negotiate their status by means of a re-evaluation of their contributions to the household economy and by expressing their viewpoints on gender relations. The power to name, to define a social identity, and to ascribe characteristics to that identity, as others have demonstrated, was a political power (Bourdieu 1976; Moore 1992). For some women this power was in part exercised through
the domestic activity of child rearing as well as through their production of figurines as tools of education.

The analysis of the Jonuta figurine with which I began this thesis is a particularly valuable source for such interpretation because what I argue is a self-referential narrative. Not only was this figurine produced and used for childcare purposes, but it also portrays a woman engaged in childcare activity, as the woman holds a young child by the arm, while that child uses her other arm to hold a figurine. The subject of childcare produced by women that is so common in figurines is virtually absent in representational media I have argued was produced primarily by men. This pattern of inclusion and exclusion emphasizes differences in interests, as they were mediated through representation, for a variety of groups within ancient Maya society.

By exploring the intricate filaments of meaning among the various context of use, I suggested the production of figurines as a representational system was intimately wedded to the construction and maintenance of gender identity within ancient Maya society as well as negotiations concerning the status of gender associated with labours. Figurines of women focused on objects that were not only used by women but also
made by them. Textiles and pottery were therefore also in this sense self-referential. The Jonuta figurine fore-grounded women's contributions to the reproduction of society and served to value the labour attributed by women to childcare in ancient Maya society that was nearly absent in male representation. It also stressed the crucial role figurines played in the engendering of children thereby valuing the production of those objects as well. I therefore argue that both women and men used visual media to promote their particular concerns and attempt to elevate their relative status.

This thesis has also employed gender theory to investigate the potential ramifications of the often-mentioned possibility that mould-made figurines were children's toys. I have argued that figurines as playthings provided children with an ever-available resource for interpreting appropriate actions by which they held themselves and others accountable for their performances as girls and boys. Child rearing in ancient Maya house society was not just the biological reproduction of individuals or the labour force, it was also a matter of producing particular sorts of persons that would potentially and variously benefit the houses in which they were born. Different observations and interactions with visual materials
may have led to specific learning outcomes in relation to
gendered identity and other perceptions of social organization
for the child (Sofaer Derevenski 1997: 194).

The subject matter of a figurine like the example from Jonuta
may have had the potential to influence children's gender
behaviour in several ways. The figurine imagery implies that
women cared for children. Whether the child viewer identified
with the child's or the woman's role, the expectation of the
relationship between woman and child and/or child and figurine
was one of caring. A boy viewing the image learned caring for
children was "appropriate" female behaviour. However, the
image in and of itself did not exclude the possibility of
caring behaviour by boys. By contrast, a girl was encouraged
through viewing, play and even by carrying the figurine—like
the young girl in the image—to identify with the adult caring
role.

Regardless of how dogmatic the repeated representation of a
"normative" gender stereotype of woman and child may have been
in ancient Maya society, the "success" or "failure" of the
engendering function of the figurine was ultimately governed
by the viewer's response and understanding. As such, the
visual signs of clothing, accoutrements, adornment and bearing
represented were more than mere identifiers: they provoked a cognitive assessment that was partially determined by the viewer's interpretation of the elements of the image in terms of their conscious and non-self-conscious understanding of their world. They incorporated those understandings into a narrative of the self that reconstituted a chain of causes and effects, motives and intentions that also had the potential to change their world.

Such possibilities of change in gender relations might partially have arisen as a result of the narrative aspect of self-identity that empowered individual behaviour and interactions with figurines. The self-narratives that governed the choices and behaviours of young Maya children playing with figurines, I argue, would have influenced their future choice of identity. For example, a young girl's understanding of the role of woman as merchant was partially governed by the availability of that identity in figurines. The role taken on by the child in turn may have instilled a new sense of independence or self-direction that was incorporated into their narrative of the self. Thus, the production of figurine-whistles as a means by which women passed on knowledge, opinions, and struggles to their children created a space to attempt change in social relations.
This thesis has investigated ancient Maya visual imagery as a form of discourse through which individuals expressed their views on gender in an attempt to negotiate change in relations. I have explored concerns by both women and men through an examination and interpretation of figurines in comparison with fancy ceramics as gendered productions. However, it is problematic to compare in general the figurines and painted ceramics of the central southern Lowlands. The analysis of material from a single site such as Tikal, Naranjo or other Petén sites known to invest in ceramic workshops would provide a more critical and informative comparison of the two discourses but sufficient documented comparative material has not been published. An excavation project within such a site [preferably within single district] that sought to track changes in figurines in relation to a chronological sequence of painted ceramic imagery needs to be developed if we are to critically evaluate possible changes in gender relations.

I write, then, in the conviction that history is not shaped around a single privileged social category. Gender difference and social inequality are articulated categories in the sense that they come into being in historical relation to each other and emerge only in dynamic, shifting and intimate
interdependence. For this reason, a proliferation of historically nuanced theories and strategies is called for, which may enable us to engage more effectively in the politics of affiliation, eventually changing the currently devastating balance of power.
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FL = flake
D = donut stone
SH = pottery sherd
H = hematite pigment
P = pottery vessel
OB = obsidian implement
C = lump of potter's clay
FS = field sample
RF = roof fall
(B) = pot full of beans
L = "laja" stone slab
PH = post hole
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