Chapter 4

Sexual Subjects

Identity and Taxonomy in Archaeological Research

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Introduction

As archaeologists increasingly engage with research questions related to sexuality, how we conceptualize sexuality takes on great importance. Whether implied or explicitly stated, ideas about what sexuality *is*, and how sexuality and identity are interconnected, are the fundamental building blocks of any archaeological study of past sexualities.

This chapter discusses some of the models of sexuality that are being used in some archaeological studies of social identities. I am interested in tracing the ways that certain theories of sexuality are mobilized in archaeological discourse, and what the strengths and limitations of these theoretical frameworks are. Of particular concern to me are the ways that interpretations of the archaeological past may unwittingly serve to naturalize present-day sexual identities, ideologies, and politics. My aim is not to critique the pioneering research on sexuality that has emerged within archaeology in the last decade or so, but to promote dialogue about the implications of this research by reflecting on the intellectual genealogies that support it. I begin this exploration by broadly discussing three dominant theoretical models of sexual identities, then move into a close examination of how these models are deployed in two archaeological research topics: prostitution and Native American two-spirit identities. I close by briefly discussing what I see as the liabilities and the productive tensions inherent in these theoretical models of sexual identities.

Taxonomies and Subjectivities

Like all archaeological research, investigations of sexuality interpret the past through the lens of the present: deliberately, through the use of ethnographic analogies; and less consciously, through the ways that present-day sexual norms, politics, ideologies, and identities affect researchers' conceptualizations of the past. The language used to discuss sexuality today can appear so self-evident and commonsensical that terms such as "heterosexual," "homosexual," "masochist," or "cross-dresser" are often taken to be universal, trans-historical identity categories. Archaeological researchers without specific training in the field of sexuality studies may not be aware of the extent to which these modern, largely Euro-American, sexual identity categories are relatively recent cultural phenomena. Here, I briefly discuss three of the major intellectual projects that have shaped present-day conceptions of sexual identity: sexology, the sex/gender system, and gender performance theory.

Sexology

All modern academic studies of sexuality, including archaeological ones, are a legacy of the discipline of sexology, a science that emerged in the late 1800s as part of the general expansion of taxonomic and medical sciences in Europe and America during the mid-nineteenth century. Although the research goals and practices of sexologists were diverse, a shared premise of sexology was that sexuality was an essential, enduring determinant of a person's character or identity. While religious and civil frameworks of the time focused primarily on the regulation of sexual acts and sexualized behaviors, sexologists argued that sexual acts and practices were the symptomatic expressions of durable underlying sexual dispositions. Further, these sexual dispositions were thought to cause not just sexual desires and behaviors but non-sexual preferences, habits, and behaviors as well.[1]

Sexological researchers generally used the medical case-study method, in which interviews and examinations of afflicted patients are used to build profiles of the symptoms and progressions of specific diseases. These profiles provide benchmarks to aid others in diagnosing these medical conditions as they appear in other patients—and, within sexology, were particularly geared towards diagnosing whether a patient's sexual behavior was rooted in perceived congenital or situational causes. Observations gathered from multiple case-studies were analyzed to develop elaborate sexual typologies. Common variables that sexologists evaluated when constructing these typologies included the patient's apparent genital sex at birth, the physical attributes of the patient's adult genitalia and other parts of the body, the patient's degree of conformance to gender norms in appearance and behavior, and the patient's sexual behavior and desires, with a specific focus on the gender(s) of the patient's real and desired sexual partners. While the case-studies used were primarily drawn from urban European and American populations, the resulting typologies were also informed by the findings of early ethnographic studies of non-Western societies and by the observations and reports submitted by colonial officials and missionaries working abroad (e.g., Casella, 2000). The resulting typologies were thus generally presented as universal and trans-historical categories that had been discovered through scientific research, resulting in a speciation of sexual subjects loosely parallel to the Linnaean speciation of plant and animal organisms.

Three legacies of sexology are of critical concern for archaeological researchers. First, the very conceptualization of sexuality as a distinct area of archaeological investigation is intellectually tied to the founding premises of sexology. Second, the notion that an individual sexual disposition is a determining component of social identity is a relatively recent social phenomenon. Third, the categories of sexual identity that are widely used today (e.g., transvestite, homosexual) are also recent phenomena, the enduring legacy of medical typologies that were developed to address the particular needs of industrialized European and American urban societies and the administration of their colonies.

Anthropology and the Sex/Gender System

If sexology provided a universalizing model of sexuality, cultural anthropology studies throughout the twentieth century (and continuing today) have provided an alternative legacy that highlights cross-cultural variation in sexual behaviors and identities. Many anthropological researchers adopted the language of sexology to discuss the sexuality and sexual identities observed in the populations they studied, but their observations were also oriented towards understanding the cultural specificity of sexual identities and practices. In particular, anthropological research on sexuality has to this day focused on how individual sexual subjectivities are constituted through specific cultural systems or practices. While sexologists argued that sexuality was central to individual identity, the work of anthropologists—from Mead and Malinowski onward—expanded this premise to argue that sexuality is implicated in "almost every aspect of culture" (Malinowski, 1929: xxiii).

These anthropological studies provided the empirical basis for the second dominant model operating today in sexuality studies: the sex/gender system. First articulated in Rubin's 1975 article, "The Traffic in Women," the sex/gender system at its most basic level argued for a distinction between sex (biological—male, female) and gender (cultural—man, woman, masculine, feminine). More pointedly, Rubin proposed the sex/gender model specifically to challenge the position that unequal power relations between the sexes are the inevitable result of biological difference. Countering that the roots of women's oppression lie in social relations, not biology, Rubin argued that the sex/gender system provides a mechanism for studying the ways that culture functions as "a systematic social apparatus which takes up females as raw materials and fashions domesticated women as products" (Rubin, 1975: 158). Subsequent anthropological research inspired by the sex/gender model focused initially on documenting the cross-cultural variability of gender roles and the similarities and differences in the ways that women are oppressed.

Within the sex/gender model, sexuality lurks uncomfortably in the interstices between nature and culture. Studies of sexuality within this framework have primarily focused on the ways that cultural attitudes towards men's and women's sexuality and the power dynamics of sexual relationships have contributed to women's oppression. In 1984, Rubin herself articulated the limitations of the sex/gender model in this regard. Intoning, "The time has come to think about sex" (1984: 267), Rubin called for historical and political analyses to demonstrate how sexuality in general has been constructed as a stigmatized aspect of modern life, and how specific sexual practices have been constructed as benign or malignant. Through reference to sexological research, Rubin advocated for a "concept of benign sexual variation" in which differences in sexual practices should be viewed through an appreciation of "variation [as] a fundamental property of all life, from the simplest biological organism to the most complex human social formations" (Rubin, 1984: 283). As in the sex/gender system, this conceptualization of varied sexualities that are suppressed or lauded through cultural mechanisms embraces a nature/culture duality.

The theoretical prominence of the sex/gender system within anthropological and archaeological studies has specific implications for the ways in which sexuality has been conceptualized to date in archaeological interpretations. Most positively, the sex/gender model has countered the dominant tendency in archaeology to conceptualize sexuality as a biological function related to human reproduction, and has encouraged research on cross-cultural variability on sexuality, especially non-reproductive sexuality. However, within this rubric, sexual practices and sexual identities have been treated predominantly as a function of gender rather than as a distinct aspect of social relations. For example, many archaeological studies have examined marriage primarily as a locus of the gendered organization of labor but not as a mechanism for the social regulation of sexuality. Additionally, the conceptualization of sexuality as the product of a biological/cultural duality has unwittingly supported a tendency to treat reproductive, heterosexual sexual acts as natural and constant while emphasizing the cultural production of non-reproductive sexual practices and identities. This effect, of course, is wholly counter to the *spirit* of the sex/gender system, but nonetheless it is an outcome that has been supported by the rhetoric of biological/cultural dualism.

Performing Gender, Performing Sexuality

It is precisely this biological/cultural duality that has been challenged by the third dominant conceptual framework used in archaeologies of sexuality, namely, Butler's theories of gender performativity. First outlined in her landmark text, *Gender Trouble* (1990, reprinted in 1999), and further elaborated in various articles (e.g., Butler, 1993b, 1994) and the book, *Bodies that Matter* (1993a), Butler's theory of gender performativity challenges both the analytical distinction between gender and sexuality and the biological/cultural dualism of the sex/gender system model.

Butler's performance theory is complex and multifaceted, and cannot be briefly summarized; however, I will attempt to briefly outline a few of her key points for those readers who may not be familiar with her work. First, most feminist analyses have made, as discussed above, a distinction between gender and sexuality, and have generally viewed sexuality as an outcome or consequence of gender roles. In contrast, Butler argues that both gender and sexual identities are mutually produced through a discursive heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1999: Chapters 1 and 2). The dominant discourse of heterosexuality requires a division of persons into two gender categories and simultaneously legitimizes sexual desires for the opposite gender. Through this matrix, those with non-normative gender identities *and* those whose sexual desires and practices deviate from heterosexuality are simultaneously constructed as abject persons. While the sex/gender system implicitly takes heterosexual reproduction and the distinction between male and female as stable, biological constants, Butler argues that this matrix is in fact very unstable and that its appearance of stability is only maintained through the constant policing of the discursively constructed boundaries between subject and abject (Butler, 1993a: 2–4). In other words, heterosexuality only exists by defining itself against those practices and identities that it stigmatizes, and thus relies on the abject for its own existence (Butler, 1993b).

Butler also argues against the distinction between biological and cultural aspects of sexuality and gender, positing instead that gender and sexuality are materialized wholly through cultural discourse. The sex/gender system rests, for example, on a claim that certain aspects of being a woman or a man are natural, and therefore irreducible and prior to culture; yet this claim is made through a discursive practice which itself is culturally situated, so that what is "natural" is delineated and fixed through cultural practices (Butler 1999: 7–12). Butler argues that it is perhaps more productive to see the distinction between natural and cultural as a disciplining practice that seeks to establish certain aspects of identity as irreducible and unchangeable. "This is not to say," Butler qualifies, "that the materiality of bodies is simply and only a linguistic effect . . . Such a distinction overlooks the materiality of the signifier itself" (Butler 1993a: 30).

A third, and perhaps the core, element of Butler's theory is that gender and sexual identities are not stable and unchanging but are continually produced through social performances. Although gender and sexual identities may appear stable, the appearance of continuity and stability is an illusion created by an endless series of mimetic repetitions, each repetition separated by a gap, or risk, of loss (Butler, 1999: 40–43). If this seems confusing, imagine going to a movie matinee and watching the characters move across the screen. Of course what you are really seeing are a sequence of still images being projected at a rate so rapid that you do not consciously observe the gaps between each image. The illusion of continuity is produced only because each frame is nearly (but never exactly) identical to the one that came before. It is important to emphasize that Butler does not view these gendered and sexual performances as volitional in the sense that an actor might assume the identity of a character she is playing; rather these performances are "a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (Butler, 1999: 43–44). It is within the gaps between these repetitions that Butler identifies potential for agency, as subjects may be able to subtly transform these mimetic performances through subversive practices like mimicry, satire, drag, exaggeration, and so on (e.g., Butler, 1993a: 121–140, 1999: 173–177).

It would not be an understatement to note that Butler's theories of gender performance have transformed the fields of feminist/gender/sexuality studies and have shifted the terms of sexual and feminist political and social activism. One of the key effects of Butler's theories has been a profound change in sexual identification practice, especially the reclamation of the word "queer" (de Lauretis, 1991: v). Broadly conceptualized as being oppositional to the normative heterosexual matrix, queer practices of identification generally celebrate fluidity and instability in both gender and sexual identities. Many people who previously identified (or would have been identified) as gay or lesbian or bisexual or trangendered/transexual have adopted the moniker "queer" as a form of resistance to the taxonomic sexual identity categories that were codified and given medical and legal legitimacy through sexology (Warner, 1993).

Within archaeology, Butler's performance theory has been most widely utilized by researchers who use textual and pictorial lines of evidence in their interpretation of the past (e.g., Casella, 1999, 2000; Gilchrist, 2000; Joyce, 2000a, 2000b; Meskell, 2000). Such texts and representations lend themselves well to Butler's focus on cultural discourse, while applications of gender performance theory to the analysis of non-discursive material remains and residues has been less common to date.

In Practice: Archaeological Studies of Sexual Identity

These three bodies of sexuality theory—sexology, the sex/gender system, and performance theory—have provided important foundations for archaeological investigations of sexual identities. In my opinion, the pertinent question is; how do archaeologists actually use these theories in practice? How do these models enable or constrain certain kinds of research and interpretation? And, what happens when these theories of sexuality, which were developed specifically to address the peculiarities of late nineteenth and twentieth century life in European and American societies, are used to study the near and distant past, and to conduct research on non-Western and well as Western cultures?

In North American archaeology, two topics dominate the arena of sexuality studies: Victorian-era prostitution and Native American two-spirits. Research on both of these topics has been underway now for well over a decade and has involved case studies that are both geographically dispersed and that have been conducted by researchers aligned with a diversity of theoretical standpoints in archaeology (although, not surprisingly, most have been associated to some degree with feminist or gender-focused archaeology). A review of these two fields of study thus provides good examples of how the above-outlined theories of sexuality are influencing archaeological research.

Brothel Archaeology

Archaeological studies of prostitution in North America have been spurred by the discovery of deposits from Victorian-era and turn-of-the-century brothels, parlor houses, and cribs.[2] In most cases these sites have been identified and excavated as part of cultural resource management projects associated with urban development. Significant studies include an analysis of brothel sites in East Blairmore, Alberta (Lawrence Cheney, 1991, 1993), studies of several brothels in Washington, D.C.'s Hooker's Division (Cheek and Seifert, 1994; Seifert, 1991, 1994; Seifert, et al., 2000), and recent excavations in the former Los Angeles red light district (Costello, 2000, 2002; Costello, et al., 1998, 1999; Costello and Praetzellis 1999).[3] In nearly all cases, these investigations have focused on the recovery of artifacts and other remains from hollow features such as privies and kitchen waste pits that are known through historic records to have been associated with houses of prostitution. In some cases the structural remains of buildings have been recovered and recorded as well.

All of these studies share a core methodological approach. Generally, archaeological data recovered from non-brothel households (often in the same neighborhood) are used as a baseline to identify the archaeological profile of the typical material culture, foodways, medicinal practices, alcohol consumption, etcetera, of working-class family life. Materials recovered from the brothel deposits are compared in various ways against this baseline in order to identify the unique archaeological characteristics of brothel deposits and to measure the similarities and differences between brothels and working-class family life. The Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. studies in particular have used this comparative approach to examine the working conditions of prostitutes and their relative economic status compared to non-brothel households. For example, materials recovered from Los

Angeles indicate that parlor house prostitutes enjoyed a substantially higher standard of living than their working-class neighbors, while the material record of crib prostitutes reflects spartan, non-residential working conditions (Costello et al., 1998, 1999). Studies in Washington, D.C. have shown that initially, in the late nineteenth century, the living conditions of brothel prostitutes were roughly identical to that in adjacent non-brothel households. However, by the early 1900s, the relative economic status of prostitutes had increased (Seifert 1994). Archaeological studies have also documented the occupational hazards of sex work through the recovery of panel medicine bottles that once contained "cures for venereal disease and pain-numbing tinctures of opium and morphine" (Costello, 2002: 177). The economic and occupational emphases in archaeological research on prostitution are suggestive of feminist organizing around sex work as labor from the 1970s to this day (Bell, 1987; Kempadoo, 1998).

Archaeological studies of prostitution have also problematized conventional scholarship about gender ideologies of the Victorian era, noting the permeability of the "separate spheres" usually associated with the female cult of domesticity (Poovey, 1988; Smith-Rosenberg, 1985). For example, Seifert has noted that for white working-class women in Hooker's Division, economic well-being and sexual activity were intertwined through marriage, on-the-job sexual harassment, sexual reciprocation for gifts from male friends, and sex for pay. Likewise, until the 1890s, kin-based households, boarding houses, and brothels formed a continuum that is archaeologically visible: in Washington, D.C., deposits from late nineteenth century white brothels and white working-class non-brothel households were more similar to each other than they were to brothels and non-brothels from neighborhoods populated by other races and classes (Seifert, 1991). Both Costello and Seifert have also considered the social paradox of the Victorian-era brothel, which was often run as a family business and provided homes for single young women; these buildings were commercial spaces that were simultaneously public, private, and neither.

Overwhelmingly, however, these archaeological investigations of prostitution sites have focused on the economic aspects of prostitution. What are curiously sidestepped are the sexual subjectivities of the people who lived at, worked in, and patronized these businesses. Recent studies of present-day commercial sex work in the urban United States have begun to explore the erotics of commercial sex transactions for both client and sex worker, and have opened dialogues about the ways that prostitutes' sexuality is engaged with, rather than divorced from, their role as sex workers (for examples, see Califia, 1994; Dangerous Bedfellows, 1996; Nagle, 1997). Consequently, feminist studies of sex work have broadened to include issues of sexual agency as well as sexual oppression, and have increasingly focused on the self-defined experience of sex workers (e.g., Delacoste and Alexander, 1987). An example of how archaeological interpretations are radically changed when sexual subjectivities are included is provided by the performance piece, "Red Light Voices: An Archaeological Drama of Late Nineteenth Century Prostitution" (Costello, 2000). Performed by the author and her colleagues at several archaeological conferences in North America, "Red Light Voices" is a spoken-word archaeological narrative that juxtaposes historic photographs and images of artifacts from Los Angeles brothel sites with selections from oral histories and letters of prostitutes, johns, and pimps. Costello's aim in producing this drama: "to expose the human face behind our data [. . .] to arrive at a deeper understanding of past events by humanizing them" (Costello 2000: 163).

"Red Light Voices" is notable within the genre of archaeological studies on prostitution not only in its humanistic approach, but also because the drama engages with the experiences not only of women prostitutes but also of their male clients. With this one exception, archaeological studies of prostitution have focused on women—the standard of living and health practices of female prostitutes, and the business acumen of madams. These studies have also presumed that the sexual transactions at brothel sites were wholly heterosexual. It is here that I believe we see the shadow effect of sexological studies. With very few exceptions, sexologists confined their discussions of prostitution to diagnosing the underlying causes of female prostitution; male patronage of female prostitutes was not pathologized and instead was framed as a normal, unremarkable outgrowth of men's naturally vigorous sexual drive. Female prostitutes, on the other hand, were variously characterized in sexology as degenerate and immoral, as evidence of evolutionary atavism among the lower classes, and as the female equivalent of the male born criminal.[4]

Both historical studies of prostitution in the nineteenth century United States and research on more contemporary sex work have challenged the assumption that prostitution can be assumed to consist wholly of women who are paid for sexual services to male clients. In the sex trade, women are not always the sellers (Davies and Feldman, 1997; Longo, 1998; West 1993), men are not always the buyers (Nestle, 1987; Watanabe, 1998: 120), and gender transgression itself is often a sexual commodity (Kulick, 1998; Slamah, 1998). In recent years, some scholars and activists have cited Butler's gender performance theories in calling for research that focuses on "acts rather than identities" to challenge heteronormative assumptions about commercial sex transactions (Dangerous Bedfellows, 1996: 14).

When applied to archaeological investigations this "queering" of prostitution studies has opened up the study of commercial sex beyond the physical limits of identified brothel sites. A prime example is Casella's archaeological and historical investigation of the Ross Female Factory, a nineteenth century women's prison in Australia (Casella, 1999, 2000). Her excavations there revealed evidence of a black-market sexual economy—one in which both "heterosexual" and "same-sex" sexual exchanges were complicated by the participation of transgendered and transsexual individuals. These sexual interactions and relationships existed within the contradictory intersections between romantic love, commercial sex, and sexual harassment, and could neither be defined wholly as prostitution nor as non-commercial. Further, within the context of the prison's sexual economy, the sexual "identities" of the participants in the black market were highly contextual and unstable.

Native American Two-Spirits

The study of North American indigenous two-spirit identities is another area where archaeological researchers first engaged with issues of sexuality. Two-spirit (also berdache or third- and fourth-gender) is a term used to generically describe Native American identities that reference both masculine and feminine characteristics.[5] Because two-spirit identities lie outside the binary gender system dominant in Western culture, within anthropology they often have been championed as evidence of the cultural construction of gender. Two-spirit identities are also contested academic sites for theorizing about the interplay between biology, culture, and sexuality, as two-spirit identities are often also associated with same-sex sexual practices, hermaphrodism, and transsexuality.[6]

It is beyond the scope of this essay to consider the ways that two-spirit identities have been treated in anthropological and historic literature as a whole, but I do want to examine how two-spirits have been considered in archaeological research. In the early 1990s, the concept of third and fourth genders in Native American cultures was repeatedly advanced by archaeologists to demonstrate the potential diversity of sex/gender systems in the past (Claassen, 1992b; Duke, 1991; Hollimon, 1991, 1992; Whelan, 1991). In particular, Claassen (1992b) and Duke (1991) used the example of two-spirit identities to illustrate conceptual problems with certain methodological approaches to "finding" gender in archaeological assemblages, especially the use of the direct historical approach in task-differentiation frameworks and gender attribution studies.[7] As Claassen wrote in 1992:

> Berdache individuals of Native American cultures are arguably a third gender, or a between-gender, but their material culture is indistinguishable from that stereotypically assigned to women or men. [. . .] We archaeologists currently have no way to recognize gender independent of sex and sex roles. (Claassen 1992b: 3)

At the same time that two-spirit identities were used to challenge both an assumed transhistorical binary gender system and the gender attribution methods being used in feminist archaeology, Whelan (1991) and Hollimon (1996, 1997) undertook studies of human remains and associated mortuary artifacts to increase the archaeological visibility of gender diversity. Whelan's analysis of a nineteenth century Dakota burial site revealed patterns of artifact clusters that suggested that gender categories were not always not ascribed on the basis of biological sex, and indicated that gender status was also age-dependent. Hollimon's study of prehistoric Chumash burials combined analysis of skeletal pathologies with distributional analysis of associated artifacts to identify a possible *'Aqi* (two-spirit) burial. These approaches to "finding" two-spirits in the archaeological record emphasized transsexuality as the determinant characteristic of two-spirit identity.

More recently Hollimon has re-examined the Chumash burial case by using ethnohistoric sources to consider the relationship between gender, sexuality, religion, and occupation in *'Aqi* identity. Noting that the Chumash *'Aqi* are members of an undertaking guild that involves occupational, spiritual, and kin-based obligations and privileges, Hollimon suggests that designation as an *'Aqi* may not be seamlessly linked to transsexuality or same-sex sexual practices. Instead it is abstinence from procreative sex acts and fictive or biological kinship relationships that allow an individual to be initiated into the *'Aqi* guild. Ethnohistoric sources suggest that this could include biological males who are transsexual, men who have sex with other biological men, men without children, celibates, and post-menopausal women (Hollimon, 2000). Thus sexuality (but not just homosexuality), spirituality, and craft specialization together support *'Aqi* identity.

Using an ethnohistoric approach similar to Hollimon, Prine (1997, 2000) has examined the two-spirit Hidatsa *miati* through close readings of ethnohistoric, ethnographic, and archaeological records. Her research indicates that *miati* individuals, who were identified as male at birth, were differentiated from their age and sex cohorts in six ways: they changed their gender at adolescence, they had or acquired kinship relationships with people in specific spiritual roles, they were highly respected, they created households focused on same-sex relationships, they were highly productive, and they were cultural innovators (Prine 2000). *Miati* also played a key role in earthlodge building ceremonies, mediating the tension between feminine earth and masculine sky by raising the central lodge posts (Prine 1997). Prine thus finds archaeological indicators of the *miati* through a study of architectural remains, identifying a double-posted earthlodge that might have been a *miati* household. It is both the unusual architectural features of the earthlodge and its small size that suggest its occupation by cultural innovators who had a smaller household because of their non-reproductive sexuality (Prine 2000). The role of space and architecture in the maintenance of two-spirit identities has also been recently examined by Perry (1999), who examines how plaza architecture may have participated in the social performance of occupational and ritual aspects of Zuni *lhamana* identities.

These recent archaeological considerations of *'Aqi*, *miati*, and *lhamana* identities illustrate how sexology, the sex/gender system, and theories of gender performativity have influenced archaeological interpretation in at times contradictory ways. In particular, Prine, Perry, and Hollimon demonstrate how the treatment of two-spirit identities as either third or fourth *genders* and/or as distinct *sexualities* reduces the complexity of social identities that are formed through a constellation of gendered, sexual, ritual, occupational, and spiritual attributes. Especially within sexological research and the sex/gender system, gender and sexual identities are viewed as core structuring aspects of personhood that influence other, more transitory identity components such as occupation. Within some indigenous cultures, two-spirit identities may be configured primarily spirituality, kinship, and/or occupation, suggesting that in some cases sexual and gender identities may be the "by-products" or outcomes of other identification practices.

To develop this point further: the notion that sexual identities are deeply installed or innate "essences" abound in modern narratives such as coming out stories where puzzling non-sexual behaviors are later "explained" when the narrator realizes that he or she is "really" gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, etc. This concept that sexuality is the underlying cause of non-sexual behaviors can be traced back to sexology's postulate that sexuality is a central determining force of character and behavior. In most modern Western societies, it would be ludicrous, and even injurious, to suggest that a man *became* gay because he chose to be a hairdresser, or that a woman started having sex with women *because* she was elected CEO of a major financial corporation. But Hollimon's research suggests that among the Chumash, for example, it could be acceptable for a person to change their gender identification or sexual practices because he or she joined a mortuary guild. This shift in perspective is perhaps less difficult to apprehend if one considers the vows of celibacy taken by some Christian religious in Medieval Europe (see Gilchrist, 1994, 2000 for further discussion of this point) and even to present-day Catholic priests, nuns, and monks. I think it is important for archaeological researchers to resist the assumption that gender and sexuality are necessarily constitutive cores of social identities in the cultures they study, unless substantial evidence exists to the contrary.

The archaeological investigations of two-spirit identities discussed above also illustrate a potential limit to the utility of gender performance theory in studying sexual identities in the past. The queering of sexuality studies has shifted the grounds of discourse away from the study of fixed, taxonomic identity categories to a focus on identification practices. As discussed above, the identification "queer" is increasingly being used as an inclusive, flexible description of identities and practices that are situated in opposition to the (usually heterosexual) norm. The example of two-spirit identities illustrates the need for archaeologists to make a critical, firm distinction between *social* deviance and *statistical* deviation.

To date, most archaeological investigations of two-spirit identities have shared a common research strategy, one that draws heavily on the direct historical approach (Steward, 1942). First, a normative archaeological pattern (of architectural remains or of grave-good distribution, for example) is determined. Next, attributes of the archaeological record that vary from that norm are examined as possible evidence of two-spirit practices and identities. Ethnographic and ethnohistoric textual sources are then used to substantiate the researchers' hypotheses that certain non-normative practices can be reasonably presumed to be evidence of two-spirit identities.

When this methodology is used, it is of vital importance that archaeologists be very clear that variance from a *statistical* norm does *not* necessarily indicate that two-spirit people were in some way transgressive, oppositional, or in a relational stance to *cultural* norms. According to Hollimon, the Chumash *'Aqi* were members of a high-status spiritual-occupational guild. Likewise, Prine presents ethnohistoric evidence that Hidatsa *miati* were highly respected and valued by their communities. In other words, *'Aqi* and *miati* were as "normal" as individuals who were gendered male and female and who practiced reproductive heterosexual sex. It would be a grave ethnocentric error to presume that difference from heterosexuality is always marked as deviance. If archaeologists fail to consider the ways that transgendered or non-heterosexual sexualities can be "normative" within specific cultural contexts, they may overlook the ways that sanctioned non-heterosexual identities might participate in creating other stigmatized or abject sexual practices. For example, Epple's ethnographic studies of contemporary Navajo two-spirit *nádleehí* indicate that Navajo "traditional" cultural values restrict *nádleehí* from having sex with other *nádleehí* (Epple, 1998: 271). Hollimon's ethnographic and archaeological study of the Chumash *'Aqi* presents another set of regulatory practices that prohibit undertakers from engaging in procreative sex acts (Hollimon, 2000). Thus it is important to consider not only whether or not historically specific non-heterosexual or transgender identities might have been normative, but also how such identities or practices might have contributed to the regulation of gender and sexuality.

Sexology, Sex/Gender, Performance: Pitfalls and Productive Tensions

The examples of prostitution and two-spirit identities illustrate how archaeological research on sexual identities operates within the triple legacy of sexology, the sex/gender system, and gender performance theory. These models provide a necessary foundation that begins to define what sexuality is, why it is important, and how it can be studied. It would be perhaps be easy to focus on the shortcomings and contradictory aspects of these models, and to emphasize the pitfalls awaiting archaeologists who are bold enough to study sexuality as part of their research agenda. I will note that, for archaeologists, the greatest liability of these theories is that they were all developed to address present-day (or at least very recent) conditions in European and American cultures. However, this shortcoming can also be seen as an opportunity. Archaeological studies of sexuality may be particularly important precisely because they may illuminate the assumptions and limitations of modern theories of sexuality—and in doing so, aid in developing a discipline of sexuality studies that more accurately engages with the full range and potentials of human subjectivity.

I conclude by outlining what I believe are four "productive tensions" in theoretical models of sexuality that simultaneously enable and constrain archaeological research on these topics. They are listed in no particular order, nor is this list exhaustive.

1. The Tension between Gender and Sexuality

In an articled titled, "Against Proper Objects" (1994), Butler warned against assuming that gender is the proper object of feminist theories, and sexuality, the proper object of queer studies. Reflecting on Rubin's 1984 article, "Thinking Sex", Butler reflected, "If sexual relations cannot be reduced to gender positions, which seems true enough, it does not follow that an analysis of sexual relations apart from an analysis of gender relations is possible" (Butler, 1994).

Chicken-and-egg debates about "which came first" are more likely to derail archaeological studies of gender and sexuality than encourage them. I believe that Butler's gender performance theory provides a useful framework for beginning to understand how both sexual and gendered identities are mutually constituted and inseparable: a "normal" woman is both heterosexual and compliant with the gender roles of her culture; likewise, the sexological invert was diagnosed both through same-sex sexual preferences and through behaviors deemed to be gender deviant. One interesting avenue of archaeological inquiry could include diachronic investigations of the changing extent to which sexuality and gender identities were merged or separated within a given culture.

What has been demonstrated by a large body of archaeological work is that taking either sexuality or gender as a starting point in an investigation can lead to interesting, productive research on both topics. The key, I think, is to remember that this distinction may be only heuristic, and that in practice social identities will always be more complex than the study of one axis of identification could ever reflect.

2. The Tension between Universal and Culturally Specific Sexual Identity Categories

The legacy of sexology is a language of taxonomic categories of sexual identities, practices, and proclivities that has been so naturalized through modern medical and social discourse that it may at times seem universal and self-evident. The sex/gender system, in contrast, resists these universalizing tendencies in favor of attention to the cultural specificity of sexual identities. Performance theory calls attention to the political project inherent in any sexual identity category—namely, the policing of the borders of what is normative and what is abject, and the social reproduction of the cultural matrix. Performance theory also teaches us to be suspect of the apparent stability of sexual identities.

Many cultural anthropological studies have stepped away from the legacy of sexology by using only the culturally specific terms revealed through ethnographic observation of a society or culture. However, unless archaeologists are studying a culture for which abundant documentary and ethnohistoric information is available, they are unlikely to ever know what sexual categories and terms were used by the people they studied. Even when such evidence does exist, the ethnohistoric and documentary records may be biased in ways that distort or mask such categories. What remains is the classic tension between etic and emic perspectives that is inherent in any anthropological, archaeological, and historic endeavor.

In my opinion, universal taxonomic frameworks of sexual identities and sexual practices (e.g., the categorization between heterosexual vs. homosexual practices and identities) can be useful beginning points for archaeological research on sexuality, as long as it is remembered that the terms and categories being used may have absolutely no relevance to the experiences and perspectives of the past peoples being studied. These terms should be used as entry points only; in a manner akin to Wylie's bootstrapping methodology (1986), diverse lines of archaeological evidence should be used to test and refine the terms and categories that form the basis of archaeological research on sexuality.

3. The Tension between Biological and Cultural Models of Sexuality

The question of how much biology, on one hand, and culture, on the other hand, shape sexual identities is highly contested both in modern society and in social theory. For example, in recent years, popular and scholarly publications have carried headlines examining controversial evidence of "gay genes" (e.g., Wall Street Journal, 1993; LeVay 1991; Painter 1993; Risch, et al., 1993). These claims for a biological origin of same-sex sexuality—based on an apparent correlation between certain physiological traits and sexual identity (for gay men, an enlarged hypothalmus; for lesbians, differences in the configuration of the inner ear)—have yet to provide specific evidence of the chromosomal transmission of homosexuality (Wickelgren, 1999). Other researchers have examined same-sex sexual behavior among non-human species to develop other models of the adaptive functions of homosexuality (e.g., Baghemil, 2000; Dixson, 1998; Vasey, 1998). However, regardless of the technologies and methods being applied, the search for a biological, universal (trans-historical, trans-cultural) "cause" of homosexuality (or of other sexual practices) is in many ways an extension of the sexological project of medical classification and diagnosis of sexual practices that deviate from social norms.

Archaeological investigations of sexuality have been shaped by this analytical tension between culture and biology and the theoretical models that engage with it. Nineteenth and twentieth century sexologists varied widely in the degree to which their diagnoses attributed certain sexual conditions to congenital or to social origins. Rubin's sex/gender model continues to work within this tension, arguing for a cultural elaboration of a biological template, in which the biological aspects of sexuality consist both of those aspects of sexuality closest to reproduction and a concept of universal variability in sexual desires and practices. Butler (1990, 1993a) challenges the presumption that there is a natural or biological component of sexual identities that can ever be said to be outside of cultural discourse, and argues that what is perceived as "natural" is signified and materialized through language and repetition.

I would like to suggest that for the purposes of archaeological research, the question of whether or not a sexual desire, proclivity, or identity "originates" in culture or in biology (e.g., genetics, heredity, or physiology) can detract us from more interesting and productive research topics.[8] From a biological perspective, any aspect of sexuality that is shaped by genetics would consist not only of its genotype, or genetic coding, but also of its phenotype—the specific manifestation of that genetic coding in response to physiological and environmental conditions. The "environment" within which human phenotypes are shaped includes culture, in both its discursive and material aspects. Archaeological investigations of sexuality can work within the tensions of the nature/nurture debate by exploring, as we do best, the cultural specificities of how sexualities are manifested in particular historical moments.

This methodological stance is nothing new to archaeology. For example, archaeologists investigate dietary practices and foodways in our studies of the past. Few would argue that food consumption is unrelated to biology or lacks an adaptive function; yet archaeologists also investigate how human culture—including social organization, economic relationships, ethnic identities, gender ideologies, and religion, to name a few—shape the way that social groups and individuals produce, process, prepare, and consume food. Likewise, cultural responses to sexual desires and behaviors are so profound and varied that even if a sexual desire or behavior is conditioned by biology, its practice is so shaped by cultural context that the relationship between biology and a specific sexual identity is at most likely to be correlative rather than determinate.

I believe that archaeological research can play an important part in further exploring this ongoing tension between biological and cultural models of sexuality—not necessarily with the goal of reaching any particular resolution, but rather of coming to terms with the possibilities and limitations of specific stances within this broader debate. In particular, archaeology provides an opportunity to add time depth and cultural breadth to our knowledge of human consistency and variability in sexual practices and identities. Archaeology probes deep beyond the limits of written records in its study of human culture and also provides methodological alternatives to discursive evidence of sexuality. With this in mind I am particularly intrigued by archaeological investigations of sexualities in the deep prehistoric past (e.g., Schmidt, 2000, 2002).

4. The Methodological Tension between Empirical and Discursive Models of Sexual Subjectivity

The tension between empiricist and discursive epistemological frameworks in archaeology is not, of course, limited to studies of sexual identities. But in archaeological studies of sexuality, this tension has had a particular effect. Generally, sexology and the sex/gender system both take as their starting point an empiricist perspective on knowledge production, while Butler's performance theory is rooted in discourse analysis—for Butler and other post-structuralists, there is no "real", only discursive claims for realness.

In the short time that sexuality has been an explicit topic of archaeological investigation, a methodological divide has begun to emerge. Generally, researchers studying the archaeological remains of cultural discourses, such as imagery and texts (e.g., Joyce 2000a, 2000b; Meskell 2000), have tended to more readily work within performance theory. Those working with the non-discursive residues of the past, such as faunal or botanical remains, material culture, and skeletal remains, have tended to work more within the sex/gender system and its correlate postulates about sexuality (the archaeological studies of prostitution discussed earlier in this chapter are a good example of this). Butler herself, in her role as a discussant in a symposium at the November 2000 Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, remarked on the challenge of applying performance theory to non-discursive remains of past societies:

> . . . the question which it seems you pose, and must pose, has to do with how to interpret the traces of gender that are left at sites, material sites. And so I imagine, from the outside, the kinds of forensics that must be involved: the identifying of the trace, the figuring out whether any old mark is a trace, and if so, how it can be read so that we might know that of which it is a trace, a reminder. It is particularly difficult for me to imagine how one derived something like a gender performance from a trace, since one must, on the basis of some remain, possibly small, infer from its various physical and knowable features what social life it was taken up in, and in what form. (Butler 2000)

The question of how material practices intersect, constitute, produce, and are produced through social life is precisely where archaeological research has a strong contribution to make to theories of sexual identities. Regardless of whether sexological categories, the sex/gender system, and/or gender performance theory are taken as the point of entry, archaeological research is contributing to a better understanding of the materiality of sexual identities and the relationship between material and discursive practices in sexual identity formation.

Closing Thoughts

The title of this volume, *The Archaeology of Change and Plural Identities*, is nowhere more appropriate than when thinking about sexuality and how it can be best studied through archaeological research. I have emphasized earlier that is important for archaeologists to be aware of the potential fluidity of sexual subjectivities and to be open to the likelihood that both sexuality and gender could in some cultures and in some situations be more strongly imbricated with occupation, or spirituality, or age class, than with each other. While using theories of sexual identities as an entry point, I think we should be careful to interrogate these theories through research designs and methodologies that allow "non-reductive and non-causal accounts" (Butler, 1994) of the connections between gender, sexuality, culture, and identity (Wylie, 1992).

Archaeology has a unique role to play in stretching theories of sexuality in new chronological and cultural directions. The very nature of our disciplinary practices highlights methodological and epistemological challenges related to the limits of evidence, inference, and the discursive production of the present through reference to the past. By engaging with the tensions located within social theories of sexual identity, archaeologists are contributing to a more nuanced, complicated understanding of sexuality both in the past and in the present.

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Notes

1. A full review of the field of sexology is beyond the scope of this essay; a comprehensive overview is provided by Bland and Doan's two-volume compendium, *Sexology Uncensored: The Documents of Sexual Science* (1998) and *Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desires* (1998).
2. Brothels are both boarding houses and places of business; the employees of the establishment live and work in the building and entertain their clients in their rooms. The term 'parlor houses' historically referred to higher-class brothels that, in addition to sexual services, offered other amenities such as dancing, live entertainment, drink, or food. Cribs were small rooms rented for use as a place of business by prostitutes who lived elsewhere (Costello 2002).
3. At the time that I am writing this (May 2003), a thematic issue of *Historical Archaeology* ('Sin City') on the topic of prostitution is in preparation for publication by the Society for Historical Archaeology; unfortunately it will not be in press soon enough to be included in this review.
4. See Greenway (1998) and Caplan (1998) for further discussion of these points.
5. See Epple (1998) for an insightful discussion of this topic. Although in recent decades some Native Americans have begun to widely use the term 'two-spirit' for political and social purposes (Gay American Indians and Roscoe 1988, Roscoe 1998: Ch. 1), this and terms such as berdache and third gender have also been criticized because they generically lump together social identities and practices which actually varied considerably from tribe to tribe. Most anthropologists and archaeologists studying a specific tribe usually use terms from tribal languages, as there are rarely English equivalents that match indigenous terms with any accuracy.

6. Pertinent sources on this topic include Blackwood (1984, 1999) Callender and Kochems (1983), Herdt (1994), Gutmann (1997), Jacobs et al. (1997), Lang (1998, 1999), Roscoe (1991, 1998), Trexler (1995), Whelan (1993), Whitehead (1981), and Williams (1996).
7. See Conkey and Spector (1984) and Spector (1991) for a discussion of these frameworks.
8. My thanks to Deb Cohler for sharing her thoughts with me on this point.

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