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PREHISTORIC AESTHETICS

AN ONTOLOGY OF STONE AGE ART FROM THE LOWER PALAEOLITHIC UNTIL THE NEOLITHIC

Supervisors: Prof. Chris Gosden; Dr. Lambros Malafouris



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Within this thesis I examine how the phenomenon of 'prehistoric art' can be defined. The difficulty is situated within the fact that the concept of 'art' cannot be understood apart from the autonomy of art and the aesthetic within Western modernity. This would mean that the condition of art is contradictory to the active role of 'prehistoric art' in the constitution of the social. I argue that this apparent opposition is incorrect, as it is precisely the autonomous dimension of art and the aesthetic that allows understanding art's capacity for social agency. 'Autonomy' should not be understood in terms of detachment from the everyday, but in terms of a universal principle. The universal principle of the aesthetic is situated within its capacity to operate as a form of plateau-constitution or world creation. Within the first part of the thesis I examine how the autonomy of art and the aesthetic can be reworked for animism through an analysis of the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, Alfred North Whitehead, Immanuel Kant and Theodor Adorno. This theoretical examination provides the basis for the second part of the thesis, in which I theorize three different types of aesthetic experience for three different prehistoric periods: the Early Palaeolithic, the Upper Palaeolithic and Neolithic. Whereas it is necessary to understand the universal principle of art and the aesthetic, it is equally necessary to understand that this principle can only take up a particular form and therefore can be modified in different ways. By theorizing three different modifications of aesthetic experience across prehistory, I argue that one develops insight into the way prehistoric art takes up different forms through time. I construct a definition of prehistoric art by examining whether one can detect continuity across the three different types of aesthetic experience that I propose.

PREFACE

What has provided the starting point for this DPhil project is the increasing interest into contemporary art within the field of prehistoric archaeology. It is the work *Figuring it Out* (2003) by Colin Renfrew, which is mainly responsible for this archaeological interest into contemporary art. The idea that contemporary art can contribute towards the understanding of the prehistoric past and particularly the study of prehistoric art intrigues me, as it poses a theoretical problem. Why would the art of today have anything in common with the art of the distant past? If this cross-cultural comparison is of any value, it must be possible to detect a principle, which is shared by both prehistoric and contemporary art. Without such a principle, the comparison would be based on superficial similarities. The difficulty is situated within the fact that one cannot speak about contemporary art outside the autonomous condition of art and the aesthetic. Whereas it is the expansion of contemporary art towards the outside (art becoming more than an individual image or object) that has attracted the interest of prehistoric archaeologists, one cannot understand this expansion apart from the autonomous dimension of art and the aesthetic. Therefore, in order to understand theoretically the cross-cultural comparison between prehistoric and contemporary art, one needs to examine whether the autonomy of art and the aesthetic can be extended to prehistory. As a result, my initial interest in the adoption of contemporary art within prehistoric archaeology became redirected towards the question whether it would indeed be possible to extend the autonomous condition of art and the aesthetic to prehistory. This idea of autonomy is specific to the tradition of Western philosophical aesthetics and therefore cannot straightforwardly be applied outside the context of Western modernity. It is a reworking of this tradition, which will prove the theoretical relevance of the concept of art for prehistory. However, even though my thesis does not examine the cross-cultural comparison between prehistoric and contemporary art, it is nevertheless necessary to understand that my research has been shaped by this initial interest. This is visible in the fact that the definition of prehistoric art that I propose takes the form of a theoretical statement on the relationship between prehistoric and contemporary art.

I would like to thank my supervisors Prof. Chris Gosden and Dr. Lambros Malafouris for the chance to develop my research project at the School of Archaeology, University of Oxford. I acknowledge that my research project is rather unusual for an archaeological department and I am extremely grateful that they had the faith that it would make a valuable contribution to prehistoric

archaeology. I also would like to thank my assessors Prof. Richard Bradley and Dr. Alexander Geurds for their comments and advice on my research project during the transfer and confirmation application. At St Cross College, I wish to express my thanks to the Master Mrs Carole Souter, Dr. Joanna Ashbourn and my College Advisor Dr. Ho-Yin Mak. For financial support I am extremely grateful to the department of Fees and Funding at the University of Oxford, which has awarded me the Scatcherd European Scholarship 2017-2018. This Scholarship enabled me to study the German tradition of philosophical aesthetics and theory on contemporary art at the University of Art and Design, Offenbach am Main, Germany. I am grateful that this scholarship application has been supported by my supervisors and by Prof. Juliane Rebentisch, who teaches philosophy and aesthetics at the University of Art and Design at Offenbach am Main. I also would like to thank Dr. Dirk Setton, whose class *Theorien der Einbildungskraft* I attended during my year in Germany, which introduced me into the philosophy and aesthetics of Immanuel Kant. I also want to thank the following people with whom I had the privilege to have a conversation: Prof. Amy Bogaard, Prof. Richard Bradley, Prof. Joao de Pina-Cabral and Prof. Marilyn Strathern. For the inclusion of the images within my thesis I wish to express my thanks to Anthony Gormley, Peter Roberts and Dr. Aaron Watson, who have very kindly given their permission for reproduction. Last but not least, my final thanks go to my family. My mother supported my research financially and in every other possible way. Without her support it would not have been possible to study at Oxford and I am extremely grateful for her confidence that I would succeed in completing my doctoral research. I wish to thank my twin brother, Sander, for introducing me into the pleasures and difficulties of doing academic research and for being a source of support every time I needed it. I would like to thank my grandparents for having supported my study at BA, MPhil and DPhil level. Without their assistance, it would never have been possible to start my doctoral research at the University of Oxford.

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INTRODUCTION

Research Question

Within this doctoral thesis I examine how the phenomenon of 'prehistoric art' can be defined. Whereas the term 'prehistoric art' has been adopted widely within prehistoric archaeology, it is only very rarely theorized into a definition.[1] The problem in defining this term is situated within the fact that it requires to resolve theoretically the applicability of the concept of art to prehistory. The concept of art is a Western invention, which cannot be understood apart from the way it has been defined within Western art history and philosophical aesthetics.[2] One could argue that we can only speak about art from the Renaissance onwards, in which we see for the first time the differentiation between artist and craftsman, art and material culture.[3] Such a perspective would mean that art is a result of the Western process of rationalization through which the realms of the religious, political and artistic became disentangled from one another.[4] This disentanglement reaches its culmination in twentieth-century Modernism, in which art becomes aware of its own visual language and no longer has to serve an external purpose.[5] The Western concept of art is therefore coupled to a process in which art is striving towards its own autonomous dimension. This process is unique to Western history and for this reason one could say that the phenomenon of art is indeed a Western invention and not applicable to a non-Western or prehistoric context. Within prehistoric archaeology, the Western concept of art has therefore been opposed as it would be coupled to assumptions about the nature of the object under examination. It would imply that the object in question was only meant for disinterested contemplation and did not have a use-value.[6] Such a perspective is contradictory to the imagery and objects that have been called prehistoric art as they must have taken up an active role within the constitution of the social.[7] The apparent visual similarity between prehistoric art and Modernism has in this sense been fiercely critiqued as it would imply that the aesthetic experience associated with Modernist art could be extended to prehistory.[8] If we follow the idea that the concept of art is a Western invention and

[1] Bradley 2009: 3-4; Jones and Cochrane 2018: 183.
[2] Heumakers 2015: 17-21.
[3] Danto 1997: 3-4; Herva and Ikaheimo 2002: 96; Paillet 2006: 11.
[4] Habermas 1984: 160-167.
[5] Danto 1997: 7; Garcia 2014: 265.
[6] Jones and Bonaventura 2011: 8-9; Jones and Cochrane 2018: 7-18; Robb 2017; Sjöstrand 2017: 5-6.
[7] Garrow and Gosden 2012: 311; Gell 1998; Mithen 1998d: 181-185; Porr 2010; Robinson 2013: 74-76.
[8] Bradley 2009: 205, 225; Clifford 2006: 152-156; Danto 1997: 94.

therefore coupled to the striving for 'autonomy', it would mean that 'prehistoric art' as a term is contradictory as it brings together two concepts (prehistory and art), which cannot occur together.

As an alternative to the term 'prehistoric art' one could argue that the term 'prehistoric aesthetics' is more appropriate. Because the phenomenon of the aesthetic is not limited to an art object, but also applicable to nature, one could say that it avoids the difficulty of the concept of art, as it is not limited to a specific object category. However, also in this case one becomes confronted with the problem of how to define 'aesthetics' for a prehistoric context. Although the phenomenon of the aesthetic is more encompassing than the phenomenon of art, it nevertheless has a specificity, which cannot be generalized. Within the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics, an aesthetic experience is defined as a cognitive experience that operates without concepts.[9] This means that an aesthetic experience can neither be reduced to sense perception (which is solely concerned with immediate appearance) nor conceptual knowing (in which one attempts to align a concept with an object of intuition). An aesthetic experience therefore is associated with a special type of rationality, in which cognition operates through feeling. It is this rational characteristic of the aesthetic, which has been called by Immanuel Kant the autonomy of aesthetic experience.[10] Whereas the phenomenon of the aesthetic is not limited to the autonomous realm of art, it nevertheless must also take up an autonomous character in order to be characterized as aesthetic. It is for this reason why an aesthetic experience tends to be associated with a passive form of contemplation distinct from practical action.[11] This is problematic for prehistory as it would mean that the aesthetic experience of nature would have operated as a passive contemplation distinct from the way the landscape was actually used. The term 'prehistoric aesthetics' is in this sense equally problematic as the term 'prehistoric art'.

However, what needs to be understood is that this inapplicability of the autonomy of the aesthetic constitutes a paradox. This is the case because the autonomy of aesthetic experience (as defined by Kant) is a type of experience that is based onto the human condition as such and in this

[9] My statement that an aesthetic experience is cognitive might seem contradictory to Immanuel Kant's theory of the aesthetic, which defines aesthetic experience as a non-cognitive experience. The reason why I call an aesthetic experience cognitive is in order to diffirentiate an aesthetic experience from an experience based on bodily sensation. This distinction is also made by Kant (Kant 2007 (1790): 334). However, the reason why Kant calls an aesthetic experience nevertheless non-cognitive is because it is a type of experience that is based upon the feeling of pleasure and therefore does not give a perceiver any knowledge about the object or phenomenon encountered (Ibid. 24-25, 115). The aesthetic theory of Theodor Adorno provides a corrective to Kant's theory of the aesthetic as Adorno argues that an aesthetic experience can operate as an experience of truth and is in this sense not based upon the feeling of pleasure (Adorno 175-176; Maharaj 2013: 154). This means that an aesthetic experience is best understood as a specific type of cognition (which operates without concepts) instead of being non-cognitive.
[10] Kant 2007: 54-55.
[11] Ibid. 36-37.

sense not culturally specific.[12] *The limitation of the autonomy of aesthetic experience to Western modernity is therefore contradictory to the autonomy of the aesthetic itself.* Instead of the autonomy of aesthetic experience being an invention of the modern West, I argue that it is more correct to say that the West has made this autonomous principle explicit. This means that the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics must not necessarily be rejected, as it gives insight into the nature of aesthetics itself. In order to develop a 'prehistoric aesthetics' one needs to examine how the autonomy of the aesthetic provides the basis for the constitution of the social.

If one acknowledges that the limitation of the autonomy of the aesthetic to Western modernity is contradictory to the autonomy of the aesthetic itself, a similar argument could be made for the autonomy of art. The equation of the autonomy of art with the idea that art does not serve any purpose apart from its own (being a work of art) misconceives the fact that art's autonomy is situated within its capacity to operate as a depiction of truth.[13] An art object can neither be reduced to its material form nor to conceptual meaning and for this reason must be understood as the transformation of the autonomous principle of the aesthetic (constellation of cognition and sensation) to a materially constructed object.[14] *The autonomy of art does not stand for the detachment of art from the everyday, but for the recreation of the autonomous dimension of the aesthetic within material form.* It is this idea of recreation, which allows conceiving why art is both related to and differentiated from the aesthetic.[15] The opposition of the aesthetic to mere sense perception (immediate appearance) is made explicit within art, as art is a material object that cannot be reduced to its empirical dimension.[16] It is this countering of mere empiricism, which gives art the capacity for agency. In the case of Modernism, this is visible in the way art has the capacity to operate as a critique on the distortion of rationality and modern life. Whereas Modernist art is indeed detached from the everyday lifeworld, it nevertheless has an inherent tendency towards the social in the sense that it opens up the promise of a different world, a different way of existence.[17] The autonomy of art is therefore not concerned with art's detachment from the everyday, but with art's capacity for social agency.[18] Whereas the equation between prehistoric art and Modernism has been critiqued for being a sole formal similarity, it is more correct to say that Modernist art has made explicit how the autonomous dimension of art has an intrinsic social/political

[12] Kant 2007: 42-43.
[13] Badiou 2001: 18-25; Osborne 2013: 44; Osborne 2018: 68.
[14] Adorno 2013: 119-120, 132-133.
[15] Ibid. 97, 105-106.
[16] Garcia 2014: 248-250.
[17] Adorno 2013: 330; Jaffé 1986: 31-33.
[18] Adorno 2013: 328-335; Maharaj 2013: 157-160.

character. This acknowledgment indicates that the autonomous dimension of art could indeed give insight into the social dimension of prehistoric art, as it allows understanding art's capacity for agency.

In order to come to a definition of prehistoric art, I argue that this autonomous principle of art and the aesthetic, which characterizes the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics, should not be critiqued but reworked. This argument is not straightforward, as it is opposed to the current theorization of art and aesthetics within prehistoric archaeology and anthropology.[19] The work that has largely shaped the archaeological understanding of art and aesthetics is *Art and Agency* (1998) of the anthropologist Alfred Gell. Within this work, Gell argues for an anthropological approach to art, which is non-aesthetic. Gell considers the Western tradition of aesthetics to be inapplicable to 'tribal art' as it does not allow understanding the active role these objects had within the mediation of social relationships.[20] Instead of aesthetics, he puts all his emphasis on art as a mediator of social agency. This means that the condition of art is not intrinsic to an object itself (in terms of its formal, aesthetic dimension), but a function associated with an object's capacity for social agency.[21] However, following my argument above, the capacity of art to operate as social agent is coupled to its autonomous dimension. Moreover, because the autonomous dimension of art is coupled to the autonomous dimension of the aesthetic, Gell's argument in favour of social agency cannot be understood apart from the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics. Because Gell fails to acknowledge this tradition, his theory has become extended to the whole realm of material culture objects.[22] Following the adoption of actor-network theory within archaeology, every material culture object is a potential agent within the constitution of the social.[23] Whereas Gell argued against aesthetics, the generalization of his work has resulted into a reappraisal of the aesthetic within archaeology. Aesthetics is approached as 'everyday aesthetics', which means the affective dimension of our encounter with objects, environment and the lifeworld at large.[24] However, such a conception of aesthetics has the danger of reducing the rational principle of the aesthetic to empirical sensation, which would be contradictory to the phenomenon of the aesthetic itself.

[19] Coote 2006; Hamilakis 2013; Pollard 2001: 317; Skeates 2017: 608-609.
[20] Gell 1998: 2-5.
[21] Ibid. 5-7.
[22] Chua and Elliott 2013: 13-15.
[23] Knappett 2005; Knappett and Malafouris 2008; Robb 2010: 504-505.
[24] The term 'everyday aesthetics' could be equated with the term 'affect' as both refer to the everyday engagements between people, matter and lifeworld: Jones 2012; Jones and Cochrane 2018; Hamilakis 2013; Skeates 2017; Watson 2001; Wells 2012.

The conceptualization of aesthetics as everyday aesthetics is based on the aesthetic theory of John Dewey, who critiques the opposition between everyday experience (as being non-aesthetic) and the experience of art (as the autonomous realm of the aesthetic). One could read Dewey's aesthetics as being a critique on the autonomy of aesthetic experience, as defined by the Western aesthetic tradition. However, this does not mean that Dewey is unconcerned with the autonomy of the aesthetic and that he would reduce 'everyday aesthetics' to empirical sensation. His argument in favour of continuity between art and the everyday does not mean the replacement of the autonomy of the aesthetic with 'everyday aesthetics', but the acknowledgement that the autonomy of the aesthetic also characterizes everyday experience. This is visible in the fact that experience for Dewey is the fulfilment of an organism in its struggles and achievements within an environment. The reason why such a type of experience is aesthetic is because it operates simultaneously as a cluster of parts (the accumulation of histories that have shaped the process of individuation) and by unity (the fact that experience is pervaded by a singular quality, which means the unity of the subject).[25] This same constellation, Dewey argues, is visible in a work of art in the sense that it consists of parts that together give rise to a singular quality.[26] A work of art therefore makes visually explicit what defines people's experience on an everyday basis.[27] This idea of a 'becoming explicit' both means that the experience of art is distinct from the everyday and that it must be structurally equivalent to everyday experience. The analogy between art and the everyday put forward by Dewey therefore does not mean a rejection of the autonomy of the aesthetic, but the acknowledgement that this autonomy stands for a rational principle that also characterizes people's everyday struggles for fulfilment within an environment. An 'everyday aesthetics' should therefore not be understood in opposition to the autonomy of the aesthetic, but as being structural similar to it.

In order to prove the relevance of the autonomy of art and the aesthetic for prehistory, one must understand how this autonomy provides the basis for the social itself and is therefore integrated within the lifeworld. Whereas the aesthetic theory of Dewey provides a way to understand this integration, it is not sufficient because it fails to understand how the aesthetic can take up different forms in different lifeworlds. Within archaeological theory, the condition of the lifeworld has been

[25] Dewey 2005: 15-16, 37, 42, 57-58.
[26] Ibid. 177, 185-187, 211-212.
[27] Ibid. 87, 142, 180, 293.

coupled to metaphysics.[28] This connection to metaphysics is primarily concerned with the way prehistoric societies did not have the same conception of reality as modern Western societies, which is based on the dichotomy of subject and object. In order to explain the phenomenon of animism, a different conception of reality is required, in which such a dichotomy was non-existent. However, the idea that different lifeworlds are coupled to different conceptions of metaphysics can easily be misconceived as a form of cultural relativism (different societies experience reality in different ways).[29] Instead of different metaphysical conceptions of reality, one must conceive how metaphysics itself takes up a plural character. The pluralisation of metaphysics radicalizes the traditional anthropological/ archaeological task of reconstructing past ways of life or world views to the reconstruction of different 'metaphysics' or 'ontologies'.[30] The reason why this shift towards metaphysics is important is because it is coupled to the autonomy of aesthetic experience. The process metaphysics of the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Alfred North Whitehead are based on the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience, which means that it is through the rational principle of the aesthetic that a general metaphysical condition becomes particularized.[31] It allows conceiving how different lifeworlds should not be understood as different world views on a general metaphysical condition, but as different particularizations of this general metaphysical condition. This alignment between the autonomy of aesthetic experience and metaphysics is important as it allows to extend Dewey's integration of the autonomy of the aesthetic within the everyday lifeworld to ontological difference.

However, if aesthetic experience becomes ontological primary, it ceases to be a unique capacity of a human being and becomes a capacity of every entity in the universe. This has lead towards a post-human perspective on aesthetics, in which aesthetics becomes uncoupled from the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics, in which it is defined as a reflective judgement of truth based on feeling.[32] The danger with this generalization of the aesthetic is that the autonomous dimension of the aesthetic becomes distorted and reduced to an 'everyday aesthetics'. By eliminating the distinction between human and non-human, the autonomy of the aesthetic loses its reflective character and becomes reduced to the ontological continuity between people, matter and the

[28] Alberti 2016, Alberti et al. 2011; Conneller 2011; Fowler 2013; Gosden 2008; Gosden and Malafouris 2015; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017; Ingold 2018; Kohn 2013; Pina-Cabral 2017.
[29] Alberti et al. 2011: 902-903; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017: 176.
[30] Alberti 2016: 168; Pina-Cabral 2017: 158-167; Viveiros de Castro 2015: 256.
[31] Deleuze 2014: 71, 85-86; Whitehead 1927: 101-102; Whitehead 1978: 108, 280.
[32] A post-human perspective to aesthetic is proposed by the philosophical movement speculative realism (Askin et al. 2014: 31-33). Within archaeology, a post-human perspective to aesthetics is concerned with a decentering of human agency (Conneller 2011; Fowler 2013; Gillings and Pollard 2016; Hamilakis and Jones 2017; Ingold 2000b; Jones 2012a).

lifeworld.[33] Such a reduction is contradictory to our human condition, as we are creatures that do not only engage with the world, but are also able to reflect upon the world. It is the autonomy of the aesthetic, which allows understanding this continuity between reflection and engagement, as it is a type of reflection that operates through feeling. *If one acknowledges the ontological primacy of the aesthetic, an aesthetic judgement of truth is not only reflective, but also a form of human self-concrescence and world making.* The ontological primacy of the aesthetic therefore does not necessarily mean that one should eliminate the distinction between human and non-human. Instead, it indicates that it is the reflective character of aesthetic experience, which is unique to human beings, that forms the basis of the ontological condition of ourselves as a species and the basis of human world making. This is important because it allows conceiving why art and the aesthetic played such an important role within the constitution of the social during prehistory. Therefore, instead of a post-human perspective to aesthetics, I argue that prehistoric archaeology requires the distinctiveness of the autonomy of aesthetic judgement as defined by the Western aesthetic tradition. This means that two very different philosophical traditions (process metaphysics and Western philosophical aesthetics) must be integrated with one another. This reading of the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics will allow understanding how the autonomy of aesthetic judgement and art provide the basis for human world making itself.

However, in order to develop a definition of prehistoric art, it is not sufficient to solely rework the autonomy of art and the aesthetic for prehistory, as there is no general form of prehistoric art. A general approach would be contradictory to the nature of prehistoric art itself, as it would fail to acknowledge how different forms of prehistoric art are coupled to different forms of world making. It is for this reason that a theoretical reworking of the concept of art and aesthetics requires confrontation with the archaeological record. Whereas it is theory, which allows understanding the autonomous character of art and the aesthetic, it is the archaeological record that allows understanding how this autonomous dimension was particularized. The development of a 'prehistoric aesthetics' therefore means the construction of different types of aesthetic experience through the prehistoric record.[34] Moreover, following the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience, such a construction would

[33] Alberti et al. 2013; Back Danielsson et al. 2012; DeMarrais 2017; Hamilakis and Jones 2017; Vesa-Pekka 2009; Wells 2017.

[34] The idea of developing different types of aesthetic experience is based upon Whitehead's argument that the history of human civilization can be understood as a mutation of human experience. (Whitehead 1967: vii). The mutation of experience means the mutation of aesthetic experience, as aesthetic experience is ontologically prior in Whitehead's metaphysics.

simultaneously give rise to a particularization of metaphysics and therefore allows conceiving how the particularization of the aesthetic is coupled to a particular lifeworld. Following my earlier argument that the autonomy of art must be understood as a recreation of the autonomy of the aesthetic within material form, it is on the basis of a differentiation of aesthetic experience that one gains insight into the diversity of prehistoric art. It is for this reason that I have given my thesis the title *Prehistoric Aesthetics*. The front image is the work *Lost Horizon I* (2008) of the contemporary artist Anthony Gormley, in which a cast of his own body is multiplied and positioned on different 'planes'.[35] I find that this image captures well the idea of how a general human condition (the ontological primacy of aesthetic judgement) is coupled to different space-time constellations and therefore gives rise to different 'planes' or 'worlds'. It captures well the challenge of this thesis, which is the reworking of the general principle of art and aesthetics for prehistory and the theorization of how this general principle was particularized. I have not adopted a gender-perspective in my thesis (no differentiation between male and female pronoun) because I theorize three different modifications of aesthetic experience for three different prehistoric lifeworlds. This implies that such a modification defines the experience of all members of the lifeworld (men, woman and children). This does not mean that the difference between men and woman is unimportant, but that this difference must be understood as a nuancing of a shared modification of experience. Without a shared basis in experience it would be impossible for men and woman to occupy the same space-time and therefore the same lifeworld.

Methodology

I have structured my thesis into two parts: *Prehistoric Aesthetics: Rethinking Western Philosophical Aesthetics for Prehistory* (Part I) and *Towards an Ontology of Stone Age Art: From the Lower Palaeolithic until the Neolithic* (Part II). The first part is a theoretical examination into aesthetics, in which I rework the autonomy of aesthetic experience and art for prehistory. This reworking is primarily concerned with how the autonomy of aesthetic experience can be related to an animistic context. It is within the second part that I examine how my theoretical work can be particularized for different forms of prehistoric art. My focus is on prehistoric art during the Stone Age, from which I discuss the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic period, the Upper Palaeolithic of the Franco-Cantabrian area and the Neolithic of Britain and Ireland.

[35] Royal Academy of Arts 2019: 184-191.

Part I: Prehistoric Aesthetics: Rethinking Western Philosophical Aesthetics for Prehistory

In order to rework the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics for prehistory I have divided this part into four chapters. Within the first chapter *Aesthetics as Ontology: The Process Metaphysics of Gilles Deleuze* I undertake an examination into the relation between aesthetics and metaphysics. The process metaphysics of Deleuze is a type of metaphysics, which is based on the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience. I examine that this situation of the aesthetic on the level of ontology is not opposed to the autonomy of aesthetic experience, but is based upon it. It is the autonomy of aesthetic experience, which Deleuze uses as model for his metaphysics in order to define a form of experience, which is generative of reality rather than an experience of reality. This realization is important because Deleuze's metaphysics has been adopted extensively within prehistoric archaeology. For this reason, an in depth examination of Deleuze's metaphysics will offer a first step to resolve the distinction between prehistoric aesthetics and the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics. A second aspect that I will address is that Deleuze puts forward a metaphysics that cannot be understood in a general way, but only within a particular way. This is relevant for the connection between aesthetics and animism, as it means that animism is a particular form of world making, which can be related to prehistoric societies, but cannot be equated with Deleuze's metaphysics as a whole. I will therefore undertake an examination into how Deleuze's reliance on the autonomy of the aesthetic is specifically related to an animistic context.

Within the second chapter *Alfred North Whitehead: Aligning Process Metaphysics with Reflective Judgement* I develop my examination of the connection between aesthetics and metaphysics further through an analysis of the process metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead. On a general level, the process metaphysics of Whitehead and Deleuze can be understood as equivalent, as both define a type of metaphysics, which is based on the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience. However, what Whitehead adds to Deleuze's metaphysics is the incorporation of cognitive judgement within his metaphysical system. This realization is significant because the adoption of process metaphysics within archaeology is mainly concerned with a countering of the ontological distinction between human and non-human, therefore acknowledging the ontological continuity between people and the lifeworld as a whole. However, by solely focusing on the ontological continuity between human and non-human, one

risks to eliminate the condition of humanity itself and therefore the particularity of human world making. As human beings, we do not only engage with the world, but are also able to reflect upon the world. We therefore do not need a replacement of the human capacity of reflection with engagement, but understand how they exist in configuration. Such a configuration can be understood through the autonomy of aesthetic judgement. The metaphysics of Whitehead therefore allows connecting Deleuze's argument on aesthetic autonomy as model for metaphysics to the unique human capacity for aesthetic judgement. Moreover, I will use Whitehead's integration of aesthetic judgement within his metaphysics to further define the relation between aesthetics and animism. I will argue that the condition of animism does not require the ontological continuity between human and non-human, but on the other hand the human capacity of reflective judgement.

Within the third chapter *A Reformulation of Immanuel Kant's 'Critique of Judgement'* I undertake an analysis of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement*. The choice for Kant can be understood as provocative, as Kant's theorization of the aesthetic has never been considered relevant for prehistory. Kant's theorization of aesthetic experience is based on a conception of the human subject that relies on the Western idea of a human being as an individual, which is a condition that is specific for Western Enlightenment. However, the reason why Kant's theory on the aesthetic is nevertheless important is because it outlines how an aesthetic judgement has its own rational principle. Moreover, Kant's *Critique of Judgement* outlines the full complexity of the autonomy of the aesthetic by distinguishing between the beautiful, the sublime, the aesthetic judgement of art and teleological judgement. I will mainly focus on the distinction Kant makes between an aesthetic judgement and teleological judgement. An aesthetic judgement is concerned with the appearance of form as beautiful whereas a teleological judgement with the experience of the order of nature. What must be taken into account in order to define aesthetics for prehistory is that a teleological judgement is not aesthetic. This means that Kant's theorization of the aesthetic cannot be applied to a religious experience. By undertaking a rereading of Kant's aesthetics through the process metaphysics of Whitehead, I argue that this distinction between aesthetic and teleological judgement can be resolved. Moreover, it will allow resolving a second distinction within Kant's aesthetics and that is the distinction between the beautiful and the sublime. It is through such a resolution that I will develop a type of aesthetic autonomy that is not limited to passive contemplation, but becomes aligned with practical action.

The fourth chapter *Aligning Process Metaphysics with Theodor Adorno's Negative Metaphysics* is concerned with the potential of the autonomy of the aesthetic to operate as a form of critique onto society and human rationality. It is such a form of aesthetic experience, which is necessary to understand the art of Western Europe from the twentieth century onwards. This characteristic of the aesthetic is relevant because it is not limited to the modern West, but also present within animistic societies. In this chapter I undertake an examination of Theodor Adorno's theorization of metaphysics and aesthetics in order to define a type of aesthetic experience within communicative action, which takes up a critical perspective towards the metaphysical condition of the world. Such a type of aesthetic experience, I argue, defines the type of animism, which is put forward by the perspectivism of the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. Perspectivism is a form of animism in which one must be careful to not be deceived by appearance. This means that experience cannot simply be defined as the contemplation of the order of nature, but must take up a critical character.

Part II: Towards an Ontology of Stone Age Art: From the Lower Palaeolithic until the Neolithic

In order to specify my theoretical work of Part I, I discuss three different prehistoric periods, in which the phenomenon of the aesthetic and art take up different forms. In the first chapter *An Ontology of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Art* I examine how the autonomy of aesthetic experience can be theorized for the earliest prehistoric record. This poses a challenge, as we are dealing with early hominid species and not with the modern species *Homo sapiens*. It requires posing the question whether the capacity for aesthetic judgement and the production of art is unique to the modern species or a capacity that is shared by different hominid species. Based on the chapter of Kant, I argue that the capacity for aesthetic judgement must have been essential throughout human evolution. An aesthetic judgement is a type of experience that does not presuppose the human cognitive faculties, but activates the human cognitive faculties. Through an analysis of the symmetrical beauty of a Lower Palaeolithic hand axe and stone bola, I examine how Kant's conception of aesthetic experience as 'disinterested' can be extended to the Lower Palaeolithic record. This extension also leads to the realization that the earliest type of archaeological artefacts can be theorized as a form of art. As soon as early hominids developed the capacity to recreate the condition of the aesthetic within nature into material form, the phenomenon of art emerges.

In the second chapter *An Ontology of Upper Palaeolithic Cave Art in the Franco-Cantabrian Area* I examine how the emergence of cave art in the Franco-Cantabrian area is coupled to a particular modification of aesthetic experience. Whereas the development of cave art has been interpreted as marking 'the origin of art', I argue that Upper Palaeolithic cave art is actually less true to the condition of art than the early prehistoric record. This argument might seem surprising as we are not dealing with early hominids, but with the modern species *Homo sapiens*. However, it is precisely this shift towards the modern mind that complicates the phenomenon of art and the aesthetic, as it entails the potential for distortion, which means that aesthetic experience becomes transformed from a judgement of truth to a form of deception. With the emergence of the modern mind, the modification of aesthetic experience could either give rise to art or to fetishism. We speak about fetishism when art loses its truth-character and becomes reduced to 'illusionary appearance'. In the case of the Upper Palaeolithic in the Franco-Cantabrian area, I propose that we are dealing with a modification of aesthetic experience in which the aesthetic took up a hybrid character. This means that aesthetic experience was both rational and irrational, both a form of truth and a form of deception. Such a modification constitutes a paradoxical situation, as it means that Upper Palaeolithic cave art is both a form of art and a form of fetishism. I demonstrate that this hybrid character is a result of the contradictory character of the Upper Palaeolithic lifeworld itself.

In the third chapter *An Ontology of Neolithic Art in Britain and Ireland* I examine how the complication of aesthetic experience through the modern mind takes up a different form during the Neolithic. Whereas Upper Palaeolithic cave art is associated with a hybrid type of aesthetic experience, I argue that the Neolithic is characterized by a rationalization of aesthetic experience. A rationalization of aesthetic experience means that the incoherence between appearance and reality becomes transformed to the condition of truth. It means that the Neolithic lifeworld was not based on the isomorphy between substances in which appearances could be exchanged, but on the coherence between appearance and reality. Through my reworking of Kant's theory of the aesthetic, I propose that the Neolithic lifeworld can be defined through a type of aesthetic judgement, in which the distinction between the beautiful and sublime, the teleological and the aesthetic falls apart. I focus on the way this entanglement between the beautiful and the sublime, the teleological and the aesthetic, gives rise to different forms of Neolithic art, consisting of both practice-based artefacts concerned with the process character of form and enduring art forms. In the first category I discuss two different types of stone

decoration: carved stone balls (eastern Scotland) and the Folkton Drums (Yorkshire). Within the second category, I discuss the cup-and-ring rock art tradition within the open landscape. Moreover, I examine how the modification of aesthetic experience during the Neolithic gives insight into a type of animism that is not based on isomorphy of substances (Upper Palaeolithic), but on the endurance character of nature.

The fourth chapter *Towards a Definition of Prehistoric Art* addresses the question how the phenomenon of prehistoric art can be defined in a general way. In order for the term 'prehistoric art' to be meaningful, it must be possible to detect a general principle across the different types of prehistoric art and aesthetic experience, which I will discuss. I propose that three such principles can be detected: (1) an unconscious form of the autonomy of art; (2) art as war-machine that works against State-formation and (3) representation of relations. These three general characteristics give insight into a type of social organization (and therefore world making) in which the autonomy of art and the aesthetic provides the basis of the social itself. Based on these three general characteristics, I develop a definition of 'prehistoric art'. This definition will provide a theoretical statement on the relationship between the Western striving for art's autonomy and the origin of art within prehistory.

PART I. PREHISTORIC AESTHETICS: RETHINKING WESTERN PHILOSOPHICAL AESTHETICS FOR PREHISTORY

1. AESTHETICS AS ONTOLOGY: THE PROCESS METAPHYSICS OF GILLES DELEUZE

Introduction

The process metaphysics of Gilles Deleuze has had a major influence on archaeological theory because it provides the archaeologist with a new conceptualization of the relation between people and the material world, which has initiated a renewed attention towards the material properties of archaeological artefacts.[36] Generally, the Deleuzian influence on archaeological (and anthropological) theory can be summarized as follows: (1) the ontological continuity between subject, object and lifeworld; (2) the critique on representational approaches and (3) the renewed interest in animism and metaphysics. What these three topics share is the affective dimension of the way people relate to each other and the lifeworld at large. This focus on affect is related to the renewed interest in aesthetics within archaeology.[37] Aesthetics is approached as everyday aesthetics, which means the everyday experience of people in relation to objects and their environment. However, although the philosophy of Deleuze has initiated a renewed interest in the aesthetic, what is lacking is a theoretical discussion of the position of the aesthetic within Deleuze's metaphysics. What needs to be understood is that Deleuze's sense of the aesthetic is based on a unification of everyday aesthetics with the autonomy of aesthetic experience. This is important because it means that the autonomy of aesthetic experience, which we associate with the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics, would in fact not be opposed to Deleuzian thinking. Following the fact that archaeological theory has been influenced on a major level by Deleuze's metaphysics, it would mean that *the concept of art and the autonomy of the aesthetic are already implicitly embedded within archaeological theory itself*.

This realization has consequences for the theorization of the agency of matter and material culture within archaeological theory. Following a Latourian perspective, the recognition of the agency

[36] For the turn towards the material properties of archaeological artefacts see for example: Alberti et all. 2013; DeMarrais et all. 2004; Lucas 2012; Malafouris 2013; Olsen 2013. For the adoption of Deleuzian metaphysics within archaeology consider for example: Conneller 2011, 18-20; Fowler 2013, 21-30; Gillings and Pollard 2016; Gosden and Malafouris 2015; Hamilakis and Jones 2017, 80; Jones 2012a.
[37] See for example: Gosden 2001; Hamilakis 2013; Pollard 2001; Skeates 2017.

of matter requires a symmetrical relationship between human and non-human.[38] However, if one acknowledges Deleuze's reliance on the autonomy of the aesthetic, this relation should not be understood as symmetrical, but asymmetrical.[39] Also, I will argue that a reduction of the ontological continuity between human and non-human to the concept 'relationality' is not entirely correct. If one acknowledges Deleuze's reliance on the autonomy of the aesthetic, his metaphysics cannot be understood without a notion of essence. This realization is important because it means that relationality and essence should not be conceived in opposition, but in configuration. By reducing process metaphysics to the general concept 'relationality', one neglects the fact that it is a type of metaphysics, which aims to explain how different forms of world making are possible. Such a simplification of Deleuze's metaphysics is also visible in the way his metaphysics has been adopted within the theorization of animism. Animism has to be understood as one type of world making that a Deleuzian metaphysics allows to occur and not as the metaphysical condition of reality itself.[40]

Within the first part of this chapter *Gilles Deleuze: A Metaphysics based on Aesthetic Experience*, I examine what it means to make aesthetic experience ontologically prior. This part is divided into two sections: (1) Transcendental Empiricism: The Ontological Primacy of Aesthetic Experience and (2) Not a Rejection of Essence, but a Rethinking of Essence. Within these two sections I explain how it is the autonomy of aesthetic experience that allows Deleuze to define a type of experience that does not operate as an experience of reality as pregiven, but that is itself productive of reality. Within the second part *Defining Animism as a Conception of the Social based on the Autonomy of the Aesthetic* I analyse how Deleuze's reliance on the autonomy of the aesthetic can be related to an animistic context. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to specify the metaphysical discussion for human forms of world making. It is the concept of the war-machine that is essential to understand the role Deleuze ascribes to art in human world making and his conception of animism. This concept receives an in depth analysis with a particular focus on how the war-machine is related to an a-signifying type of semiotics. Moreover, through the concept of the war-machine, I theorize the distinction between animism and fetishism, which is not a distinction made by Deleuze himself. I end

[38] Latour 2005: 76.
[39] With asymmetry I do not mean the priorization of human over non-human, but the fact that the ontological primacy of (aesthetic) experience has to be understood as an asymmetrical type of encounter.
[40] The reduction of Deleuzian metaphysics to a meta-ontology is particularly visible in the work of Tim Ingold (Ingold 2006, 2007, 2018). See also Conneller 2011: 13, for a similar critique on Ingold.

this part by analyzing how animism has to be understood as a particular type of world making and not as a general condition of Deleuze's metaphysics.

1.1 Gilles Deleuze: A Metaphysics based on Aesthetic Experience

1.1.1 Transcendental Empiricism: The Ontological Primacy of Aesthetic Experience

The process metaphysics of Gilles Deleuze has reintroduced speculative metaphysics in Western thinking, which means a return to pre-Kantian philosophy that made statements about the nature of reality as a whole.[41] The critical philosophy of Kant marked a turning point in Western philosophy because it puts forward the limitation of human experience. This, however, does not mean that experience defines all there is. For Kant, there is 'an itself', a reality existing beyond human experience, which is impossible for human beings to access. As a result, metaphysical speculation for Kant is impossible, as one cannot access the 'in itself'.[42] From this perspective, a general metaphysics is precritical because one makes a statement about something that lies beyond experience. Although the metaphysics of Deleuze makes a general metaphysical statement, it is nevertheless not precritical. Deleuze incorporates both the concerns of precritical speculative metaphysics (because he makes a general statement about the condition of reality) and critical Kantian philosophy (because he takes a critical perspective to the ground of (human) existence).[43] The way this problem is addressed by Deleuze is by making experience ontologically prior. Experience for Deleuze is not a passive form of experience of a subject in relation to a world, but an active form of experience that defines the subject and world in the first place.[44] Process metaphysics is in this sense not a critique, but a reversion of Kantian philosophy. For Kant, the world emerges from the subject, whereas for Deleuze the subject emerges from the world.[45]

In order to understand the ontological primacy of experience, the concept of the 'transcendental' needs to be introduced. The realm of the transcendental was first proposed by Kant in order to understand the a priori condition that makes it possible to have an experience. For example,

[41] Deleuze 2014: 46-48.
[42] Dunham et all. 2011: 93.
[43] Deleuze does not only critique, but also relies on Kantian philosophy. Deleuze 2014: 73, 111, 126-127, 223-224.
[44] Ibid. 98-99, 103.
[45] Ibid. 103, 176.

'space' and 'time' are requisites in order for an experience to occur, but cannot be experienced in themselves. In a similar way, the cognitive faculties provide the ground that allows one to have an experience, whereas they cannot be experienced themselves.[46] The transcendental is in this sense distinct from the transcendent. The transcendent refers to a realm different from the actual world, like Plato's ideal forms or a Christian heaven. The transcendental on the other hand does not denote a realm different from the actual world, but is part of it. Space, time and the cognitive faculties are part of this world, they are real, but nevertheless they cannot be experienced. Deleuze develops this concept of the transcendental further into a transcendental empiricism. Transcendental empiricism is not concerned with the givenness of the actual world (a radical empiricism solely concerned with actual reality), but with the way the actual world could have been given in the first place. It therefore puts forward a dynamic form of empiricism, which is based on self-determination rather than givenness. It means that one cannot reduce empirical phenomena to their actual state of affairs, but that the world could always be different than it actually is.[47] Deleuze uses the concept of the virtual to denote the realm of reality that is real, but not actual. The virtual must be understood as the a priori condition that makes it possible for experience to be productive of empirical reality.[48]

Deleuze's concept of the virtual can be defined as follows:

'The word virtual is derived from the Medieval Latin virtualis, itself derived from virtus, meaning strength or power. In scholastic philosophy the virtual is that which has potential rather than actual existence. The virtual tends towards actualization, without undergoing any form of effective or formal concretization. The tree is virtually present within the seed. Strictly speaking, the virtual should not be compared with the real, but actual, for virtuality and actuality are merely two different ways of being.'[49]

The idea that the virtual is real without being actual means that its condition is solely defined by a potential for actualization, without itself being actual. The virtual is in this sense related to the actual world, as it requires actualization in order for its potential to be made manifest. However, it must be distinct from the actual as a complete equation between virtual and actual would mean a form of empiricism that is given and complete within itself. A transcendental form of empiricism means that

[46] Deleuze 2014: 112-113, 178.
[47] Ibid. 126-127, 188.
[48] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 115.
[49] Pierre Lévy quoted in: Bryant 2008: 106.

the actual has virtual roots, that actual reality has determined itself out of a virtual potential.[50] It is also this virtual dimension of actual reality, which explains why reality cannot be reduced to the givenness of empiricism.

The virtual dimension of reality points to the fact that intelligibility is situated on the side of the sensible itself. The cognitive is situated on the side of the sensible because thinking can only emerge when something in reality forces us to think.[51] If thinking would be the subsumption of empirical reality under a preformed concept, one would not actually think, but only categorize. True thinking requires a confrontation with what one does not understand, does not know.[52] Deleuze defines this situatedness of thought on the level of the sensible through the concept 'encounter'.[53] It is through encounter with what is other than oneself, that one's habitual way of being and the givenness of empirical reality becomes questioned and that something new can be actualized. This situation of thought on the level of the sensible allows understanding how the cognitive faculties of a subject are not given, but must become constituted within experience.[54] This transformation of the intelligible from the givenness of the human cognitive faculties to the sensible does not mean that Deleuze's transcendental empiricism would be anti-rationalist. Moreover, it is best understood as a hyper-rationalism instead of empiricism because Deleuze does not prioritize matter over cognition, but matter as the outcome of a process of self-concrescence that is cognitive.[55] Experience as concrescence means that experience does not operate as reception (which presupposes subject and lifeworld), but as a productive type of experience through which both subject and lifeworld become determined.

The idea that experience as concrescence operates as a hyper-rationality can be understood through the idea that Deleuze's concept of the virtual operates as a revision of Platonic ideal forms.[56] A Platonic form is a type of universal that operates as ground of the actual world, yet is distinct from it. Deleuze's virtual on the other hand is a subjective type of universal in the sense that it is a potential that has no form in itself, but requires actualization. This type of universal is a ground, which is groundless because it is a ground that only becomes constituted within the act of concrescence (experience) itself.[57] *Deleuze also uses the term problem-Idea because the task of what defines the*

[50] Deleuze 2014: 269, 273, 276.
[51] Ibid. 182-183, 190.
[52] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 439-441.
[53] Deleuze 2014: 183, 190.
[54] Ibid. 188.
[55] Ibid. 183-184, 190. See also Bryant 2008: 41.
[56] Deleuze 2014: 74, 80, 83, 161-162.
[57] Ibid. 84, 118, 159.

ground of one's existence must become established every time anew and therefore operates as a problem.[58] One could give the example of a seed, which grows into a full-grown oak tree. The seed is not a Platonic essence that contains the final form of the tree in advance, but only a potential. It is through encounter with its environment that a process of self-determination occurs in which the seed has the possibility to actualize itself and finds its form.[59] It is a form of rationality, which denotes the way the potential of the seed solves the problem of concrescence that becomes posed through encounter with the other.

Experience as self-concrescence means that Deleuze does not make a distinction between subject and world. It is within the act of encounter that both subject and world emerge.[60] Transcendental empiricism is an empiricism because it requires the encounter with the other (environment) in order to initiate the process of self-concrescence, which gives rise to empirical form. However, what is encountered cannot be reduced to objectivity, but operates as problem-Idea. The encounter with the other does not address the other as such, but the being of the sensible, which is manifested in the way experience as encounter activates the process of concrescence of the self.[61] This does not mean that empirical reality provides the ground that makes experience possible, as the empirical world itself is initiated by the act of encounter. Transcendental empiricism is a form of hyper-rationalism because encounter becomes initiated through the problem-Idea. The Idea is therefore more fundamental than empiricism even though it requires empiricism (actualization) in order to become manifested.[62] From this perspective, it is incorrect to reduce Deleuze's metaphysics to an empiricism based on flow in which empirical form is not the result of a virtual-actual interaction (encounter with a problem-Idea), but itself a process of becoming. Such a reduction would mean the elimination of the distinction between virtual and actual and therefore would fail to solve the problem of how the actual world itself is given.[63] The process of concrescence would become reduced to the idea that 'everything operates as a process' instead of process being the specific act of self-determination of actual entities through the encounter with a problem-Idea.

The ontological primacy of experience can be understood through the title of his work *A Thousand Plateaus*, which Deleuze wrote together with the psycho-analyst Felix Guattari. When

[58] Deleuze 2014: 212, 233, 240.
[59] Ibid. 275.
[60] Ibid. 255, 275.
[61] Ibid. 190.
[62] Ibid. 233, 240, 275.
[63] Ibid. 273. See also Bryant 2008: 63.

experience is ontological primary, there cannot be one ground (plateau), but only many, which become manifested within the act of encounter of a subject with its other.[64] Encounter as self-concrescence means the constitution of a plateau, in which a subject defines himself and the world in which he lives. The conditions of subjectivity and world are therefore not pregiven, but have to be constituted every time anew within experience. A Deleuzian plateau defines a type of ground, which is groundless as it is itself a product of experience. A plateau is therefore the result of the encounter with a problem-Idea, which operates as a potential for the new, the being of the sensible, to become concretized.[65] The way in which Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize the condition of the plateau is through the encounter with a work of art.[66] The aesthetic experience of a work of art generates a plateau because it challenges one's habitual way of being and normal forms of sense perception. The experience of art is for Deleuze and Guattari not defined by perception and sensation, but by percepts and affects.[67] It offers a type of experience, which is distinct from sense perception because it is not concerned with the condition of possible experience (the perception and sensation of the diversity of the given empirical world), but the condition of real experience. Real experience addresses the being of the sensible, that what produces empirical reality as given and therefore holds the potential for difference.[68] The experience of art is therefore not situated on the level of representation, but activates a form of becoming in which the viewer becomes other.[69]

This condition of becoming other also defines the ontological process of self-concrescence, which is responsible for the production of empirical reality as given. The encounter with art activates the process of self-concrescence of a subject because it is not an experience based on bodily sensation, but forces a subject to think.[70] It is a form of intelligibility on the level of the sensible and for this reason structurally equivalent to the ontological primacy of encounter as world creation and self-concrescence of the subject. *It is for this reason why a metaphysics based on the ontological primacy of experience means the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience*.[71] The aesthetic experience of art is a cognitive experience that addresses the being of the sensible. This means that a work of art makes the virtual dimension of empirical reality explicitly visible because art is an empirical object that cannot be

[64] Deleuze 2014: 199.
[65] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 183.
[66] Deleuze 2014: 85-86; Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 180, 186.
[67] Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 164.
[68] Deleuze 2014: 85-86, 183-184, 275, 293.
[69] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 317; Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 169.
[70] O'Sullivan 2006: 50.
[71] Deleuze 2014: 71, 85-86.

reduced to its empirical dimension. Art therefore makes people aware of the fact that the reduction of the sensible to empirical form is an illusion. The aesthetic experience of art is a type of experience that is productive because it makes visible a dimension of reality that lies beyond the senses.[72] It is such a type of experience, which allows understanding how experience becomes an active form of experience, which is not related to empirical reality in its givenness, but is responsible for the genesis of empirical reality itself. The transformation of experience from a passive form of experience of the world as given to an active form of experience means that it is through experience that a subject defines himself and the world in which he lives. When experience becomes productive, subject and world must be understood as the outcome of rather than ground of experience. By using the experience of art as model for metaphysics, the being of the sensible is not contemplated, but realized through the active character of experience. The making visible of the being of the sensible within the aesthetic experience of art then becomes an ontological act of self-concrescence, meaning that empirical reality produces itself.

This structural similarity between the metaphysical concept of the plateau and the plateau in art means that art for Deleuze is not limited to human societies, but is also a quality of nature.[73] The condition of art is not limited to the encounter with a work of art, but denotes the condition of how to feel at home.[74] Art for Deleuze must be understood through the metaphor of the *House*:

'A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orients himself with his little song as best he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos. Perhaps the child skips as he sings, hastens or slows his pace. But the song itself is already a skip: it jumps from chaos to the beginnings of order in chaos and is in danger of breaking apart at any moment. (…) Now we are at home. But home does not pre-exist: it was necessary to draw a circle around that uncertain and fragile center, to organize a limited space.'[75]

It is the act of singing, which allows the child to gain a sense of ground, to create a feeling of security that works against the uncertainty of being in the dark. The activity of singing is a form of expression, which transforms the condition of chaos (darkness) into a quality. However, this type of framing simultaneously operates as deframing because expression for Deleuze must be understood as a becoming other. The encounter with art operates as the opening up of another world, a break with

[72] Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 167, 173, 182.
[73] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 351, 368, 373.
[74] Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 179-180, 186.
[75] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 362.

people's normal mode of becoming. The act of singing is therefore both a type of framing and deframing because it is a form of world (plateau) constitution through a becoming expressive of the child, a becoming other of the child. Art as House therefore means both a framing, sheltering from chaos, and a deframing because it allows the opening up of difference, an intensification of life.[76] It is this simultaneous condition of territorialisation (framing) and deterritorialization (deframing), which defines the plateau established by art as groundless ground. In order to feel at home, a sole act of framing is not enough. This indeed offers security and sheltering from the forces of chaos, but reduces the condition of the plateau to a stable ground and therefore neglects that empirical reality is not given, but must be produced. Without a frame, no qualities can become expressive and therefore no world is possible. However, in return, a stabilized type of framing causes an elimination of qualities because it neglects the necessity of ground to be groundless. It is only art that provides a type of framing that allows qualities to become expressive without eliminating them.[77] To feel at home requires both framing and deframing in order to acknowledge the necessity of both limitation (security) and living qualities. By defining the condition of the frame through art, Deleuze prevents the stabilization of the frame to occur because art is a type of framing that operates through deframing.[78]

1.1.2 Not a Rejection of Essence, but a Rethinking of Essence

A common mistake in the interpretation of Deleuze is the reduction of the virtual-actual interaction to the concept of 'relationality'. The concept of relationality denotes that an entity is not defined by itself, but through its mode of engagement with the other. This is true to a certain extent, as Deleuze indeed argues that a subject is not complete in itself, but constitutes itself through encounter with the other. The other is part of me. However, what is misleading about the concept of relationality is that it would be opposed to the concept of essence. Such an interpretation is incorrect because it would affirm rather than oppose a radical empiricism (the world as solely being actual). The process of self-concrescence for Deleuze requires the encounter with a problem-Idea, a form of thought situated on the level of the sensible in order to become activated. The self is not pregiven, but must become constituted out of a virtual potential. This interchange between virtuality and actuality indicates that the self is not defined

[76] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 362-363; Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 180, 186.
[77] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 366-369.
[78] Ibid. 391.

by the other, but that through the other, the realm of potentiality becomes activated, which allows the subject to determine himself. The process of concrescence in which a virtual potential becomes actualized must be understood according to Deleuze (and Guattari) as a vague notion of essence. A vague notion of essence means that essence cannot operate as ground of one's existence, but only operates as potential. It denotes a type of essence that is not pregiven, but becomes constituted within the process of self-concrescence.[79] It is within the act of encounter that a virtual potentiality becomes activated, which initiates an actualization of oneself as subject. This dependence of the subject on essence as potentiality and the dependence of essence on the determination of the subject can indeed be related to the concept of relationality because the self is not pregiven, but the outcome of a process of individuation.[80] *However, in order to counter the idea that relationality would be opposed to essence, we need to define relationality as an asymmetrical type of encounter*.[81]

Following my discussion of Deleuze's concept of the encounter, the encounter is a type of aesthetic experience that becomes initiated by a confrontation with a form of thought situated on the level of the sensible. This situation is asymmetrical because the encounter is not initiated by a subject, but starts from the outside. The asymmetrical character of the encounter indicates the priority of the problem-Idea, the confrontation with a form of thought on the side of the sensible, which activates the process of self-concrescence of the subject.[82] Without a vague notion of essence (virtual potential) the encounter ceases to be productive and therefore one would reduce transcendental empiricism to a mere empiricism. It is for this reason that a concept of relationality in opposition to essence is meaningless. *Because Deleuze uses art as model for his metaphysics, one can envision why relationality and essence have to operate in constellation. Within the encounter of a work of art, relationality takes up the characteristic of singularity because the encounter with art is not limited to the relation between a subject and material object, but to the way this relation initiates an opening up towards the transcendental.* A work of art forces the viewer to think and for this reason is addressed to the being of the sensible instead of empirical form. In the encounter with a work of art, matter is not experienced as

[79] In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze argues that the concept of essence should not necessarily be rejected: 'No doubt, if one insists, the word "essence" might be preserved, but only on condition of saying that the essence is precisely the accident, the event, the sense; not simply the contrary of what is ordinarily called the essence but the contrary of the contrary: multiplicity is no more appearance than essence, no more multiple than one.' (Deleuze 2014: 251). In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari use the term 'vague essence' or 'nomad essence' in order to characterize a type of essence, which operates as event and therefore as a type of ground that is groundless (Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 430-431, 475, 590). See also Bryant 2008: 64.
[80] Deleuze 2014: 160, 198.
[81] Ibid. 24, 25, 29. Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 342. See also Bryant 2008: 238.
[82] Deleuze 2014: 255.

empirical form, but within its singular dimension, which indicates that aesthetic experience is a type of relationality that is entangled with essence rather than opposed to it. The encounter with art operates as model for the encounter with a problem-Idea, in which the transcendental dimension of reality activates the process of concrescence.

This idea that Deleuze rethinks rather than rejects the concept of essence might seem contradictory to his argument that a subject attempts to strive for the *Body without Organs*. The condition of the Body without Organs means a state in which a virtual potential and actualization have achieved complete reconciliation, a state in which there is no distinction anymore between self and environment.[83] This condition is impossible to achieve precisely because the virtual only operates as potential, which means that it is striving for particularization without the possibility of the virtual and actual ever attaining an ideal state of reconciliation. A complete alignment of virtual and actual entails the risk of eliminating their distinction, which would mean a reality that is solely actual (radical empiricism) or a reality that is solely virtual (which is a reality without expression, without qualities). The state of the Body without Organs must therefore be understood as a condition one is striving for, that guides the process of concrescence of the self, but is unattainable.[84] It indicates nothing but the necessity that one must go beyond oneself in order to be oneself.[85] The reason why the Body without Organs is not opposed to Deleuze's concept of essence is because essence for Deleuze can only exist through a process of becoming. Because essence itself is nothing but a potentiality, it can only exist through becoming particularized. This condition is related to the striving for the Body without Organs because the Body without Organs means the attempt to strive for a state in which virtual potentiality and actualization have achieved complete reconciliation. Without a concept of essence (virtual potentiality) the striving for this condition would be impossible. The Body without Organs is therefore not opposed to essence, but addresses the utopian realization of essence's full potential.

Moreover, it gives insight into the paradoxical situation that Deleuze developed a metaphysics that is both defined by a continuous process of becoming and by the striving for harmony. Deleuze needs the Body without Organs in order to give a sense of direction to the various processes of concrescence. Without the Body without Organs, every form of actualization would be as good as any other. If everything would indeed be a process of becoming, then the idea of 'self', 'world' and

[83] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 178, 182.
[84] Ibid. 174.
[85] Ibid. 175.

'metaphysics' would lose all meaning. Deleuze's argument that one must go beyond oneself does not mean a rejection of the concept of the self, but a full actualization of the self, the striving for coherence between virtual and actual. When the attempt to strive for this coherence disappears and becomes replaced by becoming as such, then the process of concrescence ceases to make qualities expressive and ceases to integrate with the other processes of concrescence to form a consistent world.[86] By characterizing metaphysics and the Body without Organs solely through the term relationality, one neglects the fact that the continuous process of becoming requires a form of essence as potentiality and the fact that becoming is directed towards harmony, which means an ideal reconciliation of virtual potential with actual reality. *Without essence, no becoming and without becoming no essence*. It is this reconciliation of essence (as potential) and relationality, which is necessary in order to understand Deleuze's reliance on the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience. Within an aesthetic experience, encounter with the other (relationality) activates the determination of a virtual potential. Without the constellation of relationality and essence, aesthetic experience would be incapable to operate as a productive type of experience that is generative of reality.

1.2 Defining Animism as a Conception of the Social based on the Autonomy of the Aesthetic

1.2.1 The Nomad War-Machine and Art as War-Machine

In order to understand the condition of animism, it is necessary to extend my analysis of Deleuze's metaphysics to human world making. Animism for Deleuze and Guattari should be understood as a particular form of world making that process metaphysics allows to occur and not as the general condition of metaphysics as such.[87] I argue that an animistic lifeworld can be understood through a conception of the social, which is based on the autonomy of the aesthetic. This requires envisioning how the autonomy of the aesthetic becomes transformed from a general metaphysical principle to the condition of 'war-machine'. The concept of the war-machine is introduced by Deleuze and Guattari as the principle that prevents a lifeworld from becoming reduced to representation or mere empiricism.[88] The war-machine keeps the social open towards the transcendental and therefore prevents it from

[86] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 186-187.
[87] Ibid. 500-501.
[88] Ibid. 387-388.

becoming a closed system in which content and expression or appearance and reality would completely cohere with one another. The war-machine could in this sense be understood as the principle that prevents the development of State-formation and maintains the dispersal and segmentary character of groups.[89] This could take the form of critique (as it does in modern societies), but also form the basis of the lifeworld as such, which, I argue, is the condition of the social that defines an animistic lifeworld.

Deleuze and Guattari made in this sense the argument that the war-machine is an invention of nomadic societies.[90] One has to make a distinction between the nomad and the migrant.[91] Movement as migration denotes a condition of not being at home, as the migrant leaves his home country in search for a new home, a new land. The difference with the condition of the nomad is situated within the way a nomad is at home through movement. The nomad is not in search for home, but is continuously at home and therefore does not 'depart' in the way the migrant does. For this reason Deleuze and Guattari make the remark that a nomad is he who does not move: 'Of course, the nomad moves, but while seated, and he is only seated while moving.'[92] Within my discussion of Deleuze's metaphysics, I argued how the condition of being at home requires both territorialisation and deterritorialization. Territorialisation means the act of framing of chaos, which allows the becoming expressive of qualities that constitute a plateau and therefore a ground for one's existence. However, the condition of home requires a ground that is groundless in order to prevent the closing down of the transcendental dimension of reality to a radical empiricism. It is the condition of the war-machine, which must prevent such a closing down to occur.

The reason why Deleuze and Guattari propose the war-machine as an invention of the nomad is because the nomad's sense of territory operates through deterritorialization as such.[93] The condition of the nomad can in this sense be related to the example of the child in the dark, who starts singing in order to initiate a frame, a secure place. In this case, territorialisation (frame) operates through deframing as art (singing) is a becoming expressive of the child, a becoming other of the child. This same condition is present within nomadic communities, who establish a frame (territory) through the act of deterritorialisation itself. For both the child and the nomad, territory lies on the outside, in the becoming expressive and movement, and not within a particular place. The groundlessness of ground

[89] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 416-417.
[90] Ibid. 442.
[91] Ibid. 443.
[92] Ibid. 444.
[93] Ibid. 444-445.

becomes in both cases particularly manifest, as both the child and nomad feel at home without belonging to a 'land'. Land or ground becomes in this sense shapeless, without becoming groundless as such. *Art and nomadism stand for the condition of the war-machine par excellence precisely because they define a form of home without a land and therefore react against the development of State-formation.*

Because territorialisation and deterritorialisation must always operate in constellation, one cannot say that nomadism is opposed to State-formation, but on the other hand that the condition of the State is already present implicitly within nomadic societies.[94] Deleuze and Guattari argue against the idea of an evolutionary sequence from egalitarian nomadic/tribal societies to empires and kingdoms.[95] A nomadic or tribal society is not incapable of achieving the level of State-formation, but deliberately counters the tendencies that would allow State-formation to occur:

'And in primitive societies there are as many tendencies that "seek" the State, as many vectors working in the direction of the State, as there are movements within the State or outside it that tend to stray from it or guard themselves against it, or else to stimulate its evolution, or else already to abolish it: everything coexists, in perpetual interaction.'[96]

The countering of State-formation does not mean that nomadic/tribal societies would lack power organization, but the fact that the becoming centralized, systematized of these power structures is deliberately countered.[97] The tendency towards State-formation means the attempt for coherence between content and expression within the regime of signs, which would transform it into the realm of signification (representation). Deleuze and Guattari use in this case the concept of the 'Face', which means the reduction of the regime of signs to one interpretation, a reduction of the world to one coherent appearance (the Face).[98] The tendency towards State-formation is present within every society because of the necessity of territorialisation. It is territorialisation that allows qualities to emerge and the regime of signs. In order to both promote State-formation (territorialisation) and counter State-

[94] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 249.
[95] Ibid. 138, 245, 259, 419.
[96] Ibid. 500.
[97] Ibid. 247, 416.
[98] Ibid. 132-134, 197.

formation, the semiotic system within nomadic/tribal societies must be understood as an *a-signifying* type of semiotics.[99]

The a-signifying character of nomadic/tribal semiotics is related to Deleuze's and Guattari's discussion of 'becoming animal' or 'becoming other'. They give the example of the mask as sign, used within nomadic/tribal societies, as a tool of 'becoming other'. The mask does not operate in terms of the 'Face', which would mean the imitation of the other on the basis of a sign.[100] In that case, the mask would be a representation of the other and a hiding of the self. Connecting the mask with 'becoming other' means that the mask operates through a *mimetic relationship that is a-signifying*. The mimetic relationship of a mask to the animal depicted is not situated on the level of representation, but operates as a way to relate to the other as other: a making present of the animal's inner essence. The mask in this sense reveals a dimension of reality that is not immediately accessible by vision and therefore connects the actual with the transcendental. However, what must be taken into account is that Deleuze and Guattari argue against the concept of mimesis. This is the case because an equation of mimesis with 'becoming animal' entails the danger of reducing 'becoming animal' to signification, a playing of the animal, rather than actually becoming animal.[101]

Becoming is easily reduced to play-acting precisely because one does not become an animal in a literal sense by putting on a mask. What Deleuze and Guattari mean is that through the putting on of a mask, one replaces the affects of one's own body with the affects of the animal body.[102] Because Deleuze's metaphysics is defined by the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience, it is through experience (affect) that one determines oneself and therefore 'becomes'.[103] 'Becoming animal' means how through the wearing of the mask one replaces the affects of one's own body with the affects of the animal body and in this way connect to and reveal the animal's inner essence. One can define the mimetic then in terms of the taking up of the affects of another body rather than as imitation of the appearance of the other. It is such a definition of mimesis, which allows understanding a sign as a-signifying.[104] It is art for Deleuze and Guattari, which is the model par excellence for the a-signifying

[99] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 136-137.
[100] Ibid. 200.
[101] Ibid. 277-278, 319.
[102] Ibid. 280.
[103] Ibid. 299.
[104] Ibid. 321.

sign.[105] Every form of art, in order to be art, is never a form of representation of the other, but the taking up of the affect of the other.[106]

However, the reason why the condition of the State is nevertheless present within nomadic/ tribal societies is because the process of 'becoming other' also needs to be countered:

'The politics of becoming-animal remains extremely ambiguous. For societies, even primitive societies, have always appropriated these becomings in order to break them, reduce them to relations of totemic or symbolic correspondence.'[107]

This necessity of countering processes of 'becoming other' is related to Deleuze's and Guattari's remark that deterritorialisation requires territorialisation. Territorialisation is necessary in order to prevent false hybrids to occur in which the going beyond the self becomes a destruction of the self. For this reason, it is too simplistic to define nomadic/tribal societies solely through the countering of State-formation (the a-signifying sign as war-machine). The sign must simultaneously embody the striving for State-formation in order for the process of 'becoming other' to be meaningful. This countering of processes of 'becoming other' is visible within the way the art of Neolithic Britain incorporates a dualism: the circle and the line.[108] Such a dualism works against becoming because it could transform the regime of signs into a system of binary oppositions, but at the same time is also consistent with the idea that becoming itself is based on a dualism: virtual and actual, territorialisation and deterritorialisation.[109] Within my discussion of the Body without Organs, I have argued that Deleuze's metaphysics is not about becoming as such, but requires becoming to be defined by rules, having a direction, in terms of the striving for a harmonious reconciliation of self and environment. This cannot occur simply through deterritorializing as the Body without Organs requires the full actualization of essence as virtual potential and not the replacement of essence by the other. A sole deterritorial space cannot make one feel at home. The condition of the nomad and art is not based upon deterritorialisation as such, but upon a type of deterritorialisation, which is itself territorial.

[105] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 219.
[106] Ibid. 355.
[107] Ibid. 289.
[108] Bradley 2012: 54-56.
[109] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 246.

1.2.2 Distinguishing between Fetishism and Animism

The necessity of both the tendency towards State-formation and the countering of State-formation in nomadic/tribal societies is not always successful, which can be understood through the distinction between animism and fetishism. This is not a distinction made by Deleuze and Guattari, as they define tribal semiotics as an a-signifying regime, which counters facialization (signification). However, what needs to be taken into account is that the concept of the 'Face' is not only related to signification (which means territorialisation), but also to desire, which means that the Face can take up the condition of war-machine.[110] The Face becoming war-machine constitutes a contradictory situation, because the war-machine is what is supposed to work against the Face, against the reduction of reality to mere appearance. The way Deleuze and Guattari explain this contradictory situation is through the drug addict. A drug addict takes up the condition of war-machine because the desire for drugs operates as a countering of the territorialized condition of the identity of the self. Through the continuous desire for drugs, the drug addict transforms himself into a Body without Organs, becoming other than himself, which is temporarily achieved within the state of hallucination associated with drugs. However, this striving for the Body without Organs is false, because one does not go beyond oneself in order to fully become oneself (the Body without Organs as the utopian state of harmony between virtual potential and actuality), but destroys oneself. The Body without Organs of the drug addict is an empty Body without Organs, a literally hollowing out of the self because the going beyond the self fails to deliver a determination of the self, a becoming expressive.[111] A virtual potential does not become actualized, but destroyed. An empty Body without Organs can only result into suicide.[112]

We are dealing then indeed with the condition of the war-machine, as the empty Body without Organs works against identification and operates as a 'becoming other'. However, the reason why it nevertheless becomes aligned with the condition of the Face is because the empty Body without Organs paradoxically generates an increased form of territorialisation: the becoming addicted, the becoming dependent on the drug shot.[113] Therefore, instead of countering territorialisation, the drug addict increases its bonds of territorialisation to such a degree that he finds himself imprisoned completely.[114]

[110] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 148, 154-155.
[111] Ibid. 176-177, 187.
[112] Ibid. 189, 268.
[113] Ibid. 155, 331-332.
[114] Ibid. 187.

The Face takes up a different condition in this case, as it not only reduces the world to appearance, but becomes involved in a destruction of the self and world on the basis of desire. Desire breaks with territorialisation, with appearance, but brings it back heavier then before, which results into a different Face: the Face as death drive. Instead of content being an overcoding of expression (reducing reality to a projected appearance), appearance now becomes the destruction of expression.

Whereas Deleuze and Guattari discuss this second condition of the Face in relation to the drug addict (and fascism), it can also be related to the occurrence of fetishism within tribal societies.[115] Precisely because 'becoming animal' requires the highly unstable condition of both the tendency towards State-formation and the countering of State-formation, it can easily become distorted. Such a form of distortion is visible in the taking up of processes of 'becoming animal' within secret societies. We speak of a secret society when a tribal semiotic system becomes abused in favour of the power of an elite.[116] In such a case, the regime of signs remains a-signifying, but a-signification takes up the condition of deception. 'Becoming animal' becomes a tricking of perception, the creation of an illusionary and confusing situation, which is often related to a state of hallucination.[117] We are dealing in this case with a type of overcoding of expression by content in the sense that one is told what to see in order to enhance the power-basis of a small elite. However, because this type of overcoding is achieved through a 'becoming animal', a tricking of the perception of the perceiver, we are not dealing with the first condition of the Face (State-formation), but the second type of Face: a war-machine based on desire. Secret societies do not function on the basis of interpretation; an audience does not interpret, but becomes deceived. This deception is achieved through the creation of highly elaborate visual effects, which do not create an interpretative type of experience, but a deceptive type of experience based on bodily sensation. We are dealing with a war-machine because secret societies do not enhance State-formation, but work against it: it is beneficial only for an elite group of people, but does not provide the idea of the social as a whole, which the condition of the State requires.

The concept of the fetish can be understood as the combination of overcoding (the reduction of expression to content) with devotion (overcoding functions through a sensational experience and not through interpretation). The reason why fetishism and animism are often equated with one another is because in both cases we are dealing with the experience of an object or image as alive, in the sense

[115] Deleuze and Guattari argue that facialization does not occur within tribal societies (Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 205-206). However, they do mention the term fetishism in relation to facialization (Ibid. 199).
[116] Hayden 2018: 340-341.
[117] Ibid. 338-339.

that it would embody an ontological spirit. However, the reason why fetishism is different from animism is because a fetish does not address the transcendental dimension of empiricism (which requires the countering of a closed world), but distorts the condition of the transcendental through a false unification between virtual and actual. On the one hand one could say that fetishism counters a radical empiricism, as it acknowledges that reality cannot be reduced to empirical form, but must incorporate a sense of spirit. On the other hand however, fetishism promotes in a similar way as radical empiricism a closed world because the virtual-actual relationship is stabilized and in this sense works against the opening up of the potential for difference.[118] Such a distortion of the virtual-actual relationship increases rather than counters the reduction of reality to appearance, which occurs in radical empiricism. *In the case of animism, 'becoming animal' operates as a true war-machine, which through encounter with the other creates a sense of home. Animism is then concerned with the striving for the true Body without Organs, the utopian reconciled condition of transcendental and empiricism, whereas fetishism with the illusion of a Body without Organs, the mere appearance of reconciliation between transcendental and empiricism*.

One could relate the condition of animism to what Deleuze and Guattari call an *atheistic sense of the absolute*.[119] An atheistic sense of the absolute is distinct from a religious sense of the absolute, as it is not based on a god, priest or the supernatural. It can be related to the condition of the nomad, in which deterritorialization as such takes up a territorial quality. For the nomad, empiricism always has a transcendental quality, which becomes achieved through the fact that his sense of land (territory) is based on the act of deterritorialization (movement) itself. *Animism is atheistic because the absolute is experienced within everyday acts of encounter (like movement) that operate as a 'becoming other'*. It is in this sense distinct from fetishism, which is usually associated with particular ritual contexts and performances.[120]

[118] Horkheimer and Adorno 2002: 12.
[119] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 446.
[120] Hayden 2018: 342.

1.2.3 Defining an Animistic Lifeworld: A Particular Earth-Territory Constellation

The way in which Deleuze and Guattari theorize the structural similarity and difference between multiple types of world making is through the concepts 'Earth' and 'Territory'.[121] The difficulty with these two concepts is that they are related, yet not entirely equivalent to territorialisation and deterritorialisation. In order to explain the difference, I first want to refer to the definition of 'la planète' and 'la Terre' proposed by the philosopher Michel Lussault:

'La planète désigne, dit-il, les systèmes biologiques et physiques qui constituent la nature au sens ou il en est question dans les sciences du vivant et de la matière. C'est l'ensemble des écosystèmes, des communautés biotiques et de leurs milieux abiotiques – le sol, l'eau, les plantes et les animaux, sans exclure les êtres humains eux-mêmes et les sociétés qu'ils forment, qui interagissent en permanence matériellement, corporellement et culturellement, avec le réalités biophysiques. La Terre, poursuit Michel Lussault, est ce que devient la planète via l'humanisation, c'est-a-dire non plus seulement au travers de l'occupation de la planète par les êtres humains, mais au travers du déploiement a sa surface des cultures, des imaginaires, des idéologies, etc., qui permettent de saisir la réalité planétaire dans une autre perspective.'[122]

If we relate this definition of 'la planète' and 'la Terre' to Deleuze's metaphysics, we can reformulate 'la planète' as the whole constellation of virtual-actual interactions, which constitutes the givenness of the empirical world. Every plant, animal, human being etc. is involved in a process of concrescence through which it determines itself and the surrounding world. These multiple processes of concrescence do not form together one coherent world, but multiple worlds, which exist in constellation with one another. 'La planète' is distinguished from 'la Terre' in the sense that 'la Terre' is concerned with a unification of the various processes of concrescence into a shared type of experience. We are not dealing with processes of concrescence as constellation of different worlds, but as becoming united into 'one world'. Deleuze's and Guattari's concept of Earth and Territory can be understood on the basis of this discussion of 'la planète' and 'la Terre'. Earth does not stand for a particular 'world' nor for the transcendental field of potentiality, but for the state in between, the whole constellation of virtual-actual interactions, without having yet become integrated into a shared

[121] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 394-397.
[122] Afeissa 2014: 55.

'world'.[123] Earth in this sense works against Territory because it promotes the disintegration of the processes of concrescence into multiple worlds instead of a unification, which leads to Territory. The concept of 'Territory' is related to the idea of *Art as House*, a feeling at home within the world. It means the creation of a shared plateau (experience), which offers the basis for people to live within a common world.[124] However, the equation between 'Territory' and 'Art' is confusing because Deleuze and Guattari use art as a model for their metaphysics as such. Art as home therefore refers both to the ontological act of self-concrescence (Earth) and to the framing of the constellation of multiple plateaus into a unified experience (Territory).

This isomorphy between Earth and Territory points to the fact that they are not only distinct, but must also be integrated with one another. A Territory disconnected from Earth cannot create the feeling of 'Home' as it would become estranged from the multiplicity that is inherent to the ontological processes of concrescence, reducing it to unity as such. In return, Earth cannot become disconnected from Territory, as then it would be impossible to share an experience with another living being. This requires the transcendence of one's own world into a shared world, a shared experience. It is from the moment that multiple worlds become transformed into one world that one moves from Earth to Territory. It is the isomorphy between Earth and Territory, which gives rise to different forms of world making. The case of animism means a form of life in which one feels at home through the act of deterritorialisation as such. Putting this condition in terms of Earth and Territory means that the sense of home is not based on 'one world', but on a constellation of multiple worlds. The nomad has a sense of home or land by lacking a land. This can be reformulated to the idea that land takes up the condition of Earth and not of Territory. This means that *a nomad moves within a constellation of multiple worlds that touch on one another without becoming integrated*. It is the condition in which the processes of concrescence of animal, place, plant and human do interact, but lack a unified experience. *The sense of home or land is situated in the way, within the act of movement, the difference between multiple worlds becomes (temporally) transcended through the encounter with the other. This can be related to the condition of 'becoming animal' in which one gains a sense of home (territory) through becoming other, through deterritorialisation*. We are dealing then with an Earth – Territory constellation in which Territory is situated in the act of encounter between different worlds. Territory therefore never takes up

[123] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 394.
[124] Ibid. 374, 387.

the condition of a unified experience that characterizes the world as one because it is solely situated within the act of movement or encounter as such.

Conclusion

Within this chapter I examined the connection between aesthetics and metaphysics. In order for aesthetics to form the basis of metaphysics itself, Deleuze uses the autonomy of aesthetic experience as his model. Deleuze needs the particularity of the autonomy of the aesthetic because it defines an active type of experience in which a subject is forced to think. I analysed how Deleuze's reliance on the autonomy of the aesthetic can be related to prehistoric societies and animism through the concept of the war-machine. The condition of the war-machine is what prevents a human society from becoming a closed system in which reality becomes reduced to signification or appearance. In order to acknowledge that reality cannot be reduced to actual empirical form, but has a transcendental dimension, a regime of signs is needed that keeps human experience open towards the possibility of difference. Such a regime of signs Deleuze and Guattari discuss through the idea of 'becoming animal', in which imitation does not operate as a representation of the animal, but as a taking up of the affects of the animal. This is related to the aesthetic experience of art because an artist must not create a representation of reality, but engage the viewer with a type of affect, that is different from his own habitual forms of experience.

Secondly, I discussed the distinction between animism and fetishism. Fetishism occurs when an a-signifying type of semiotics takes up the condition of the 'Face' and becomes a form of deception. The distinction between fetishism and animism is situated within the way animism operates as a true war-machine, which opens up the transcendental dimension of reality, whereas fetishism only generates the illusion of the transcendental. I argued how Deleuze and Guattari define animism through a particular Earth-Territory constellation and therefore do not equate it with process metaphysics as such. Within an animistic form of life, Territory takes up the condition of Earth, which means that it is through encounter with a different world (a becoming other) that one gains a sense of Territory. This is related to aesthetic autonomy because the encounter with the other (a different world) is not a passive form of experience on the diversity of empirical reality, but a productive type of experience, which opens up towards the transcendental.

2. ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD: ALIGNING PROCESS METAPHYSICS WITH REFLECTIVE JUDGEMENT

Introduction

Within this chapter I develop my examination into the relation between aesthetics and metaphysics further through the process metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead. On a general level, the process metaphysics of Whitehead can be understood to be equivalent to Deleuzian metaphysics, as both are concerned with the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience. However, despite this similarity, Whiteheadian and Deleuzian metaphysics are not entirely equivalent. The main difference between Deleuze and Whitehead is based on the fact that a Whiteheadian perspective allows to counter the current tendency within archaeological theory to take a post-human perspective in which humans and non-humans are considered as ontologically equivalent. Such a post-human perspective is considered to be relevant to theorize animism, as it allows approaching world making in terms of the continuity between human and non-human beings. Within this chapter I argue against such an interpretation of animism because it neglects that human beings possess the unique capacity to reflect onto the world.

This unique human capacity of reflection has been critiqued within archaeological theory because it would reduce animism to a form of representation. However, by acknowledging that Whitehead incorporates human reflective judgement within his metaphysical system, I demonstrate that such a reading can be countered. Moreover, the incorporation of reflective judgement within Whitehead's metaphysics allows to further elaborate my argument on the autonomy of aesthetic experience. Because aesthetic experience for Whitehead is ontologically prior, reflective judgement must be understood as a type of experience, which is aesthetic. A reflective type of aesthetic experience can be understood through the autonomy of aesthetic judgement, which is the type of aesthetic experience associated with the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics.[125] By analysing the position of reflective judgement within Whitehead's metaphysical system, it becomes possible to further theorize how the autonomy of aesthetic judgement can be related to prehistory. Also,

[125] Aesthetic experience operates as aesthetic judgement when a viewer reflects on the purposiveness of form. The purposiveness of form means the connection between the appearance of form and its underlying design (which could formulated as the coherence between appearance and reality). Aesthetic experience as a form of judgement therefore transforms the relation between virtual and actual, which defines the process of concrescence, towards a reflective judgement of truth.

Whitehead's discussion of reflective judgement allows me to develop a different perspective towards animism. I propose that animism is neither an ontological condition of reality nor a representational projection onto reality, but a condition that emerges out of a reflective type of aesthetic experience. Such an approach to animism means that it is the autonomy of aesthetic judgement, which is generative of the condition of animacy.

In the first part of this chapter *Rethinking the Ontological Primacy of Aesthetic Experience for Human Beings* I discuss how experience as aesthetic judgement is embedded within Whitehead's metaphysical system. In the second part *A Critical Analysis of the Equation between Process Metaphysics and Animism* I put forward a definition of animism that is based on the idea that animism emerges out of the autonomy of aesthetic judgement. This argument is developed by undertaking a critical analysis of the theorization of animism within archaeology and anthropology. I distinguish between two approaches: 'relational ontology' and 'critical ontology'. Both define animism as an ontological condition distinct from the modern West. However, based on my definition of animism, I demonstrate that this is not entirely correct. This is the case because an animistic form of life and the modern West must share the capacity of propositional judgement. It is through propositional judgement that one can acknowledge how different forms of human world making are both ontologically distinct and related to one another.

2.1 Rethinking the Ontological Primacy of Aesthetic Experience for Human Beings

2.1.1 Distinguishing between Deleuzian and Whiteheadian Metaphysics: The Continuity of Becoming versus the Becoming of Continuity

In order to understand Whitehead's metaphysics three concepts need to be introduced, which form the basis of his metaphysical system: actual entity, prehension and eternal object. The categories of actual entity and eternal object are the fundamental elements that make up reality, whereas the concept of prehension indicates how they are connected with one another.[126] An actual entity is not given or complete in itself for Whitehead, but can only exist in relation to what is other than itself. This means that actual entities not simply interact with one another, but actually enter into each other's

[126] Whitehead 1978: 22, 25.

concrescence.[127] The reason why this is the case is because the basic nature of an actual entity is that it is a prehending thing. Prehension therefore is not a feeling by a subject, who is already preformed, but feeling as a form of self-realization of the subject.[128]

In order to explain this further, the concept of eternal object needs to be introduced. An eternal object can be understood as equivalent to Deleuze's realm of the virtual; it stands for the condition of reality that is real, yet not actual. An eternal object is not actual because it operates as a pure potential for ingression within the concrescence of actual entities. However, an eternal object is real in the sense that it shapes the processes of concrescence, which make up the actual world.[129] Without the category of eternal objects, it would be impossible to conceive how prehension both operates as a form of concrescence that includes the other and as a self-realization of the subject.[130] Whereas it is the encounter of the other that allows the act of prehension to occur, it is the category of eternal objects, which defines the particular subjective way that an actual entity prehends or feels the other. This means that an eternal object is not a dominant ideal that defines the way an actual entity must constitute itself. An eternal object is not a possibility that simply needs to be realized, but only takes up meaning through the act of actualization. It therefore adds particularity to the act of prehension without determining in advance the process of concrescence itself.[131]

In order to understand the difference between Deleuzian and Whiteheadian metaphysics, one needs to acknowledge that the process of concrescence for Whitehead is not opposed to the endurance character of actual entities. This means that Whitehead does not argue in favour of endurance as an unchanging actual entity, but as an inherent aspect within process itself. In the case of an enduring object, endurance depends on two different types of process: concrescence and transition.[132] The process of concrescence means how the self-constitution of a particular entity is given direction by the category of subjective unity. The category of subjective unity is introduced by Whitehead in order to define prehension as the subjective aim of self-determination.[133] Whereas actual entities are not complete in themselves, they are nevertheless guided by a subjective aim, which is what adds determinacy to the process of prehension. This subjective ideal is not something, which can ever be attained because eternal objects themselves are defined by indecision. It is through the category of

[127] Whitehead 1978: 7, 20, 41.
[128] Ibid. 51-52.
[129] Ibid. 23, 44.
[130] Ibid. 45, 50-51.
[131] Ibid. 29, 154.
[132] Ibid. 210.
[133] Ibid. 25, 222-224.

subjective unity that it becomes possible to understand how reality for Whitehead operates simultaneously as a cluster of relations and is defined by the limitation of actual entities in their own particularity. Without this category, process would lack a sense of direction and it would be impossible to understand the coherence of entities in a world that indeed operates as a process of becoming.[134]

However, the process of concrescence is in itself insufficient to understand the endurance character of actual entities. The occurrence of schizophrenia is always an inherent risk within the process of concrescence of human beings. What requires explanation for Whitehead is not the occurrence of dissociation of personality, but how there can be a unified personality when the concrescence of actual entities is a process of becoming, which includes the other.[135] In addition to concrescence, a second type of process must be considered, which Whitehead calls transition. The process of concrescence is directed by the striving for the subjective aim, whereas the process of transition is concerned with the continuity between past and present. Transition means the inheritance of the past and the continuation of the past relationships between actual entity and its environment.[136] Because the environment enters into the process of concrescence, which defines the actual entity, a stable environment is as important as the category of subjective unity for the endurance of an entity.[137] The idea of a stable environment is related to social order; it means the existence of actual entities within a common world.[138]

It is this concern with endurance as both personal order and social order, which leads to Whitehead's statement that although the self-constitution of entities must be understood as a process, the ultimate metaphysical truth is nevertheless not process, but atomism:

'The extensive continuity of the physical universe has usually been construed to mean that there is a continuity of becoming. But if we admit that something becomes it is easy to prove that there can be no continuity of becoming. There is a becoming of continuity, but no continuity of becoming. (…) Thus the ultimate metaphysical truth is atomism.'[139]

[134] Whitehead 1978: 85, 87, 150.
[135] Ibid. 107-108.
[136] Ibid. 35.
[137] Ibid. 75, 100-102, 204-205.
[138] Ibid. 34, 89-90.
[139] Ibid. 35.

The expression 'becoming of continuity' means that the process of concrescence is defined by the category of subjective unity and the inheritance of past relationships with the environment. An actual entity must become in order to be an enduring subject, to have continuity as that particular actual entity. 'Continuity of becoming' on the other hand indicates that the process of concrescence is not defined by the striving for and maintenance of one's own particularity, but by the constant striving to develop oneself anew. It is the difference between both expressions, which indicates the difference between the metaphysics of Deleuze and Whitehead.[140] Whitehead's argument in favour of atomism must then be understood in terms of the way actual entities operate through a form of process, which is characterized by the concern of acquiring continuity as enduring object.[141]

However, despite this important distinction, the difference between Deleuzian and Whiteheadian metaphysics is more nuanced. This is visible in the way both Deleuze and Whitehead do not reject the concept of essence, but rethink it. Essence for Deleuze means a vague form of essence, which requires encounter with what is other than oneself in order to take up existence. This is structurally similar to Whitehead's category of eternal object as in both cases we are dealing with a form of essence that only operates as potential and therefore requires the encounter with the other in order to take up existence. For Whitehead an eternal object is a type of essence, which attempts to strive for its subjective aim. When one's environment does not allow the subjective aim of an eternal object to become determined, a type of concrescence is therefore required that takes up a critical attitude towards the world. Critique for Whitehead is one of the most beautiful things in the world as it proves the fact that one is not defined by relationality, but has the potential to react against it.[142] This points towards a difference with Deleuze as the process of concrescence for Deleuze attempts to strive for the condition of the Body without Organs, which means the transcendence of the distinction between self and environment, whereas for Whitehead the process of concrescence must react against the environment in order for an entity to maintain its continuity through time.

However, Deleuze's idea that an entity attempts to strive for the utopian state of the Body without Organs is not only related to the transcendence of the distinction between self and environment, but also to the full actualization of a virtual potential (essence). In a similar way then as for Whitehead, the process of concrescence must have a sense of direction, which is necessary to

[140] See also Stengers 2011: 272.
[141] Whitehead 1978: 67, 81-82.
[142] Whitehead 1967: 83.

prevent the loss of self to occur, which is related to the condition of the empty Body without Organs. Therefore, although Deleuze's metaphysics is characterized by a continuity of becoming, it actually is concerned with the striving for harmony and the full determination of self. In return, Whitehead's approach to the process of concrescence as becoming of continuity is not only characterized by endurance, but also by the striving for the new. Because no stable reconciliation between eternal object and actual entity is possible, the determination of self must be undertaken every time anew and therefore is as much concerned with endurance as with creativity. This means that Deleuze's and Whitehead's metaphysics are indeed distinct from one another, but at the same time share the concern of a process of concrescence that both attempts to strive for harmony and change.

2.1.2 The Position of Propositional Judgement within Whitehead's Metaphysics

A second distinction between Deleuzian and Whiteheadian metaphysics is the incorporation of human conscious perception within Whitehead's metaphysical system. This aspect is important as the process metaphysics of Whitehead is often considered as a flat ontology, meaning that it puts forward concepts, which are not specific for human beings, but for every entity in reality. This is certainly true, as Whitehead's concept of prehension is applicable to entities as diverse as a piece of rock and a human being. However, despite this general character of the concept of prehension, Whitehead also indicates how it operates in different ways, depending on the type of entity considered. Pure physical feelings comprise the most basic type of prehensions, which defines the existence of inorganic entities like a piece of rock. The physical feeling of a piece of rock must be understood in terms of the effect of the environment on the constitution of the rock as actual entity.[143] In the case of a plant, prehension becomes more complex, as physical feeling becomes transformed to conceptual valuation. Conceptual valuation means that actual entities have the potential to determine their own process of concrescence not through mere reception, but through subjective aim: a growing plant has the potential to shape its own process of concrescence through the way it grows its branches towards the light and its roots downwards to the earth.[144]

When we are dealing with more complex living organisms like animals and human beings, prehension operates as a mixed form of perception, which Whitehead calls symbolic reference.

[143] Whitehead 1978: 115, 177.
[144] Ibid. 26, 176.

Symbolic reference means that the causal form of prehension (causal efficacy) that defines the inorganic and lower organic entities like rocks and plants becomes mixed with prehension as presentational immediacy.[145] Presentational immediacy allows distinct and well defined awareness of the actual entity encountered, which was only vaguely prehended in causal efficacy.[146] The mode of causal efficacy is the general form of existence of all actual entities; it denotes the sense of existence as life history, being derived from the past and passing into the future.[147] The mode of presentational immediacy on the other hand is only concerned with a cross-section of one's entire existence: the clear and immediate perception of a particular actual entity. The mode of causal efficacy therefore is concerned with the causal influences to which the encountered actual entity is subjected, whereas presentational immediacy only indirectly perceives the causal influences and instead focuses on immediate appearance.[148]

Whitehead gives the example of the perception of a piece of stone. Presentational immediacy allows perceiving the stone as grey, which means a clear form of perception on the immediate appearance of the stone. Causal efficacy on the other hand allows perceiving the stone as stone. In order to perceive a stone as stone, one needs an awareness of the historic extension of the stone into the past, as being formed by causation. Symbolic reference means that both perceptions are brought together, which leads to the perception of a 'grey stone'.[149] The idea of perceiving a grey stone is in this sense a mixed perception, which requires the combination of immediate awareness of its appearance (the stone as grey) and awareness of stone as object that extends into the past and future (the stone as stone). The perception of a grey stone is therefore an act of abstraction or interpretation. This is the case because we are concerned with the unification of two distinct perceptions in one unified experience.[150] We are dealing with a gap in perception, as we perceive something (the grey stone), which is not directly present, as it requires the bringing together of immediate experience (grey), with an understanding of the stone's causal dimension (stone as stone). Because of this gap in perception, symbolic reference as a form of prehension initiates the possibility of error. One could associate feelings to the immediate perception of the stone's appearance, which are in fact irrelevant.[151]

[145] Whitehead 1978: 121, 168.
[146] Ibid. 121, 123-124, 179.
[147] Ibid. 81, 170, 178.
[148] Ibid. 169.
[149] Ibid. 124, 172, 179.
[150] Ibid. 126, 173.
[151] Ibid. 168, 180.

In order to understand the transition from symbolic reference to conscious perception, the category of propositions needs to be introduced. A proposition is an entity, which is neither an actual entity nor an eternal object, but something in between.[152] As an example of a proposition Whitehead discusses the outcome of the Battle of Waterloo.[153] This battle could have had a different outcome, which indicates a different way the actual world could have been. A proposition is related to actual entities in the sense that it is defined by a particular set of actual entities (the Battle of Waterloo). However, a proposition is also related to an eternal object in the sense that it only operates as a potentiality, but is not in fact actual (a different outcome of the Battle of Waterloo). A proposition adds complexity to the prehension of actual entities, as it contributes an additional element to experience, which is not present in the actual entity that is perceived. Whitehead calls a proposition in this sense a lure for feeling, as it adds intensity and complexity to experience. Propositional feelings allow to perceive how the actual world is not restricted to its current state of affairs, but could be different than it actually is. This does not mean, however, that a proposition is something that we impose or project on the actual world. When a proposition enters prehension, it constitutes what is prehended. A proposition admitted into feeling therefore defines the world that is established through feeling. A proposition does not literally have to be actualized in order to contribute to the process of concrescence that makes up the actual world. Already by its admission into feeling does it alter the world, adding a novelty to it as it merges with the actual object perceived.[154]

It is awareness of the contrast between the proposition and the actual datum encountered, which gives rise to conscious perception. This awareness of contrast means that one judges in experience whether this unification of proposition and object is actually correct. *Conscious experience therefore is a judgement of the truth or falsehood of the proposition, which is added to the experience of the actual entity.*[155] Whitehead speaks in this sense of conscious judgement as a form of *negation*. Negation means that the contrast between proposition and actual entity makes one aware of what the actual entity is not, but could be or what the actual entity is and could not be.[156] The awareness that the stone is 'not grey' is in this sense a more complex form of perception than the perception of 'a grey stone'. The experience of greyness only requires the mode of presentational immediacy, which means

[152] Whitehead 1978: 188.
[153] Ibid. 185.
[154] Ibid. 186-187.
[155] Ibid. 190-191.
[156] Ibid. 161-162, 188.

an encounter with the distinctiveness of the appearance of the stone. The perception of the stone as 'not grey' is much more complex, as it requires the awareness of an alternative, what the stone could have been, but is not. It is a conscious judgement as it is concerned with the awareness of the contrast between the actual entity (appearance of colour) and a proposition (the fact that the stone could have been grey, but is not). It is the awareness of this contrast, which produces the conscious judgement of the stone not being grey.[157]

Negation must then be understood as an affirmation-negation contrast, as it operates through the tension between what is present (affirmation) and what could have been (negation).[158] A conscious judgement is different from a propositional feeling because a propositional feeling only adds intensity to the act of experience. A propositional feeling is not a form of abstraction of the encountered actual entity, but an intensification of its immediate appearance. A conscious judgement on the other hand is a form of abstraction because it is not only concerned with the immediacy of appearance of the actual entity, but also with the negation of what it is not. This awareness of contrast operates as a form of abstraction because it is a form of clarification of one's experience rather than an immediate experience based on intensity.[159]

The reason why this presence of propositional feeling and propositional judgement in Whitehead's metaphysics is important is because it is related to Whitehead's discussion of religious experience. A religious feeling requires the category of propositions, as it is concerned with the experience of something, which cannot be directly accessed in the actual world. A religious experience is therefore the feeling of a proposition that becomes added to the actual world, which explains the feeling of there being something higher than mere present existence. A propositional feeling adds intensity to our experiences of the actual world, it goes beyond mere fact and this is precisely the characteristic of a religious experience. Approaching religious experience on the basis of truth or falsehood is therefore incorrect, as it fails to understand that the entering of a proposition in experience is primarily about intensity rather than about the truth or falsehood of the proposition. It is this definition of religious experience as propositional feeling, which allows understanding why Whitehead does not reject the concept of belief, but rethinks it. Religious experience as propositional feeling is a

[157] Whitehead 1978: 161.
[158] Ibid. 243.
[159] Ibid. 9, 193.

belief because a propositional feeling is not defined by its truth or falsehood.[160] Because a proposition that is admitted into feeling becomes added to the encountered actual entity, it becomes part of the actual world, it defines our experience and therefore our world. Religious experience as propositional feeling is not a projection onto the world or a form of fiction, but a form of world creation.[161]

However, religion is not solely related to propositional feeling, but also to propositional judgement. This is the case because religion for Whitehead means an integration of the general rational character of philosophy with the particularity of emotional feelings.[162] Therefore, religion has to connect the intensity of propositional feeling with the rational character of propositional judgement.[163] The shift from religion a propositional feeling to religion as propositional judgement means that Whitehead acknowledges that religion has various levels of complexity.[164] Religion as propositional feeling is a type of religion that belongs to the lowest level of complexity because it lacks any concern with the coherence between appearance and reality and therefore with the condition of truth. Such a type of religion indeed is a type of world making, but a type of world making that is irrational. This acknowledgement is important because it means that Whitehead's metaphysics is not only defined by the way different forms of world making are possible, but also with the fact that some worlds are more rational than others. The history of religion is characterized according to Whitehead by the striving for rationalization, the striving for coherence between proposition and actual reality, which means a transformation from religion as propositional feeling to religion as propositional judgement.[165] However, this means that Whitehead associates a rational form of religion primarily with the development of Christianity and an irrational form of religion with the ritual practices of tribal and prehistoric societies.[166] From this perspective, animism has to be considered as an irrational form of world making and therefore as belief. However, within this chapter I argue that this is not entirely correct and that animism can indeed be understood as a type of religion based on propositional judgement. I will make this argument through the fact that religious experience as propositional judgement must be understood as a type of judgement, which is aesthetic.

[160] Whitehead 1978: 185, 187.
[161] Ibid. 187.
[162] Ibid. 15-16.
[163] Ibid. 16.
[164] Whitehead 1927: 8.
[165] Ibid. 116-117.
[166] Ibid. 12-24.

2.1.3 Defining Propositional Judgement as Aesthetic Judgement: The Judgement of Truth requires the Beautiful

In order to understand the unification of the intensity of feeling (propositional feeling) with the rational character of propositional judgement, one needs to define religious experience as an aesthetic judgement of truth. Following my discussion of Deleuze's metaphysics, process metaphysics is based on the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience. This is also the case for Whitehead's concept of prehension, as it is a type of experience, which has both an objective pole and cognitive pole. The particularity of the aesthetic is situated within a form of cognition situated on the side of the sensible. This is visible in Whitehead's concept of prehension in the sense that it is the encounter with objectivity that activates the process of concrescence, but the cognitive pole (eternal object), which decides the particular form this process of concrescence takes. This interchange between the objective and cognitive can never be stabilized because a complete reconciliation of eternal object and actuality would make it impossible for different entities to relate to one another and establish a society. *It is this condition in which one attempts to strive for coherence between eternal and actual, without achieving complete coherence, that Whitehead defines as beautiful*.[167]

In order to align the condition of beauty with religious experience, one needs to shift from the aesthetic dimension of the ontological process of concrescence, which is the general condition of every entity in the universe, towards the type of prehension specific for human beings. Within my discussion above, I argued how prehension as self-concrescence becomes transformed into symbolic reference. In this case, we are dealing with a gap in perception between causal efficacy and presentational immediacy. If we translate this distinction to aesthetic terms, it means a distinction between *appearance and reality*.[168] The distinction between appearance and reality adds a level of complexity to the phenomenon of the aesthetic, as one becomes confronted with the common mistake to reduce aesthetics to 'appearance'. Such a reduction of the aesthetic Whitehead opposes because it would mean that prehension becomes reduced to sense perception. Sense perception is a severe distortion of experience because it reduces empirical reality to immediate appearance. For this reason, it neglects the ontological process of self-concrescence, which means the extension of every single entity in the

[167] Whitehead 1967: 265.
[168] Ibid. 209.

universe into the past and future.[169] Such an understanding of the beautiful would eliminate the eternal (cognitive) dimension of experience, which is necessary to speak of aesthetics in the first place.[170]

The reason why the appearance-reality distinction within symbolic reference is important is because it brings to the fore the notion of truth. Truth, following Whitehead, is not a condition of reality, but only applies to the coherence between appearance and reality. Reality cannot be true or false, it simply is the way it is.[171] However, in the case of the more complex forms of prehension, experience becomes transformed into a type of abstraction, a simplification of reality. Experience as symbolic reference means that experience operates as a form of interpretation: the attempt to unite immediate appearance with causal efficacy. *Prehension as symbolic reference can then be reformulated as an aesthetic experience of truth in the sense that one attempts to unite the intensity of feeling associated with immediate appearance (objective pole) with the non-sensuous dimension (cognitive pole) of one's embodied memory of the lifeworld*.[172] However, this aesthetic experience of truth cannot offer the basis to define the aesthetic character of a religious experience, as this requires the more complex form of prehension as propositional judgement. A proposition problematizes the appearance-reality distinction precisely because the appearance initiated by a proposition does not need to have any affinity with the encountered reality. Such a type of experience is aesthetic because it unites a cognitive pole (proposition) with an objective pole (the intensity of feeling associated with the encounter of reality). However, it is a type of aesthetic experience that can only be qualified as beautiful when the cognitive and objective pole are in coherence with one another.[173] Instead of beauty, one could use the term fetishism in order to define a type of aesthetic experience that promotes an illusionary experience in which reality has become reduced to appearance.

The reason why propositional judgement requires the aesthetic is because the universal for Whitehead cannot operate in a general way, but only within a particular way. The universal (eternal object) only operates as potential, which requires actualization in order to take up existence. The order of nature is based on the way eternal and actual cohere with one another. Such a coherence can never be complete as this would be contradictory to the nature of the universal itself. The striving for coherence between universal and particular, without the possibility of achieving complete coherence, is

[169] Whitehead 1967: 217-219.
[170] Ibid. 265.
[171] Ibid. 241.
[172] Ibid. 248.
[173] Ibid. 265, 293.

what defines the condition of the beautiful. The experience of the order of nature requires the beautiful because it is the beautiful that defines a type of universality, which operates subjectively.[174] For this reason, the experience of the order of nature cannot be based on a theoretical type of propositional judgement in which one judges the coherence between a theoretical proposition and actual reality. This is the case because it would imply that the universal can be captured through a theoretical concept, which is impossible precisely because the universal can only operate subjectively.

The alignment between truth and beauty means that the judgement of the order of nature requires a type of abstraction based on feeling. It means the judgement of a proposition not on the basis of logic, but subjectively, within aesthetic experience.[175] A consequence of this alignment between truth and beauty is that there is no one truth, but only different truths as a result of the subjective character of universality. This idea of different truths has the danger of promoting a form of relativism in which every experience of order is as good as any other. This is not Whitehead's statement, as the relativization of truth would transform propositional judgement as aesthetic judgement of truth back into propositional feeling. The way one has to understand Whitehead's remark is through the idea that the beautiful requires adventure.[176] The beautiful cannot be limited to one form of truth precisely because it requires invention, a readjustment of the coherence between eternal and actual, which is the condition of the ontological process of concrescence itself.

2.2 A Critical Analysis of the Equation between Process Metaphysics and Animism

2.2.1 Conceptualizing the Animacy of Stone through Whitehead

One possible way to understand the animacy of stone through Whitehead is on the basis of his concept of prehension. Because prehension is not limited to human cognitive faculties, but a characteristic of every entity in the universe, one could read Whitehead's metaphysics in terms of the attribution of cognitive capacities to reality as a whole. This reading of Whitehead would transform his metaphysics into a form of panpsychism. The philosopher Isabelle Stengers has argued against a panpsychist

[174] Whitehead 1967: 265.
[175] Ibid. 266-267.
[176] Ibid. 258, 274.

reading of Whitehead, as it would lead to an anthropomorphizing of reality.[177] As I outlined above, the prehension character of a piece of rock means the effect of the environment on the constitution of the rock, which is not the same as the argument that a rock has cognitive capacities. The phenomenon of the animacy of stone needs a much more mundane basis of explanation than speculating about the cognitive dimension of reality. In *Process and Reality* Whitehead makes the following statement: 'Primitive men were not metaphysicians, nor were they interested in the expression of concrete experience. Their language merely expressed useful abstractions, such as greyness of the stone.'[178] Although Whitehead does not discuss the animacy of stone in *Process and Reality* in this quotation he gives the indication that the encounter with stone in prehistoric societies has to be understood as a form of abstraction. This realization is important as it offers the opportunity to develop an understanding of the animacy of stone based on cognitive perception and not on speculation about the panpsychist dimension of reality as such.

In my discussion of *Process and Reality* above I outlined how the perception of 'a grey stone' belongs to the mode of symbolic reference, which consists of a combination of two forms of perception: presentational immediacy and causal efficacy. Within the archaeological literature, it is well established that materials like stone during prehistory were not chosen (solely) on the basis of their physical properties, but on the way they appeared. The work of the archaeologists Richard Bradley and Mark Edmonds on the Langdale stone axe quarry is a clear example of how in Neolithic Britain the quarrying of stone was undertaken at special places in the landscape with spectacular viewpoints, although the same material was also available at much easier accessible locations.[179] Another example is the work of the archaeologists Mark Gillings and Joshua Pollard on the megalithic sarsen stones in the Avebury landscape (Neolithic Britain). They demonstrate that the selection of stones in the construction of the Avebury stone circle is based on a sensitivity towards their shape, colour and texture.[180] These examples clearly reveal how the use of stone by Neolithic communities was not solely concerned with the physical properties of materials, but as much with their appearance character or association with the appearance of their location. Following Whitehead, a form of experience based on immediate appearance refers to perception as presentational immediacy. The archaeological evidence that materials were treated on the basis of their appearance therefore has not

[177] Stengers 2011: 202.
[178] Whitehead 1978: 159.
[179] Bradley and Edmonds 1993: 134.
[180] Gillings and Pollard 2004: 68.

necessarily anything to do with animism. Moreover, it is a very basic form of perception, which is in fact an abstraction as it is what allows perceiving stone as a particular enduring object in the first place.

Presentational immediacy as a form of abstraction is for Whitehead connected with causal efficacy. Causal efficacy means the life history of the stone, as extending into the past and future. In the case of the encountering of stone during the British Neolithic, the connection of these two forms of perception has to be understood through the repeated activity of encountering stone. Early Neolithic communities were mobile and therefore must have encountered sarsen stones on a regular basis while travelling through the landscape.[181] Gillings and Pollard have made the observation in this case that we must conceive the Neolithic landscape in continuity with the late Mesolithic landscape rather than as a break or transformation.[182] During the late Mesolithic/early Neolithic the landscape around Avebury mainly consisted out of woodland, clearings, pathways and sarsen stones. Knowledge of pathways and clearings must have been essential in order to navigate within a heavy wooded landscape. Becoming familiar with these routes might have been through experiencing unusual landmarks like a specific coloured or shaped sarsen stone within a special location like a pathway or clearing etc. Individual sarsen stones therefore might have become associated with the specific character of a place in the landscape and acquired their own associations and history.[183]

Causal efficacy refers therefore to the continued act of encountering the stone, which is a vague form of perception, as it is based on the memory of repeated encounter. It is this combination of presentational immediacy (distinct appearance of stone) and causal efficacy (vague form of perception, based on memory of repeated encounter) that allows to understand the perception of stone as landmark. Within the literature on stone circles, this connection between stone and its location has generated the idea that the display of particular stones within stone circles must be understood as the embodiment of a particular place in the landscape, which was first suggested by Richard Bradley.[184] This idea of stone as embodiment of place has also been connected to the animacy of stone.[185] However, if we acknowledge that the connection between stone and its location can be understood through the mixture of two forms of perception (presentational immediacy and causal efficacy) than we are not dealing with animism, but with a form of abstraction or interpretation that Whitehead calls symbolic reference. By

[181] Gillings and Pollard 1999: 183.
[182] Gillings and Pollard 2004: 37-38.
[183] Ibid. 29-33.
[184] Bradley 2000: 81.
[185] Gillings and Pollard 2016: 555-556.

treating stone as embodiment of place, Neolithic communities were not irrational, but in fact completely rational.



Fig. 2. Sarsen Stones Avebury Monument (Neolithic), Wiltshire, England.

The reason why symbolic reference is insufficient to explain the animacy of stone is because the experience of stone as animate requires the category of propositions. Animism operates as proposition because one experiences something, which is not immediately present in the actual entity encountered. Within the mode of symbolic reference, the appearance of stone and memory of repeated encounter are concerned with the enduring character of stone, which is the reason why stone can become a landmark and stand for a place. The experience of animacy therefore cannot be reduced to an awareness of the stone's (shifting) appearance or to its special location. Experiencing stone as animate requires a negation of its endurance character, which becomes established within perception as symbolic reference. The idea of negation implies that something becomes added to experience, which is distinct from the actuality of the encountered object. By admitting a proposition into feeling it defines what is perceived and therefore alters the world. A proposition for Whitehead is not a projection, but is on the side of reality. The animacy of stone is in this sense 'real' because it defines

the actual world that becomes encountered. However, at the same time it is bound to the experience of a subject and for this reason not a property of the stone itself. By understanding animism as proposition, animism could be defined as a form of belief. A belief for Whitehead is not necessarily true, but solely concerned with the adding of intensity to experience. One could say for this reason that animism as propositional feeling is a form of belief that is in fact not true.

However, instead of propositional feeling, I argue that animism has to be understood as propositional judgement. It is within propositional judgement that a proposition loses its irrelevance of truth. A religious experience can be understood as propositional judgement when it operates as a form of abstraction: the experience of the order inherent in nature. Within the religious experience of the order of nature, abstraction and intensity of experience become aligned with one another. Within the context of the British Neolithic, the archaeological record clearly indicates that it was through the encounter with stone and the display of stone that Neolithic communities contemplated and made visible the order of nature. This is most clearly visible in the idea of stone circles being a microversion of the landscape as a whole or potentially even the cosmos.[186] Whereas the perception of stone as symbolic reference generates the distinctiveness of stone as enduring object, I argue that a more complex form of abstraction that judges this distinctiveness in terms of the order of nature, requires a negation of the endurance character of stone that becomes manifested through symbolic reference. *The proposition of animacy therefore becomes added to stone in order to unite stone as enduring object with the flux inherent to nature.* It is this entanglement of endurance and flux, which for Whitehead must form the core of every metaphysics and religion.[187]

One could object to this interpretation that for Whitehead there is no contradiction between endurance and flux at all in the case of stone, as endurance always operates through prehension and therefore as a process. This is indeed true, but the point that I want to make is that the experience of animism must not start from metaphysical speculation, but from the basis of mundane acts of encounter that made up the life of prehistoric communities. Within these mundane acts of experience, stone becomes perceived as enduring on the basis of uniting its immediate appearance character with its causal dimension. The perception of stone as enduring object is a form of abstraction that is necessary in order for Neolithic communities to be able to move through the landscape and recognize places within it. The proposition of animacy emerges in order to negate the endurance character of stone that

[186] Bradley 1998: 122-123; Gillings and Pollard 2004: 67; Watson 2001: 309.
[187] Whitehead 1978: 167, 209.

becomes established within symbolic reference. Animism in this sense is a form of truth because it is a form of abstraction that aligns the singularity of the appearance of stone with contemplation of the order of nature.

This approach to animism allows taking a different perspective to the fact that the appearance of stone and its location was indeed important for Neolithic communities. Whereas I discussed above this appearance character in terms of symbolic reference, it takes up a different condition when it becomes aligned with the experience of the order of nature. The experience of the order of nature requires the most complex form of aesthetic experience, namely aesthetic judgement. Within an aesthetic judgement, the appearance of form becomes connected to the order of nature. The association of presentational immediacy with endurance, which becomes established in symbolic reference, therefore becomes transformed into animacy in order to align the appearance of stone with the order of nature. From this perspective, animacy is not a property of stone itself, but arises out of the act of aesthetic judgement on the appearance of stone. Without the capacity of aesthetic judgement, the experience of stone as animate would be impossible.

2.2.2 A Critical Analysis of 'New Animism' within Archaeology and Anthropology: Relational Ontology and Critical Ontology

Because my argument on the animacy of stone relies on propositional judgement, it constitutes a partial return to the original definition of animism in the nineteenth century. In his work *Primitive Culture* Sir Edward Tylor defined animism as the earliest religion of mankind in which people attributed inanimate things with souls or spirits. Animism in this sense was for Tylor an incorrect form of belief. However, what is important to note is that this idea of animism as incorrect belief is less concerned with irrationality than with an early form of rationalization. For the intellectual climate of the late nineteenth century, animism was a way to understand the evolution of Western rationalization, with animism being at the start and nineteenth-century European intellectualism as the culmination of that evolution.[188] Although this perspective is certainly Eurocentric, what is nevertheless important is that animism at its origin was understood as a rational practice, forming part of the Western history of rationalization, rather than being opposed to it.

[188] Tylor 1958 (1871) 10-11, 83, 86.

The current 'new animist' approaches to animism on the other hand completely revise this perspective, as animism is discussed through a critique of modern Western epistemology. This critique on the modern West is mainly concerned with a definition of animism as a 'living world', which means the acknowledgement that the 'world' is not a platform for human action, but a constellation of human and non-human beings who together co-constitute the world in which we all live.[189] From this perspective, animism is no longer a form of rationalization, a form of knowing the world, but a recognition of the world's actual state. It is this reformulation of animism, which has initiated the current equation of animism with 'relationality' or 'relational ontology'.[190] Animism as relationality means that the social no longer refers to a sole human collective, but also incorporates other-than-human collectives in which our human actions are entangled.[191] The term 'relational ontology' goes a step further as animism is then no longer just a social practice, but a form of metaphysics. This shift from relationality to relational ontology must be understood as a replacement of the modern Western dualist ontology based on the dichotomy between human subjects and an objective world, with an ontology in which the dichotomy between mind and body, subject and object disappears.[192] The reason why the metaphysics of Whitehead and Deleuze have received so much attention in archaeology is because they provide a way to envision a world in which such distinctions are non-existent. However, a reformulation of animism as a form of metaphysics is not without its problems.

Darryl Wilkinson has written an important critique on the new animist strain in which he argues that the new animists do in fact not actually engage with indigenous ontological commitments, but with the current environmental crisis of the Anthropocene.[193] The reformulation of animism in terms of a relational world of humans and non-humans speaks then more to the current problems of contemporary society rather than operating as an explanation of animism within indigenous practices. Wilkinson defends this argument by indicating that the current post-human turn in the humanities is very comfortable with an extension of 'subjecthood' beyond human beings (acknowledging the personhood of non-humans), but less with processes of dehumanization, which one also has evidence of in indigenous practices.[194] Also Deleuze discusses in his metaphysics processes of dehumanization, most notably the idea of 'becoming fascist', which have never been discussed within archaeology or

[189] Ingold 2018; Wilkinson 2017: 291, 293-295.
[190] e.g. Busacca 2017; Cummings 2011; DeMarrais 2017; Robinson 2013; Sillar 2009; Thomas 2016.
[191] Alberti and Bray 2009: 338.
[192] Ibid. 339; Alberti and Marshall 2009: 347-349.
[193] Wilkinson 2017: 300.
[194] Ibid. 299.

anthropology. Instead, the focus is on his concept of 'becoming animal', which refers to shamanistic practices of taking up the perspective or body of animals/spirits. However, by only focusing on 'becoming animal' and not on 'becoming fascist', archaeologists and anthropologists simplify Deleuzian metaphysics to a 'living animistic world' whereas it equally could be used to interpret the human disasters of the twentieth century like fascism. Process metaphysics does not give us a living world in which humans and non-humans live in constellation; instead it is a type of metaphysics that allows to understand different forms of world making.

In his critique on new animism, Wilkinson puts forward a different approach in which animism operates as a conceptual tool to reflect critically on the way we approach the past through our own concepts. Through a case study of the Inkas, Wilkinson argues that the treatment of rocks as people has to be understood as a form of translation that allows us to engage with the practices of the Inkas. The idea of rocks being people is therefore not a claim of the Inkas, but a translation of Inka-practices through our own concepts of rock and people:

'If we say that the Inkas regarded rocks as people, we need to be aware that this is a translation of the Inkas' treatment of some instantiations of rumi as wak'as. And these two terms are not in fact local equivalents to our categories of rock and person, but actually mean something different.'[195]

By shifting the discussion from animism as metaphysics to animism as translation, Wilkinson indicates how the animistic dimension of the Inka-world is not a metaphysical condition, but a form of world making through the concepts of rumi and wak'as. When we approach this idea through Whitehead's category of propositions, it becomes possible to understand how human concepts are not a form of social construction, but actually define the world in which one lives, as propositions become added to the actual entity in experience and therefore define what is experienced. Animism refers then not to a literal 'aliveness' of the rock, but to a particular experience of the rock based on the concepts of rumi and wak'as, which I argue are equivalent to Whitehead's category of propositions. *Animism therefore was never a literal condition of the world, but always metaphorically based. However, precisely because propositions become added to the encountered object within experience and therefore alter the world, the distinction between metaphor and literal falls apart.*

[195] Wilkinson 2017: 303.

A similar concern with animism as translation of indigenous practices rather than as metaphysical condition is also visible in the strain that the archaeologist Benjamin Alberti has labelled 'critical ontology'.[196] Critical ontology relies on the particularity of archaeological or anthropological data to develop new concepts that challenge our Western categories and for this reason gives insight into a different 'world' without relying on a general metaphysical condition.[197] Critical ontology therefore undertakes ontological investigations without taking ontology as an answer. From this perspective, ontology is not a general metaphysical condition, but coupled to particular human practices.[198] For this reason, it is conceptualization and the rethinking of concepts that is the primal activity of 'critical ontology'.[199] However, although 'critical ontology' opposes any form of meta-metaphysical condition, it nevertheless also relies on the metaphysics of Deleuze and Whitehead, in a similar way as the approach of animism as 'relational ontology'. The theory of 'perspectivism' by the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro for example is concerned with the particularity of indigenous practices in the South-American rainforest, but at the same time is almost indistinguishable from Deleuzian and Whiteheadian metaphysics.[200]

Within 'perspectivism' there are no points of view (perspectives) onto reality, but reality itself becomes constituted through the taking up of a perspective.[201] For the case of the indigenous practices of the South-American rainforest this means that by taking up a different perspective (for example of an animal) one shifts one's reality as one (temporally) becomes an inhabitant of the 'animal world'.[202] Viveiros de Castro defines such a perspectivist reality by shifting from the concepts of 'multiculturalism' and 'mononaturalism' to 'monoculturalism' and 'multinaturalism'. Monoculturalism means that instead of culture referring to cultural differences it indicates the shared capacity of all entities to take up a perspective. Whereas culture is usually considered as plural (multiculturalism) and nature as common (mononaturalism) for Viveiros de Castro it is culture (the shared capacity to take up a perspective), which unites, whereas it is nature that becomes multiple through the different ways entities take up a perspective (multinaturalism).[203] It is this transformation from nature as common to

[196] Alberti 2016: 174.
[197] Holbraad and Pedersen 2017: 286-287.
[198] Ibid. 68; Alberti 2016: 172-173.
[199] Alberti 2016: 174-175; Alberti and Marshall 2009: 344, 354.
[200] Viveiros de Castro 2015: 244, 254, 287.
[201] Ibid. 10, 225.
[202] Ibid. 277-278.
[203] Ibid. 255-257.

nature as plural, which generated the paradoxical term *multiple ontologies*.[204] This term is misleading, as it implies the lack of a commonality, which people share across very different forms of human life.[205] The anthropologist Severin Fowles has in this case made the argument that 'critical ontology' risks to undo the achievements of postcolonial critique, namely the acknowledgement of our common humanity instead of radical alterity across different human lifeworlds.[206] However, if one takes into account the reliance of 'critical ontology' on the process metaphysics of Deleuze and Whitehead, it becomes possible to envision why the statement of 'multiple ontologies' should not be taken literally. Process metaphysics is a form of metaphysics that is not a dogmatic theory of how life should be, but instead acknowledges the potential for different forms of human life. *The term 'multiple ontologies' should therefore be reformulated to the idea that there is only one ontology, but an ontology that allows different worlds to occur and coexist.*

It is through the different entanglements of proposition, actual entity and the judgement of their coherence, which enables Whitehead to solve the paradox of how different human lifeworlds are possible, while simultaneously acknowledging their commonality. The common refers to the shared human capacity of propositional feeling and propositional judgement. This is for Whitehead a universal characteristic, which is however a form of universality that has only meaning through entanglement with particularity. A propositional feeling and propositional judgement can only arise through encounter with an actual entity and it is this necessity of encounter that indicates why universality for Whitehead cannot be understood in a general way, but only in a particular way. It is because of the strong concern of 'critical ontology' with the challenging and development of new theoretical concepts, which give insight into the nature of other worlds, that their approach can be understood through Whitehead's discussion of propositional feeling and propositional judgement. The idea that different worlds can be approached through the challenging of the archaeologist's or anthropologist's own theoretical assumptions implies a commonality on the level of propositions. Without this commonality, the practice of translation or conceptual creativity would be impossible.[207] It is only possible because in both cases we are dealing with the entanglement of proposition and actual entity and the judgement of their coherence.

[204] Viveiros de Castro 2015: 256; Alberti 2016: 165, 169; Alberti and Marshall 2009: 344.
[205] Alberti 2016: 171.
[206] Alberti et al. 2011: 907.
[207] See also Pina-Cabral 2017: 29.

Therefore, by reading the strain of 'critical ontology' through Whitehead, it becomes possible to understand how animism is indeed not a meta-theory, but also not a radically different ontology from the modern West. The idea that perspectivism would be a 'bomb' on the West is misleading, as it neglects the fact that the existence of different worlds requires the shared human capacity of propositional feeling and propositional judgement.[208] Viveiros de Castro's statement in favour of 'monoculturalism' implies this, as it indicates that the common element of reality is the capacity for prehension (or in his words perspective) that in the case of humans has to be understood as propositional feeling/judgement. *It is through Whitehead's rethinking of cognitive judgement that it becomes possible to align the West and non-West with one another while simultaneously taking ontological alterity into account.*

Conclusion

Within this chapter I elaborated further on the relationship between the autonomy of aesthetic experience and metaphysics. My focus has been on how the adoption of the aesthetic as model for metaphysics can be related to the autonomy of aesthetic judgement as a specific type of experience limited to human beings. Whitehead's process metaphysics acknowledges how the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience (which he calls prehension) can operate in various ways. The autonomy of aesthetic judgement has to be understood as the most complex form of prehension, which is propositional judgement. Prehension as propositional judgement means that the process of concrescence of human beings cannot be uncoupled from the judgement of truth. The judgement of truth must be aesthetic, as it is through the ontological primacy of the aesthetic that the process of concrescence takes shape and world making is possible. Based on this analysis, I further developed my argument on how to define aesthetic autonomy for animism. I proposed that the animacy of stone cannot be understood as an ontological condition of stone itself, but that stone takes up the condition of animacy through a propositional judgement that is aesthetic. Animacy must neither be understood as a projection of animacy onto stone nor as an ontological condition of stone itself. If one would reduce animacy to projection then one would fail to understand that a proposition defines what is experienced and therefore the world that becomes established through experience. Also, if one would reduce

[208] Latour 2009: 1-2.

animism to the ontological condition of stone itself one would neglect that Whitehead's metaphysics is a type of metaphysics that aims to explain how different worlds are possible. Animism has to be understood as one of these worlds and not as the ontological condition that defines Whitehead's metaphysics in general.

3. A REFORMULATION OF IMMANUEL KANT'S *CRITIQUE OF JUDGEMENT*

Introduction

The critique within prehistoric archaeology on the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics is mainly based on Kant's theorization of aesthetic experience as disinterested beauty. A Kantian approach to aesthetics is opposed to the artefacts encountered by the archaeologist, as it implies that the aesthetic dimension of these artefacts would be limited to a contemplation of their beautiful form.[209] Such a perspective is contradictory to the artefacts studied by the archaeologist, as it neglects the active role of these artefacts within the everyday life of prehistoric communities. However, because Kant's theory outlines the autonomy of the aesthetic I argue that it is on the basis of Kant's *Critique of Judgement* that one can construct an aesthetics for prehistory. What needs to be reworked is the distinction Kant makes between aesthetic judgement of the beautiful and aesthetic judgement of the sublime. By transcending this distinction, I demonstrate that Kant's conception of aesthetic judgement is not limited to disinterested contemplation, but becomes aligned with practical action. It therefore provides a way to understand how world making during prehistory was based on the aesthetic. Moreover, this new form of aesthetic judgement also allows resolving the distinction Kant makes between aesthetic judgement and teleological judgement. When both become disentangled from each other, I argue that humanity loses its capacity for world making, which has resulted in the misinterpretation of the autonomy of the aesthetic. The autonomy of aesthetic judgement is not specific for Western modernity, but already present in prehistoric societies.

Within the first part of this chapter I will analyse the affinities and differences between the four different forms of (aesthetic) judgement outlined by Kant in his *Critique of Judgement*. I will analyse each type of judgement separately in the following order: (1) aesthetic judgement of the beautiful, (2) aesthetic judgement of the sublime, (3) the distinction between aesthetic and teleological judgement, and (4) the aesthetic judgement of art. Within the second part of the chapter *Rethinking Kant's Conception of Aesthetic Autonomy for Animism* I will analyse how an aesthetic judgement can operate as contemplation of the order of nature when the autonomy of the aesthetic must be without a proposition. This means an analysis of how the distinction between aesthetic judgement and

[209] Kant 2007 (1790): 152.

teleological judgement can be transcended and related to Whitehead's argument that truth requires the beautiful. I demonstrate that this distinction can be resolved through the idea that an aesthetic judgement of truth is defined by the simultaneous movement from the universal to the particular and from the particular to the universal. Such a type of aesthetic judgement can only be constructed when we rethink Kant's critical philosophy through the process metaphysics of Whitehead. This means that instead of a universal 'in itself', which lies beyond experience, the universal takes up a subjective character. A subjective type of universal allows extending Kant's conception of aesthetic judgement to religion. Moreover, a type of religion based on a subjective form of universality means that religion takes up an immanent character and therefore becomes disconnected from a type of religion based on a transcendent Absolute like Christianity. The resolution of the distinction between aesthetic and teleological judgement therefore transforms Kant's aesthetics into a theory for an animistic form of religion. This rethinking will also allow resolving Kant's distinction between the beautiful and the sublime, which is necessary in order to integrate the autonomy of aesthetic judgement within practical action.

3.1 Immanuel Kant: *Critique of Judgement*

3.1.1 Aesthetic Judgement of the Beautiful

Kant's critical philosophy provides a turning point in Western philosophy because it is concerned with a shift from metaphysical speculation towards a rational understanding of the nature of experience. In his *Critique of Judgement* Kant discusses whether there are rational principles involved in the experience of the beautiful. If the experience of the beautiful would be without rational principle, it would mean that the experience of beauty is a type of experience based on personal preference.[210] A reduction of the beautiful to personal preference would mean that there is no standard on which to judge something as beautiful. Such a perspective makes the condition of beauty meaningless as anything can then be experienced as beautiful when someone finds it beautiful. The difficulty in defining the rational principle of the beautiful is situated within the fact that it cannot be based on a

[210] Kant 2007: 5, 43-44, 159.

concept (proposition).[211] If the beautiful could indeed be reduced to a concept then it would be possible to teach people on the basis of a concept when something is qualified as beautiful or not. This would mean that beauty could be reduced to a formula and that when this formula is followed one could create an object that is beautiful. Also, it would mean that if an object possesses all the right characteristics it would by definition be a beautiful object. Such a reduction of beauty to a concept indeed provides beauty with a rational principle, but fails to address that the condition of the beautiful also requires the intensity of subjective experience.[212] If the beautiful could indeed be captured by a theoretical concept, it would mean that one could know what the beautiful is without ever having experienced it. Because the beautiful requires to be experienced, it cannot be grounded by a rational principle that takes the form of a theoretical concept.[213]

The reason why the question of the rational principle of the beautiful is important for Kant is because it allows insight into the nature of experience itself, which is related to our condition as human beings. *If the experience of the beautiful is indeed based on a rational principle, it could be characterized as a distinctive type of experience in its own right, which one could call the autonomy of aesthetic experience*.[214] It means that the experience of the aesthetic gives insight into a different aspect of human nature than is the case with sense perception, theoretical knowing or practical action. In order to understand how Kant solves the problem of the rational principle of the experience of the beautiful, one has to look at his concept of the transcendental. Within the two previous chapters, I already introduced the concept of the transcendental in relation to the process metaphysics of Gilles Deleuze and Alfred North Whitehead. For Deleuze and Whitehead, the transcendental dimension of reality means the virtual realm of potentiality, which through encounter with actuality defines the condition that allows an experience to occur. The transcendental cannot itself be experienced, but is what makes experience possible. The difference with Kant's concept of the transcendental is that for Deleuze and Whitehead the transcendental provides the a priori condition that makes it possible for experience to become ontologically prior, whereas for Kant it is restricted to the human cognitive faculties. Kant developed the concept of the transcendental in order to understand the type of experience and knowledge a human being is capable of achieving. The transcendental for Kant is therefore related to

[211] Kant 2007: 46-47, 62.
[212] Ibid. 46.
[213] Ibid. 113.
[214] Ibid. 335, 349.

the way the nature of our cognitive faculties allows the possibility for different types of experience.[215] The transcendental also for Kant cannot be experienced itself, but is what defines the condition of experience. In order to detect the rational principle involved in the aesthetic experience of the beautiful, Kant needs to analyse the particular way in which the cognitive faculties operate in order to create the condition that makes it possible to make a judgement of beauty.[216]

Aesthetic Judgement of the Beautiful as the Free Play of the Cognitive Faculties

The way Kant defines the transcendental condition that makes the experience of the beautiful possible is through *the free play of the cognitive faculties*.[217] In order to define this state of 'free play of the cognitive faculties' it is useful to make a distinction between a determinate judgement and an aesthetic judgement.[218] Within a determinate judgement one judges an object that one encounters in perception on the basis of recognition. This type of experience is one of the most basic types of experience of human beings, as it means the recognition of what one is looking at. A determinate judgement of a flower means that one aligns the concept of 'flower' with the intuition of what one is looking at. The faculties of intuition, imagination and understanding are related to one another in such a way that they produce the recognition that one is looking at a flower. This means that the imagination operates as a mediator between the intuition of the flower through the senses and the concept of 'flower' that belongs to the faculty of the understanding.[219] Within an aesthetic judgement of the beautiful on the other hand, the relation between intuition, imagination and understanding becomes liberated from the task of recognition.[220] This means that one is not concerned with the recognition of flower as flower, but with the way the flower appears as beautiful.[221] When the relation between intuition, imagination and understanding becomes free, *the relation between the cognitive faculties as such becomes addressed* rather than in terms of the task this relation can fulfil in the production of recognition.[222] An aesthetic judgement of the beautiful addresses the cognitive faculties of the human being as such, the relation itself, whereas a determinate judgement addresses the cognitive faculties merely as a means in

[215] Kant 2007: x.
[216] Ibid. xii, 118.
[217] Ibid. 48-49.
[218] Ibid. 15.
[219] Ibid. 117.
[220] Ibid. 49, 71, 101.
[221] Ibid. 24-25, 115.
[222] Ibid. 50, 53, 117.

the task of recognition. An aesthetic judgement is cognitive because the faculties of the understanding and imagination are indeed involved. An aesthetic experience cannot be reduced to sense perception. However, because the relation between imagination and understanding has become free, it is a form of cognition that operates without a concept.

A different way to understand this rational principle of the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful is through the term *disinterestedness*.[223] Disinterestedness means that one cannot gain personal profit from an aesthetic experience. The alignment between aesthetic experience and personal profit is a distortion of the condition of the aesthetic, which occurs when beauty becomes a way of elaborating one's own status or wealth.[224] A true aesthetic judgement based on a rational principle *addresses people not as individuals with personal needs and desires, but as universal human beings*.[225] This is the case because the free relation between intuition, imagination and understanding is a capacity inherent within every human being. It is not bound to age, social status, sex, ethnic background or intellect.[226] The fact that the cognitive faculties are related to one another within a free way means that no special knowledge is required, simply the fact of possessing these faculties is enough. The type of cognition involved is present within the way one's cognitive faculties as such become addressed without that they have to perform a particular task. For this reason, an aesthetic judgement of the beautiful does not address a person as an individual with personal needs and desires, but within his condition as a human being. It is this characteristic, which defines the universal dimension of aesthetic judgement. Kant's conception of 'disinterestedness' should therefore not necessarily be understood through the idea that the experience of beauty is a contemplative experience distinct from everyday practical action, but through the way a human being becomes addressed within his human condition as such.

Aesthetic Judgement of the Beautiful as Subjective Experience of the Purposiveness of Nature

The final aspect of Kant's aesthetic judgement of the beautiful I wish to discuss is the idea that the aesthetic judgement of nature as beautiful gives rise to the appearance of nature as purposively

[223] Kant 2007: 36-37.
[224] Ibid. 36-38.
[225] Ibid. xiv, 42-43.
[226] Ibid. 49.

designed.[227] The appearance of nature as purposive could be reformulated to the awareness that there is an inherent order within nature. What needs to be taken into account is that the experience of the order of nature is in principle impossible for Kant, as the condition of nature as it is in itself lies beyond human experience.[228] Kant's theory of the aesthetic is part of his critical philosophy, in which Kant analyses how the possibility for knowledge is limited by the nature of human experience. It is the transcendental dimension of the human cognitive faculties, which defines the condition that makes experience possible and therefore defines what can be experienced.[229] It is because of this boundedness of experience to the human cognitive faculties that one's experience of reality is always a mediated experience. A pure experience of reality as it is in itself is impossible for Kant because one's perception of reality is always a result of the way sense perception has become related to the faculties of the imagination and the understanding. For this reason, Kant argues against any form of metaphysical speculation in which one tries to develop a conceptual understanding of the 'in itself' that lies beyond experience. Such an undertaking Kant considers to be irrational, as it would be contradictory to the nature of the cognitive faculties and therefore to rationality itself.

However, within his *Critique of Judgement* Kant indeed makes the remark that the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful enables the contemplation of the order of nature, which in principle lies beyond experience. This must be understood through the fact that an aesthetic judgement has its own type of rationality, which makes it distinct from a determinate judgement based on concepts. The rational principle of aesthetic judgement is situated within the free play between intuition, imagination and the understanding. The cognitive faculties do not need to perform the task of aligning intuition with a concept of the understanding, but operate reflectively. *A reflective type of rationality means that one does not attempt to know the object encountered in intuition, but only reflect on the way it appears to the beholder.*[230] The reason why this is relevant for the experience of the order of nature is because the aesthetic judgment of nature only operates as a reflection on the way nature *appears* to possess an underlying order. The condition of appearance indicates that an aesthetic judgment remains within the bounds of the cognitive faculties and does not attempt to transcend the boundary between human experience and the in itself.[231] An aesthetic judgement has its own sense of rationality because it

[227] Kant 2007: 175.
[228] Ibid. 212.
[229] Ibid. x.
[230] Ibid. 174.
[231] Ibid. 178.

operates as a reflection onto the universal, which means that one only gains a sense of the universal subjectively, within aesthetic experience, without that the universal can be determined conceptually.[232] The universal operates in this sense as a feeling, a feeling that there is a purposive design inherent in nature. Through the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful one does not know the universal, but only reflects upon the way nature appears to possess a universal dimension.

Through a type of experience, which is reflective, Kant therefore provides a rational basis for human beings to relate to metaphysics.[233] A reflective judgement onto the universal in nature is not speculative because the judgement of the beautiful has its own rational principle. However, the ability of the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful to experience nature as purposive is not equivalent to a religious experience. Within the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful, the purposiveness of nature is only experienced subjectively, in terms of the way nature appears to a beholder.[234] A religious experience on the other hand requires the experience of the objective purposiveness of nature, which for Kant is related to the concept of God. A religious experience addresses the order of nature not as a subjective condition of experience, but as an objective condition of nature itself. A religious experience is in this sense distinct from an aesthetic judgment, as it requires the incorporation of a concept (God) and is not concerned with the way nature appears to possess an underlying order, but with the actual objective order of nature.[235] I will elaborate on this distinction within my discussion of the difference between aesthetic and teleological judgement.

3.1.2 Aesthetic Judgement of the Sublime

The second type of aesthetic judgement discussed by Kant is the aesthetic judgement of the sublime. Because both the experience of the sublime and the experience of beauty are an aesthetic type of judgement, they must share the condition of a rational principle that is not based onto a concept.[236] In the case of the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful this is situated within the free relation of the intuition, imagination and understanding. In the case of the aesthetic judgement of the sublime Kant proposes a different relation: intuition, imagination and the faculty of reason.[237] The faculty of reason is

[232] Kant 2007: 177.
[233] Ibid. 16-17, 19, 21, 330.
[234] Ibid. 178.
[235] Ibid. 341.
[236] Ibid. 75, 77-78.
[237] Ibid. 86.

distinct from the faculty of the understanding in the sense that the faculty of the understanding is concerned with concepts for which in principle an alignment with intuition can be found. The concept of a flower for example belongs to the faculty of the understanding because it has a correspondence with the experience of an actual flower. Kant introduces the faculty of reason to define the area of cognition, which is concerned with concepts that lack any correspondence with what one can actually experience through the senses.[238] The concept of God is an example of a concept that belongs to the faculty of reason because it lies beyond the human capacity of sense perception.[239]

The aesthetic judgement of the sublime is related to the faculty of reason instead of understanding because it is characterized by the experience of nature as limitless or shapeless.[240] Within the experience of nature as sublime one become confronted with a condition of nature that overpowers the cognitive faculties of a human being.[241] This is the case because, in contrast with the experience of nature as beautiful, one does not encounter nature in terms of the beauty of natural form, but nature as a natural force. It is for this reason that the sublime is not related to a condition of nature that is harmonious or peaceful, but dangerous or frightful.[242] This experience of nature as limitless requires the faculty of reason instead of the understanding precisely because a human being becomes confronted with the incapacity to align the cognitive faculties with the intuition of nature as natural form.[243]

A second difference between the beautiful and the sublime is that within the judgement of the beautiful, the relation between the cognitive faculties is defined by free play, whereas within the judgement of the sublime, the relation between intuition, imagination and reason is defined by tension.[244] This is related to the fact that the faculty of the understanding and intuition do correspond with one another, whereas this is not the case with the relation between intuition and the faculty of reason. Because the faculty of reason is characterized by concepts that have no correspondence with what can be experienced through the senses, intuition and reason cannot be aligned with one another. It is because of this lack of correspondence that Kant makes the remarkable statement that the judgement of the sublime is not an experience of the purposiveness of nature, but of *the purposiveness within a*

[238] Kant 2007: 89, 169-170.
[239] Ibid. xix, 275.
[240] Ibid. 75.
[241] Ibid. 76.
[242] Ibid. 77.
[243] Ibid. 75.
[244] Ibid. 78, 88.

human being himself.[245] The sublime cannot operate as a judgement of the purposiveness of nature because nature is not experienced in terms of its form, but in terms of the lack of form, as limitless. Because the experience of the sublime cannot find a purposiveness in nature, it can only turn inwards, towards a human being himself.[246] The sublime is in this sense a paradoxical experience as it operates *both as an affirmation of the subject in his limitation and in his independence*.[247] The judgement of the sublime is an affirmation of the limited nature of the subject because a human being becomes confronted with nature as an overpowering force, which goes beyond the cognitive capacity of intuition and understanding to take fully into account. The sublime therefore confronts a human being with his incapacity to completely control and understand nature.[248] However, at the same time, the sublime operates as an affirmation of the independence of the subject because a subject becomes aware of the purposiveness within himself. It is because of the failure to relate the faculty of reason to intuition that the sublime cannot be directed towards the intuition of nature, but only to the way *the intuition of nature makes a human being aware of his own faculty of reason*.[249]

The affirmation of one's condition as a subject is situated within the way the experience of the sublime makes a human being aware of his own condition of freedom. The condition of freedom belongs to the faculty of reason because it is a condition for which no intuition can be found.[250] Whereas the concept of God is related to the purposiveness of nature, the concept of freedom is related to the purposiveness of a human being, as it affirms him as a thinking and acting individual that is conscious of his own actions. It generates the feeling of superiority over nature precisely because it affirms the idea that as a human being one's actions are not dependent upon or predefined by nature.[251] This is different from the idea that the free play of the cognitive faculties, which characterizes the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful, addresses people within their universal condition as human beings. The universal dimension of the beautiful is limited to the capacity of people to take up a shared experience, which allows experiencing nature as purposive, whereas the aesthetic judgement of the sublime addresses the purposiveness within a human being himself. Because the experience of nature as sublime is without form, it generates the idea of there being something beyond nature, a supersensible dimension. This supersensible dimension can only be found within a human being

[245] Kant 2007: xvi, 77.
[246] Ibid. 76, 80-81.
[247] Ibid. 86-87, 89, 91-92.
[248] Ibid. 84.
[249] Ibid. 85.
[250] Ibid. 171.
[251] Ibid. 99.

himself, as the supersensible within nature requires the judgement of the beautiful, the appearance of form as purposive. In accordance with the idea that the purposiveness of form is related to the way form appears a purposively designed, the purposiveness of a human being is related to the way people become aware of their own design, as being defined by the condition of freedom.

3.1.3 Distinguishing between Aesthetic Judgement and Teleological Judgement

Both teleological judgement and aesthetic judgement are reflective forms of judgements, but with the difference that a teleological judgement addresses the purposiveness of nature in an objective rather than subjective way.[252] The difference between an objective and subjective type of judgement is that the former is characterized by the alignment between a concept and intuition (through the imagination) whereas the latter by the free relation between intuition, imagination and understanding/reason.[253] However, because a teleological judgement attempts to address the objective purposiveness of nature, which in principle lies beyond experience, the alignment between concept and intuition cannot be successful, as is the case with determinate judgement. The concept involved in teleological judgement has to be understood as a concept of reason, which does not have any correspondence with actual reality.[254] It is for this reason why the alignment between concept and intuition within teleological judgement cannot be determinate, but only reflective.[255] A teleological and aesthetic judgement therefore are both reflective types of judgement, but with the difference that a teleological judgement reflects on the alignment between a concept of reason and intuition, whereas an aesthetic judgement reflects solely on the way form appears as purposive. In the case of the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful, the experience of the purposiveness of nature is subjective because it is not grounded in the actual end of nature, but solely within the universal dimension of aesthetic judgement.[256] Within an aesthetic judgement, the universal is sought on the basis of the particular through the free play of the cognitive faculties.[257] An aesthetic judgement can contemplate the purposiveness of nature only in a

[252] Kant 2007: 15, 28, 188, 349.
[253] Ibid. 29, 57.
[254] Ibid. 170-171, 341.
[255] Ibid. 188, 216-217, 223, 225.
[256] Ibid. 328.
[257] Ibid. 15, 187, 319.

subjective way, through the free play of the cognitive faculties, but not in an objective way, which requires the alignment between a concept and intuition.[258]

A teleological judgement on the other hand moves from the intuition of whole as whole (a concept of reason) to the particular.[259] Because the objective purposiveness of nature lies beyond experience, the concept involved must belong to the faculty of reason. It is this incorporation of a concept, which indicates why a *teleological judgement for Kant cannot be aesthetic*. Within the aesthetic judgement of the sublime, we are solely dealing with the relation between the faculty of reason, imagination and intuition and not with the attempt to align a concept of reason with one's experience of nature. By analysing the nature of human experience, Kant is able to address the question whether a human being is capable to experience the objective purposiveness of nature. Such an objective purposiveness cannot be sought within nature itself because it lies beyond experience. Objective purposiveness therefore can only be reflected upon in terms of a concept of reason, which allows experiencing the supersensible within nature, even though the supersensible lies beyond experience.[260] The concept of reason takes the form of an intelligent author of the world (God), because it is the only way to contemplate nature as possessing a purposiveness, which operates both as universal law and is particular for every singular entity. It is only God that allows justifying the existence of each individual creature within a universal design.[261]

2.1.4 The Aesthetic Judgement of Art

The aesthetic judgement of art takes up a special position within Kant's *Critique of Judgement* because it is an aesthetic judgement of the beautiful that incorporates a concept.[262] Within the contemplation of the beauty of nature, one is solely concerned with nature as phenomenon; the way it appears as beautiful. One does not need a concept of the flower in order to find the flower beautiful. However, in the case of the aesthetic judgement of art, we are not dealing with the experience of a beautiful thing, but with the experience of a beautiful representation of a thing.[263] The aesthetic judgement of art is therefore an impure form of aesthetic judgement, as it requires the inclusion of a concept. However,

[258] Kant 2007: 341.
[259] Ibid. 235, 341.
[260] Ibid. 230.
[261] Ibid. 227, 266-267.
[262] Ibid. 149.
[263] Ibid. 140.

despite this distinction between the aesthetic judgement of art and the aesthetic judgement of nature, art is only art when it appears like nature.[264] This means that the aesthetic judgement of art is, in accordance with the aesthetic judgment of nature, not defined by pleasurable sensation, but a cognitive experience in which the cognitive faculties are addressed in a free way.[265] The experience of a work of art therefore takes up the same universal condition as the aesthetic judgement of nature. Moreover, the aesthetic judgment of art gives rise to the idea that the object has been purposefully designed (by an artist) in a similar way as the aesthetic judgment of nature gives rise to the idea that nature has been purposefully designed. The aesthetic judgement of art is therefore both similar to and distinct from the aesthetic judgement of nature.

This simultaneous similarity and distinction becomes further complicated through the fact that according to Kant not only art has to be judged to appear as nature, but also nature has to be judged to appear as art.[266] Nature appears as art because it appears as purposively designed, in a similar way as the form in art is the result of a purposeful design executed by the artist. However, in the case of the judgement of the objective purposiveness of nature (teleological judgement) a concept (of reason) needs to be involved as one does not judge nature as appearing like art, but as actually being a work of art: a superhuman work of art executed by God. The aesthetic judgement of art is therefore structurally similar to teleological judgement, as in both cases we are dealing with a reflective form of judgement that incorporates a concept, but with the difference that a teleological judgement is not aesthetic. Within the judgement of a work of art, the concept does not ground the experience, but is incorporated within the free relation between the imagination and the understanding.[267] The aesthetic judgement of the painting of a flower does not require an alignment between the concept of flower and the intuition of the painting (as this would make it a determinate form of judgement), but only allows the occurrence of the free play of the faculties in relation to a representation of a thing. A teleological judgement on the other hand is grounded by a concept (of reason), as we are dealing with the attempt to align a concept of reason with nature as phenomenon. This alignment can only occur through a reflective type of judgement, as a concept of reason has by definition no correspondence with intuition.

[264] Kant 2007: 135.
[265] Ibid. 134-135, 148.
[266] Ibid. 130, 140, 203.
[267] Ibid. 135-136.

3.2 Rethinking Kant's Conception of Aesthetic Autonomy for Animism

3.2.1 Propositional Judgement as Aesthetic Judgement of Truth: Rethinking the Distinction between Aesthetic and Teleological Judgement

In order to rework Kant's conception of aesthetic autonomy for animism, I undertake a rereading of his *Critique of Judgement* through a Whiteheadian perspective. The idea of undertaking such a rereading might seem incorrect, as Kant and Whitehead are concerned with a very different conception of experience. For Kant, experience is grounded by the cognitive faculties and therefore presupposes a human subject, whereas for Whitehead a subject is the product of experience. In the former case, experience starts from the subject, whereas in the latter, experience becomes activated through encounter and therefore starts from the outside. When experience starts from the outside, one cannot clearly differentiate between subject and environment/lifeworld. This is contradictory to Kant's argument in favour of 'autonomy', which means that a subject is master of his own actions. However, this apparent contradiction between Kant and Whitehead is incorrect, as also Whitehead affirms a subject's capacity for autonomy. This is visible in his statement that critique is one of the most beautiful things in the world as no entity is completely defined by its environment, but has the potential to react against it. 'Autonomy' is then situated within the fact that experience indeed becomes activated through the environment, but every entity nevertheless has the capacity to decide for itself the particular form experience takes.

An integration of Kant's conception of autonomy within the lifeworld is visible for example in the work of Jürgen Habermas on communicative action.[268] In order for people to relate to one another as citizens of the same lifeworld, they must be able to communicate. Communication implies that the mind of a subject cannot be limited to his individual existence, but must take up a distributed condition within a lifeworld.[269] However, at the same time no subject is merely involved within the lifeworld, but has the capacity to be critical about it through argumentation. Autonomy is therefore not opposed to a distributed mind, but requires it, as critique is only possible within communication with other members of the lifeworld.[270] Whereas Habermas' work is distinct from process metaphysics, he nevertheless

[268] Habermas 2019: 751-752, 759-760, 762.
[269] Ibid. 752, 757.
[270] Ibid. 753, 758.

allows understanding how Kant's critical philosophy can be extended to a type of experience that starts from the lifeworld (a shared understanding between citizens that makes communication possible) rather than the individual.

For the purpose of my argument, the work of Steven Shaviro is more directly relevant. Shaviro has proposed a rereading of Kant's conception of aesthetic judgement of the beautiful through a Whiteheadian perspective.[271] Whereas Kant's critical philosophy is in general concerned with the idea that human experience makes a conceptual construction of reality, his conception of aesthetic judgement is different because it is a type of experience that operates without concepts. Shaviro argues that such a type of experience opens up Kant's critical philosophy because it is a type of experience that precedes the human act of conceptual construction.[272] When an aesthetic judgement precedes the human act of conscious perception, Shaviro argues that it cannot start from the subject, but is a type of experience that becomes activated through encounter.[273] The experience of the flower as beautiful is not something a subject can decide in advance; rather it is something that happens to the subject. If a subject could decide in advance to find something beautiful, beauty would become reduced to personal sensation. This means that the condition of beauty is indeed bound to the experience of a subject, but yet is more than merely subjective.[274] This is not contradictory to Kant's argument that the free play of the cognitive faculties is a subjective type of experience that is based upon a universal principle. By rethinking Kant's aesthetic judgement of the beautiful as a type of experience that starts from the outside, Shaviro allows to understand how aesthetic judgement could be rethought in terms of the continuity between subject and lifeworld. *The reason why such a rereading is possible is because Whitehead's ontological primacy of experience is based on the autonomy of the aesthetic. Because Kant defines this autonomy through his conception of aesthetic judgement, it can be transformed to a Whiteheadian context*. Moreover, such a transformation, I argue, allows resolving the contradictions within Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, which indicates that his theorization of aesthetic autonomy is not contradictory to a type of experience that starts from the outside.

In order to rework Kant's conception of aesthetic autonomy for prehistory I examine how it can be aligned with Whitehead's remark that the judgement of the order of nature requires the beautiful. Whitehead's concept of prehension means the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience.

[271] Shaviro 2009.
[272] Ibid. 13, 15.
[273] Ibid. 9.
[274] Ibid. 4-5.

Within the previous chapter I argued how prehension can operate in various ways. Prehension as propositional judgement is a form of negation in which one judges the coherence between a proposition and actual reality. Prehension as propositional judgement is in this sense distinct from propositional feeling, which is solely defined by the adding of intensity to the experience of an actual entity. In the case of a religious experience, the intensity of experience that defines propositional feeling becomes united with the judgement of truth that defines propositional judgement. A model for such a type of experience does not only require Kant's conception of aesthetic judgement, but also of teleological judgement. It is within the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful that the intensity of feeling becomes united with the capacity of reflection. However, Kant's conception of aesthetic judgement is not based upon the judgement of the coherence between proposition and actual reality and therefore distinct from religious experience. It is Kant's conception of teleological judgement that we need in order to understand a reflective experience as a judgement of truth on the order of nature.

In order to align aesthetic judgement and teleological judgement with one another one needs to reconceptualize the objective purposiveness of nature as a subjective form of universality. Following Kant, the objective purposiveness of nature is related to a state of reality that lies beyond experience. Teleological judgement must therefore deal with the boundary between nature as phenomenon and nature as in itself. Whitehead on the other hand puts forward a speculative metaphysics in which this distinction between nature as phenomenon and nature as in itself is non-existent. Because experience for Whitehead is ontologically prior, he puts forward a metaphysics that operates as a constellation of different worlds. It is the category of eternal objects, which denotes the condition of the universal in Whitehead's metaphysics. An eternal object only operates as a potentiality for actualization without being determined in advance. It adds particularity to the process of concrescence, but is itself without form. The universal for Whitehead therefore cannot operate in isolation, but only in constellation with the process of actualisation (self-concrescence). This means that the universal takes up a subjective dimension, as it is bound to the particularity of the actual world. *A subjective form of universality means that the experience of the purposiveness of nature must be both objective and subjective. It must be objective in order to judge the coherence between appearance and reality in terms of truth. It must be subjective as the universal is bound to the constellation of subjective experiences that make up the world itself.* This is not the case for Kant as the objective purposiveness of nature cannot be altered through the constructive dimension of human experience. This means that the contemplation of the

objective purposiveness of nature within the context of a Whiteheadian metaphysics requires a form of aesthetic judgement that simultaneously takes up the characteristics of teleological judgement.

Within my discussion of Kant's *Critique of Judgement* I indicated how the aesthetic judgement of art challenges the distinction between aesthetic judgement and teleological judgement. This is the case because a teleological judgement contemplates nature as a work of art and because an aesthetic judgement of art incorporates a concept and is therefore an impure form of aesthetic judgement. The difficulty in aligning aesthetic judgement and teleological judgement with one another is that an aesthetic judgement moves from the particular to the universal, whereas a teleological judgement from the universal to the particular. It is through encounter with the particular that an aesthetic judgement allows to address the universal dimension of nature (subjectively). A teleological judgement on the other hand operates in a reverse way, as it starts from the universal (idea of reason) for which it aims to find a particular intuition. The aesthetic judgement of art offers a model in which an aesthetic judgement moves from the particular to the universal, but nevertheless incorporates a concept from the start. This concept is not an idea of reason, but of the understanding (e.g. the concept of a flower).

In the case of religious art, however, we are no longer dealing with a concept of the understanding, but with a concept of reason. This is the case because a religious concept (e.g. the supersensible) is without sensual form and therefore belongs to the faculty of reason. The experience of religious art therefore both incorporates a concept of reason (by which it is related to the condition of teleological judgement) and operates as a reflective judgement of a work of art (by which it is related to aesthetic judgement). It is through the judgement of religious art that one can understand the paradoxical condition of a type of judgement that is simultaneously based and not based on a concept. Because the judgement of religious art is an aesthetic judgement, it starts from the encounter with particularity (work of art) from which the universal (purposiveness of nature) is sought. However, at the same time the judgement of religious art also moves from the universal to the particular as it implies a sense of faith. For this reason, the universal must also precede the encounter with the particular (work of art) as one does not only gain an awareness of the purposiveness of nature through the encounter with religious art, but already possesses a sense of the universal through one's form of life. Religion as faith means that one is not only religious through the encounter with religious art, but within one's entire mode of life. Within the encounter with religious art, the universal comes to the fore

explicitly, but must at the same time have already been understood implicitly. One cannot have a religious experience if one does not possess a form of faith, which precedes the encounter with religious art.

Following Whitehead, an aesthetic experience operates as a form of self-concrescence that shapes both the individual and the world in which the individual lives. Aesthetic experience can therefore never be detached from one's practical actions and embodied experience within the lifeworld. What defines a 'world' or 'society' for Whitehead is the limitation imposed by a universal on the processes of concrescence, which means that the modification of experience operates as the determination of the order of nature ontologically into a particular 'world'. This ability of human experience to modify the order of nature is a consequence of the fact that the universal for Whitehead can only operate subjectively and therefore must be particularized.[275] It is through the encounter with religious art that one reflects on the universal, but the universal is at the same time already present within the modification of experience that defines the lifeworld. The universal can therefore not be eliminated from experience and this allows understanding why the judgement of religious art is both defined by *the movement from the particular to the universal and from the universal to the particular*. This paradoxical situation is necessary to contemplate a form of purposiveness that operates both subjectively and objectively. A religious experience requires a sense of faith (concept of reason), but at the same time requires encounter with the particular because there is no general form of universality. A concept of reason can therefore not ground the experience of the universal in nature (as is the case in Kant's teleological judgement), but must be aligned with the subjective condition of aesthetic experience. It is for this reason that a religious experience must move simultaneously from the universal to the particular and from the particular to the universal.

The reason why Kant does not discuss the type of religious experience that I propose is because his conception of religion is based on a transcendent 'in itself' (Christianity) that lies beyond experience. Aesthetic and teleological judgement can only be aligned with one another when the universal takes up a subjective dimension, which means that a type of religion based on a transcendent 'in itself' must become transformed to a type of religion in which the boundary between experience and the 'in itself' is non-existent. A subjective type of universal means that the universal is not pregiven, but only takes up form through human experience. This means that the universal does not lie

[275] Whitehead 1967: 203-204.

beyond human experience, but is always incorporated into it. The experience of the order of nature is therefore not an experience of a pre-existing order, but is what allows the order of nature itself to take up its form. The conception of religious experience proposed above means that the distinction between immanent religions (e.g. animism) and transcendent religions (e.g. Christianity) must be rethought. Within my discussion of animism through Whitehead, I argued that the condition of animism arises through an aesthetic judgement of truth. This means that animism indeed takes up a critical character, as it is concerned with the judgement of the appearance-reality relation and in this sense distinct from the 'irrational' or 'mythological' character that has been ascribed to immanent religions. Animism therefore requires both the critical character of Kantian philosophy (which is related to a transcendent type of religion) and the subjective condition of universality (which is related to an immanent type of religion).

3.2.2 The Judgement of Religious Art: Rethinking the Distinction between the Beautiful and the Sublime

The judgement of religious art also allows resolving Kant's contradiction between the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful and the aesthetic judgement of the sublime. The beautiful and sublime are distinct from each other, as the sublime is without form and directed towards the purposiveness of a human being, whereas the beautiful is directed towards the purposiveness of nature and therefore concerned with the purposiveness of form. However, Kant argues that the beautiful operates as symbol for morality, which aligns the beautiful with the purposiveness of a human being and therefore challenges the distinction between the beautiful and the sublime.[276] This contradiction becomes further complicated by Kant's remark that a judgement of a work of art requires moral ideas, but can nevertheless not be sublime.[277] The judgement of religious art must allow both the contemplation of the purposiveness of nature and the purposiveness within oneself; it must unite the supersensible within nature with the supersensible within human beings. This is only possible when the judgement of religious art is simultaneously beautiful and sublime. It is the beautiful that allows the contemplation of the purposiveness of nature and the establishment of a common world, but it is the sublime that defines

[276] Kant 2007: 180.
[277] Ibid. 154.

the agency of art to direct people's practical actions, as it addresses the supersensible within human beings themselves.[278]

The unification of teleological judgement and aesthetic judgement allows the unification of the beautiful and the sublime because it defines a type of reflective judgement on the purposiveness of nature that operates both objectively and subjectively. *It means that the faculty of reason takes up both an objective (teleological judgement) and subjective character (aesthetic judgement of the sublime).* It means that the condition of the sublime can indeed be associated with the experience of the purposiveness of nature and therefore is not opposed to the beautiful. The transcendence of the distinction between aesthetic and teleological judgement therefore gives rise to a transcendence of the distinction between the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful and aesthetic judgement of the sublime. Art can then indeed be sublime, but only when the sublime is entangled with the beautiful. Kant is therefore correct to argue that sublime art is impossible, but is incorrect to neglect the necessity of the sublime within the judgement of the work of art.[279] Moreover, art that is solely beautiful is equally impossible as then art would lack the capacity to operate as symbol for morality and therefore would lack agency and become mere decoration. *It is the beautiful, which addresses the purposiveness of form of a work of art, but it is the sublime, which defines the agency of art, its capacity to have an effect on people's practical actions.*

This entanglement between the beautiful and the sublime, and teleological judgement and aesthetic judgement indicates that the contemplation of the objective purposiveness of nature must both operate in terms of reflection and practice. Following my discussion of Whitehead, I argued that his concept of prehension is a form of aesthetic experience that operates as self-determination. Self-determination means both the striving for harmony (the actualization of value) and the striving for the new. Because Whitehead's concept of eternal object is defined by indeterminacy, it can only guide the process of concrescence, but not determine it in advance. Aesthetic experience as process of concrescence must therefore be undertaken every time anew and cannot be stabilized. The aesthetic is therefore both beautiful (because it is striving for harmony) and sublime (as it is striving for the new, the transcendence of stabilized form). If there would indeed be a stable alignment between eternal object (universal) and actualization (particular) then it would be impossible for people to live together

[278] Kant 2007: 98.
[279] Ibid. 83.

and establish a society.[280] The ontological primacy of aesthetic experience denotes how self-determination operates through encounter with the other. It is the inclusion of the other within the process of concrescence that allows the self-determination of people to share a common form, which makes a society possible. It also allows the occurrence of friendship and love.

It is this incoherence between universal and particular, which allows understanding why the judgement of the purposiveness of nature must operate both as reflection and practice. It must operate as reflection because it is only through reflection that one becomes aware of the incoherence between appearance and reality and therefore the condition of truth. However, it must operate as a form of practice because the entanglement of the universal and particular must be established every time anew. In the same way as the process of self-concrescence, the contemplation of the purposiveness in nature requires both harmony (the alignment between universal and particular in the work of art) and the striving for the new (the recreation of this alignment through practice). It is also through practice that reflective judgement becomes connected with the aesthetic dimension of the lifeworld itself. This connection is required in order for aesthetic judgement to move simultaneously from the particular to the universal and from the universal to the particular. If the contemplation of the purposiveness of nature becomes reduced to reflection, truth becomes transformed to untruth. Following Whitehead, the essence of the universe is creativity, the striving for the new. The striving for truth and beauty cannot be achieved once and for all, but must be undertaken every time anew. A form of beauty disentangled from practice ceases to be beautiful and therefore ceases to be aesthetic. It is for this reason that the beautiful requires the sublime and why reflection must be entangled with practice.

The entanglement of aesthetic judgement and teleological judgement, the beautiful and the sublime, allows a new form of judgement associated with the experience of religious art. This form of judgement can be understood through Whitehead's concept of propositional judgement. Religious experience as propositional judgement means the unification of the intensity of feeling that characterizes propositional feeling with the condition of negation that defines propositional judgement. It is an aesthetic judgement that denotes a form of reflection that operates through the intensity of feeling. However, it is teleological judgement that denotes a form of reflection on the coherence between proposition and actual reality. Whitehead's category of religious experience therefore requires the unification of aesthetic judgement and teleological judgement. This is possible because for

[280] Whitehead 1967: 203.

Whitehead the contemplation of truth (objective purposiveness) requires beauty. Truth requires the aesthetic because it operates as a subjective form of universality. Within my discussion of religious art, I argued how a religious experience moves simultaneously from the particular to the universal and from the universal to the particular. It moves from the particular to the universal because it must start from the outside rather than from the subject; one cannot choose oneself to have a religious experience. However, a religious experience at the same time moves from the universal to the particular because it must preclude a sense of the universal.

This universal must be understood as an indeterminate universal, which is without sensual form or theoretical determination. It is best understood as a form of faith, which becomes activated through encounter with a form of particularity (like religious art) that generates a religious experience. *A religious experience is therefore simultaneously with and without concept as the universal is simultaneously given and needs to be found.* It is this paradoxical situation that indicates how an aesthetic judgement can simultaneously take up the condition of teleological judgement. The proposition (concept of reason) is not given in advance, but only emerges subjectively within the act of judgement itself. The unification of propositional judgement with the intensity of feeling therefore means a form of judgement as groundless ground. Groundless ground denotes a condition in which the universal can only operate subjectively. In the case of aesthetic judgement this means the universal dimension of the free play of the cognitive faculties. *In the case of religious experience this denotes the way a proposition only emerges within subjective experience itself.* This type of experience is therefore both aesthetic and teleological.

The resolution of the distinction between the beautiful and the sublime, aesthetic and teleological judgement, indicates that the autonomy of the aesthetic, which defines the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics, is in fact not opposed to a religious (animistic) experience. Equating the autonomy of the aesthetic with the purity of the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful is therefore a misinterpretation of the autonomy of the aesthetic itself. The autonomy of the aesthetic denotes the condition of groundless ground, which means a form of reflection that is simultaneously universal and subjective. This condition is necessary to judge the coherence between appearance and reality in terms of truth. Religion is therefore not opposed to the autonomy of the aesthetic, but requires it. By singling out the autonomy of the aesthetic in terms of aesthetic judgement of the beautiful, the condition of groundless ground becomes manifest explicitly (through the free play of the cognitive

faculties), but at the same time loses its function. An aesthetic judgement distinct from moral ideas inevitably becomes a form of sensation and therefore ceases to be aesthetic. By defining religious experience through Kant's theorization of the autonomy of aesthetic judgement, one can understand how a religious experience within an animistic context is not necessarily ideological, but can indeed be critical.

Conclusion

Within this chapter I addressed the question how Kant's conceptualization of the autonomy of aesthetic judgement can be reworked for animism through a transcendence of the distinction between aesthetic and teleological judgement. Such transcendence has been undertaken by a rereading of Kant's *Critique of Judgement* through the process metaphysics of Whitehead. Following Whitehead, the universal only operates as potential and therefore requires the subjective character of actualization in order to be determined. When the universal dimension of nature takes up a subjective character, a teleological judgement must take up the condition of aesthetic judgement and vice versa. The way I explained this unification is through the argument that *the judgement of the objective purposiveness of nature must move simultaneously from the particular to the universal and from the universal to the particular*. When the universal only operates as potential the judgement of the purposiveness of nature cannot be grounded on a theoretical concept of the universal, but must start from encounter with particularity. It is this condition in which the universal emerges from the particular, which defines an aesthetic judgement. However, precisely because the universal operates as potential it can only be understood in terms of the occurrence of different worlds. This means that the lifeworld of a subject is already a result of the way the universal has been concretized and therefore embedded within the concrescence of the subject himself. The universal must be understood in this case as a form of faith, that what guides one's actions and shapes one's vision without being a determinate concept. The judgement of the purposiveness of nature must therefore also move from the universal to the particular as one always incorporates implicitly a sense of the universal because of one's existence within a lifeworld.

A rethinking of Kant's *Critique of Judgement* through a subjective type of universality leads to the transformation of a conception of religion based on a transcendent 'in itself' towards an immanent conception of religion. The resolution of the distinction between aesthetic and teleological judgement therefore leads towards the conceptualization of a type of aesthetic experience for an

animistic lifeworld. The unification of aesthetic and teleological judgement is related to the unification of the beautiful and the sublime. This is the case because the experience of religious (animistic) art must unite the contemplation of the purposiveness of nature (beautiful) with the purposiveness of a human being himself (sublime). It is such a unification, which explains how religious art both shapes people's practical actions (and therefore possesses the capacity for agency) and allows reflecting onto the order of nature. Therefore, it is the autonomy of the aesthetic, which is necessary to understand how the aesthetic during prehistory both operated in terms of practical action and in terms of a visualisation of the order of nature. From this perspective, the critique on Kantian aesthetic autonomy (as being opposed to the practical dimension of prehistoric artefacts) can be transcended. Moreover, it is precisely the autonomy of Kantian aesthetics that we need in order to understand this practical dimension.

4. ALIGNING PROCESS METAPHYSICS WITH THEODOR ADORNO'S NEGATIVE METAPHYSICS

Introduction

Within this chapter my focus is on the potential of the autonomy of the aesthetic to operate as critique on the human lifeworld. This idea of aesthetic experience as critique has already implicitly been embedded within my discussion of art as war-machine and the way a propositional judgement allows to counter a false reconciliation between appearance and reality. However, in both cases (the nomad war-machine and the animacy of stone) the autonomy of the aesthetic does not operate as critique on the lifeworld itself, but is coupled to a feeling at home. Also within my discussion of Kant, the idea of a critical religion is not concerned with religious experience being critical of the lifeworld, but with the justification of the coherence between proposition and actual reality. Within this chapter I am concerned with a different form of critique, which can best be related to the theorization of aesthetic experience by the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno. Aesthetic experience for Adorno is defined by negativity, which means that aesthetic experience does not allow contemplating the purposiveness of the actual world, but operates as a negation of the world. Aesthetic experience as negation means a critique on the current condition of the lifeworld and the possibility to envision a different form of life. This negative dimension of aesthetic experience puts forward a different relation between aesthetics and metaphysics because metaphysics becomes associated not with the actual condition of the world, but with the possibility of a different world. Aesthetic experience as negation takes up the task to make people aware of the distorted condition of their lifeworld.

The reason why Adorno's theorization of the relation between aesthetics and metaphysics through negativity is relevant is because it is not only related to the modern condition of art, but also relevant for animistic societies. The perspectivism of the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro puts forward a type of animism in which different beings can take up each other's appearance. When appearances can ontologically be exchanged, one must be capable to make a judgement of the type of entity and world one is dealing with in order to not be deceived. A perspectivist type of animism is a form of life, which must include a form of critique within communicative action in order to counter the continuous danger of being deceived. In other words, a perspectivist type of animism requires a form of

experience as critique, which is directed towards the lifeworld itself and it is for this reason that an Adornian perspective is relevant. By integrating the negativity of Adornian aesthetics with the positivity of process metaphysics a different relation between aesthetics and metaphysics becomes visible in which aesthetic experience becomes a critical reflection on the way the process of concrescence of the lifeworld has been distorted.

In the first part of this chapter *Negative Dialectics: A Materialism and Metaphysics based on Negativity* I examine Adorno's negative conception of aesthetic experience and the way this is related to a negative form of materialism and metaphysics. Adorno's negative materialism provides the basis for his conception of aesthetic experience, which is a reflective type of experience that arises through the encounter with an object. This discussion will be used in the second part *Critical Metaphysics: Rethinking Adorno's Aesthetics for Animism* as basis to develop a conception of aesthetic experience as critical judgement on the distortion of metaphysics. First, I discuss how Adorno's negative conception of aesthetic experience and metaphysics can be reconciled with the positivity of process metaphysics; for such a reconciliation I use the term 'critical metaphysics'. Secondly, I develop a new type of aesthetic experience in relation to the theory of perspectivism by Viveiros de Castro.

4.1 Negative Dialectics: A Materialism and Metaphysics based on Negativity

4.1.1 The Modification of Human Rationality: The Dialectic of Enlightenment

Rationality is a paradoxical phenomenon, as it must incorporate its opposite in order to exist. In order to think, one needs a confrontation with what is not thinking, namely the confrontation with the material world. Thinking for Adorno means the attempt to define on the basis of a concept the nature of the object that one encounters.[281] However, rationality becomes irrational when thought and objectivity become completely equated with one another, which occurs when one reduces the material object that one aims to understand to a representational concept. This is a form of irrationality because the material object is not understood but eliminated, as its objective dimension has become replaced by a theoretical concept. A true form of rationality requires the recognition that concept (thinking) and object can never

[281] Adorno 1973: 34, 128.

completely cohere with one another.[282] Adorno therefore argues that true thinking requires the recognition of the non-identity between concept and object. This means that it is through the development of concepts that the understanding of objectivity can occur, but also that it is only through the encounter with objectivity that the construction of a concept can be undertaken in the first place. Concept and object can therefore never be completely identical, as this would be contradictory to the practice of thinking itself.[283] Thinking becomes ideological when concept and object are identified completely with one another, which means the reduction of the world to a closed system that eliminates the possibility of difference.[284]

One could easily misunderstand this argument through the idea that the nature of identity itself is incorrect. However, this is not Adorno's statement. Identification is an absolute necessity in order for thinking to occur; without the development of concepts thinking itself becomes impossible.[285] The type of identification, which Adorno puts forward is dialectical. This means that identification must continuously critique itself by confronting itself with what lies outside the concept, with the non-identity between concept and object.[286] To identify means a confrontation with what is other than thought (the encounter with an object), which implies that identification and object can never completely cohere with one another, as this would make the activity of identification itself impossible. *Negative dialectics is not a special form of thinking, but defines the nature of rationality as such. It denotes how rationality is both distinct from objectivity, but nevertheless requires objectivity in order to occur.*[287] Thinking can therefore never be stabilized, but must be undertaken constantly anew through encounter with objectivity. The dialectical dimension of thinking does justice to the potential of difference inherent within objectivity, which is manifest in the non-identity between thought and being. *It is through thinking that this non-identity becomes manifest and therefore that one can prevent the world from becoming a closed system in which nothing new can occur*.[288]

However, the critique on identification has the danger of eliminating identification completely and replacing it with an ontology of positivity. An ontology of positivity means the priority of bodily experience and encounter with materiality over identity-thinking, which Adorno relates to the

[282] Adorno 1973: 5, 21.
[283] Ibid. 10, 12.
[284] Ibid. 40; Horkheimer and Adorno 2002: 11.
[285] Adorno 1973: 5, 147, 149.
[286] Ibid. 141, 153, 162.
[287] Ibid. 149.
[288] Ibid. 19, 52, 57.

phenomenological tradition of the philosopher Martin Heidegger.[289] A phenomenological approach prioritizes the materiality of the object and the physical situatedness of the body in relation to the object. In this way, it sets out to counter the reduction of objectivity to a concept, which takes place in identity-thinking. *However, the shift to materiality as such is not a correction of rationality, but a more severe form of distortion of rationality than occurs within identity-thinking. Whereas in complete identification, it is only rationality that becomes eliminated (because of the neglect of the non-identity between concept and object), within an ontology of positivity it is both objectivity and rationalization that become eliminated.*[290] Within the phenomenological tradition of Heidegger, the nature of objectivity becomes defined through the concept 'Being'. The critique on identity becomes an elimination of objectivity because 'Being' does not give any insight into the particularity of the object encountered. Moreover, it puts the whole realm of objectivity on a pair with one another, as 'Being' becomes to stand for a condition that denotes the essence of every type of objectivity. 'Being' in this sense becomes to stand for a general universal, which has lost touch with every form of particularization.[291] Adorno calls it an 'Om' metaphysics in accordance with the religious 'Om, Om' -chant, as 'Being' says the same thing about everything, without saying anything at all.[292] It is only through the development of concepts that the non-identity between universal and particular can be drawn out and therefore that the dynamic nature of matter can be made visible.

The replacement of identity-thinking with an ontology of positivity can be understood as a false form of reconciliation between subject and object. The reconciliation is false because when identification becomes eliminated, a subject ceases to be a subject and an object ceases to be an object.[293] It is only through the activity of reflection that a subject gains the capacity to think and therefore to establish himself as a subject.[294] An object ceases to be an object because the doctrine of 'Being' reduces objectivity to a general concept, which is void. The fact that the relation between thought and being is defined by non-identity cannot be solved by moving beyond thought completely. A direct encounter with 'Being' must be understood as a pseudo-solution because matter itself is defined by the entanglement of universality and particularity.[295] For this reason, the non-identity between thought (universal) and being (particular) cannot be eliminated, as it is situated on the side of

[289] Adorno 1973: 73-74.
[290] Ibid. 79-80.
[291] Ibid. 70-71, 107.
[292] Ibid. 76, 118.
[293] Ibid. 85, 91-92, 175.
[294] Ibid. 181.
[295] Ibid. 169.

matter itself. *The primacy of practice over theory is in this sense false, as it puts forward a form of materiality that is ideological.*[296] This does not mean, however, that the priority of materiality is itself incorrect. Also Adorno argues in favour of a form of materiality, in which the encounter with objectivity is considered as prior. *The difference between the two types of materiality is situated in the distinction between positivity and negativity*. The form of materialism defended by Adorno is negative because the encounter with objectivity operates as a form of reflection in which one aims to address the essence of objectivity through the development of concepts.[297] The priority of matter is required because it is only through encounter with what is other than itself that the act of thinking can occur in the first place.[298] A materiality defined by positivity on the other hand denotes a type of encounter in which matter becomes reduced to its physical condition.[299] Practice can neither replace rationality nor operate as a correction of rationality. A true form of materialism that acknowledges the nature of objectivity requires the act of negation, as it is through negation that the entanglement between universal and particular within objectivity can be made manifest and that one can counter a reduction of matter to a pure presence.[300]

What requires clarification is whether Adorno's critique on Heidegger's ontology of 'Being' could be extended to the ontology of 'Becoming', which means the process metaphysics of Gilles Deleuze and Alfred North Whitehead. Both the ontology of 'Being' and 'Becoming' denote a form of positivism, meaning a statement on the general condition of reality. This is distinct from the negative materialism put forward by Adorno, which is not related to a general condition of the world, but to a form of rationality that allows addressing the essence of objectivity through a reflective type of experience. Within his critique on the ontology of 'Being' Adorno is mainly concerned with a countering of the reduction of reality to a pure positivity, in which everything is already given and no change can occur. The ontology of 'Becoming' can also be understood as a critique on the ontology of 'Being' because it replaces the stable nature of 'Being' with the dynamic nature of 'Becoming'. However, a replacement of the ontology of 'Being' with the ontology of 'Becoming' does not mean that Adorno's critique on an ontology of positivity can be overcome. This is the case because process

[296] Adorno 1973: 143; Jarvis 1998: 188-189.
[297] Adorno 1973: 19, 181, 205.
[298] Ibid. 139.
[299] Ibid. 38, 40, 91.
[300] Ibid. 29, 33, 82-83.

metaphysics entails the danger of becoming reduced to the statement that 'everything operates as a process'.

The idea that everything operates as a process is correct to a certain extent as the non-identity between universal and particular within process metaphysics indeed indicates that the act of concrescence is a continuous process. However, the statement is also false because it neglects the fact that 'process' never operates in a general way, but only in a particular way. Adorno's critique on the ontology of 'Being' can then be extended to the ontology of 'Becoming', as a general concept of 'Process' is structurally equivalent to the general concept of 'Being'. Both 'Being' and 'Process' are empty concepts, which have not been developed out of the activity of identification through confrontation with objectivity. Moreover, both 'Being' and 'Process' neglect the non-identity between universal and particular, as they reduce matter to a general ontological condition, which makes everything the same. A reduction of process metaphysics to the general concept of 'Process' therefore neglects the fact that there is no general universal, but only different particularizations of the universal, which results in the constitution of different worlds. The non-identity between universal and particular indicates that there is no short cut to truth. The absolute condition of reality cannot be experienced at once or formulated within a single concept.[301] Therefore, even though the statement 'everything operates as a process' indeed outlines a truth-condition about the nature of ontology, it turns into untruth because it attempts to capture truth within a single general statement.

4.1.2 Aesthetic Experience as Negative Dialectics

An aesthetic experience can be understood as a form of negative dialectics because it is a reflective type of experience that operates through encounter with objectivity. An aesthetic experience according to Adorno is not initiated by the subject, but becomes activated through the encounter with an object. *This situation can be characterized as a negative form of materialism because an aesthetic experience requires the priority of the object without being a pre-reflective type of experience*.[302] It therefore affirms the condition of negative dialectics, as a reflective form of experience based on the priority of objectivity. Adorno's definition of aesthetic experience is in this sense different from Kant's conception of aesthetic judgement, which is bound to the free play of the cognitive faculties of a

[301] Adorno 1973: 41, 53, 110.
[302] Adorno 2013: 95, 97, 136, 177, 233.

subject. For Adorno on the other hand, an aesthetic experience addresses the truth content of matter itself and must therefore be more than a feeling of the subject.[303] However, this does not mean that beauty is an objective condition of matter itself. Aesthetic experience as negative dialectics means that it is through priority of the object that a reflective experience can take place, but also that it is through a reflective experience by the subject that the truth-condition of matter can become visible. Aesthetic experience as negative dialectics therefore is a type of experience, which is both subjective and that addresses the truth content of matter itself (objective).[304] Because aesthetic experience operates as negative dialectics, the relation between subject and object must be understood as asymmetrical. Whereas the object is prior within aesthetic experience, it nevertheless requires mediation (reflection) in order for its truth content to become visible. The object in aesthetic experience therefore both precedes and requires mediation, as it is only through mediation that the condition of beauty becomes established. The asymmetry of the relation between object and aesthetic experience therefore is solely concerned with the priority of the object to start the dialectical process and not with the idea that one pole would be superior to the other.[305]

Aesthetic experience allows Adorno to further develop his negative form of materialism, because it makes possible the occurrence of a reconciliation between subject and object that simultaneously acknowledges their non-identity.[306] Negative dialectics as a form of identity-thinking can never achieve a complete reconciliation because identity-thinking must continuously criticize itself. However, within aesthetic experience, we are dealing with a reflective type of experience that does justice to the essence of objectivity without addressing it through identity-thinking. An aesthetic experience is not concerned with the task of mastery over nature, but addresses how nature reveals itself to us. It therefore proposes a new type of relationship between subject and object, in which the subject becomes confronted with a condition of objectivity he had neglected or repressed. The experience of the beautiful is both distinct from a pre-reflective form of experience and from a form of reflection based on identity-thinking.[307] It therefore allows a countering of the elimination of particularity and rationality in complete identification and positive ontology. The judgement of the beautiful proposes a different form of negative dialectics in which the cognitive faculties are activated

[303] Adorno 2013: 97, 158; Jarvis 1998: 182.
[304] Adorno 2013: 136, 150, 227, 231, 360; Jarvis 1998: 96, 183.
[305] Adorno 2013: 150; Jarvis 1998: 183.
[306] Jarvis 1998: 230.
[307] Adorno 2013: 74-75, 92; Hammer 2015: 54, 58.

through the encounter with an object, but only operate through subjective feeling and not on the basis of concept development. *This type of negative dialectics offers the potential of a reconciliation between subject and object that maintains their non-identity. This is possible because an aesthetic experience addresses both objectivity in its singularity and the subject in his cognitive faculties (therefore affirming their distinction), but also constitutes an alignment between subjectivity and objectivity, as the condition of the beautiful requires both object and subject.*[308] It is for this reason that an aesthetic experience offers a new dialectic between universal and particular without the limitation of a concept.

4.1.3 Negative Metaphysics and Aesthetic Experience as Metaphysical Experience

Within my discussion above, I indicated how Adorno's negative form of materialism operates as a critique on an ontology of positivity. However, despite this critique on ontology, Adorno does not reject metaphysics, but develops a new form of metaphysics that is negative. After the Holocaust, a general metaphysics of positivity is according to Adorno no longer possible, as this would mean the justification of human suffering. It would mean that the world is indeed meaningful and that human action belongs to the larger purposiveness of nature.[309] It is an essential argument of Adorno's thinking that human experience can indeed be distorted through the dialectical dimension of rationality. The distortion of rationality becomes extended to a distortion of the lifeworld, which as a result can no longer be understood as purposefully meaningful. *Metaphysics for Adorno can only be addressed as a negation of actual existence; the acknowledgement that reality cannot be reduced to its current state of affairs and that difference must always be possible. This is the type of metaphysics that the victims of the Holocaust oblige us to pursue: that reality cannot be reduced to human suffering*.[310] A metaphysics of negativity therefore is not concerned with a general purposiveness of reality as a whole, but with a critique on the distortion of the subject-object relation, which defines the lifeworld. A negative metaphysics must in this sense be understood alongside Adorno's negative materialism.[311] A negative materialism allows the countering of ideological thinking through the reflective confrontation of thought with its other (objectivity). A negative materialism provides the basis for a negative metaphysics because it is through a critical confrontation with objectivity that a realization of

[308] Bowie 2013: 146.
[309] Adorno 1973: 361-362.
[310] Ibid. 380-381, 392, 396-397.
[311] Ibid. 365.

difference can emerge. A negative metaphysics therefore is manifested in concrete acts of encounter with materiality, in which a human being becomes confronted with the dimension of reality he had repressed, the non-identity between universal and particular.[312] A negative metaphysics is therefore indeed objective, but nevertheless is concerned with a condition beyond objectivity, a negation of actual existence.

Adorno agrees with Kant that a metaphysical experience requires a reflective type of experience that is aesthetic.[313] The aesthetic experience of the beautiful in nature offers a contemplation of objectivity in its singularity, which makes the non-identity between universal and particular visible that had been neglected within identity-thinking and pre-reflective form of encounter.[314] However, because an aesthetic experience for Adorno does not contemplate the world as purposive, but operates as negation of the world, it is also defined by the lack of form, and the incapacity of judgement because it generates a negation of the world, the opening up of difference without that this condition of difference can be actualized or achieve a concrete form.[315] It is for this reason that aesthetic experience as negation must both take up the condition of the beautiful (because it emerges through encounter with the particularity of matter) and the sublime (because it initiates a negation of the world).[316] Because the sublime is without form and alignment with nature, it points towards a purposiveness beyond nature, which Kant calls the subjective purposiveness of a human being, but for Adorno means the negation of the world.

This means that the connection between aesthetic experience and metaphysics is no longer concerned with the experience of purposiveness, but takes up a negative character in terms of the envisionment that the world could not be reduced to its current state of affairs. It is through the sublime that the experience of the beautiful can operate as critique on actual existence and the distortion of human rationality. Within my discussion of a rational type of religious experience, I also argued in favour of an entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime. This entanglement is necessary for the contemplation of the beautiful to connect the purposiveness of nature with the purposiveness of a human being, meaning the shaping of people's moral action. However, for Adorno, the metaphysical

[312] Adorno 1973: 392.
[313] Ibid. 393.
[314] Ibid. 404-405.
[315] Hammer 2015: 53.
[316] Ibid. 66.

dimension of aesthetic experience does not allow judging nature as purposive, but operates as critique on the false purposiveness of the lifeworld that defines modernity.

In principle, dialectics denotes that no metaphysical access is possible, as the relation between universal and particular is defined by non-identity. The idea of metaphysical knowledge can therefore be nothing but a pseudo-reconciliation between universal and particular. *However, it is not only the attempt for immediate metaphysical access that is ideological, but also its opposite, namely the impossibility of metaphysical knowledge.* The idea that no metaphysical knowledge would be possible is ideological because it is a statement that is intrinsically void, as it cannot arise out of a dialectical act of reflection. The paradox is the following: because the metaphysical cannot be thought, it lies beyond thought, which means that no conceptual statement about the metaphysical can be formulated, including the statement that 'no metaphysical knowledge is possible'.[317] This poses a challenge to negative dialectics, as negative dialectics means the critique on the incompleteness of identification in order to do justice to the non-identity between universal and particular. *When negative dialectics itself makes access to the non-identical impossible (because of the limitation of conceptual thought), the logical consequence is that dialectics must even turn against itself.*[318]

This condition is present within Adorno's conception of aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience offers a reconciliation of subject and object in which their non-identity is maintained. *An aesthetic experience is therefore both dialectical, because it is an experience in which the singularity of an object is addressed through a reflective encounter by a subject, and is more than dialectical because it allows accessing the non-identity between subject and object, which lies beyond identity-thinking.*[319] This type of metaphysical experience is distinct from precritical immediate metaphysical access, because it acknowledges its own conditionedness. This conditionedness is situated in the way a metaphysical experience must be based on a negative materialism.[320]

[317] Jarvis 1998: 210-211.
[318] Adorno 1973: 406.
[319] Adorno 2013: 173; Jarvis 1998: 207-216.
[320] Adorno 1973: 376, 407-408.

4.2 Critical Metaphysics: Rethinking Adorno's Aesthetics for Animism

4.2.1 Critical Metaphysics: The Entanglement of Dialectics (Negativity) with Process (Positivity)

A critical metaphysics means a reconciliation of the process metaphysics of Deleuze and Whitehead with Adorno's negative metaphysics. These two metaphysical conceptions are distinct from each other, but nevertheless are not opposed to one another. Because process metaphysics is based on a process of concrescence in which universal and particular attempt to strive for reconciliation without ever achieving a state of complete unification, it is not dissimilar to Adorno's remark that the relation between universal and particular is defined by non-identity. For this reason one could say that process metaphysics is concerned with the non-identity between universal and particular within the ontological act of self-concrescence whereas critical theory with the non-identity between universal and particular within the act of thinking or reflective experience. *The reason why process metaphysics and critical theory must become reconciled with one another is in order to judge the rational character of the modification of experience*. When experience becomes ontologically prior, metaphysics can only operate in a particular way and never in a general way. Because the constellation of the universal and particular within process metaphysics is defined by non-identity, the ontological primacy of experience allows the constitution of different worlds based on the different forms this constellation takes.

A critical metaphysics means the capacity to make a value judgement on the way metaphysics has been particularized and therefore the conception of a metaphysical experience that does not address the purposiveness of reality in general, but operates as a critical reflection on the way metaphysics has been modified. The possibility of coexistence of different worlds does not mean that all worlds are equal and do justice to the truth-condition of metaphysics. The non-identity between universal and particular means that their relationship can be distorted, which results into an ideological world. A rational world is a world in which universal and particular are reconciled yet maintain their non-identity. An ideological world is a world in which universal and particular become equated or detached from one another. Formulated differently, a rational world means the coherence between appearance and reality, whereas an ideological world the reduction of reality to appearance. The task of a critical metaphysics is to judge the distortion of the universal-particular relation. This requires both the tradition of process metaphysics (in order to understand the ontological primacy of experience) and

critical theory (in order to judge the distortion of experience). A critical metaphysics therefore puts forward a type of metaphysics that is both positive and negative, because it is based upon a critical reflection (negativity) on the way metaphysics has become particularized (positivity).

For Adorno, the critical and metaphysical dimension of aesthetic experience remains negative, as it can only allow the temporary envisionment of difference, without actually delivering it. A metaphysical experience that is negative emerges through confrontation with objectivity, but is not addressed to the metaphysical condition of the actual world, but only to its negation. However, if one acknowledges that it is the ontological primacy of experience that defines the nature of metaphysics, a different form of aesthetic experience is possible, which is more than negative. *A metaphysical experience that is both negative and positive means a critical reflection on the particularization of metaphysics that defines the actual condition of the world*. Such a type of experience avoids a becoming ideological of metaphysics because it does not contemplate the metaphysical condition of the world in terms of a general purposiveness, but in terms of the modification of the universal-particular constellation. *A metaphysical judgement therefore does not necessarily justify the world as meaningful, but can indeed be critical*. This type of metaphysical experience has to be aesthetic because the universal-particular constellation put forward by process metaphysics is defined by the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience. Following Whitehead, the judgement of the truth-condition of reality requires the aesthetic.

By rethinking critical theory as critical metaphysics, Adorno's conception of aesthetic experience ceases to be solely negative, as it becomes a critique on the modification of metaphysics itself. This is related to, but different from the judgement of truth in Kant and Whitehead because it allows an intervention within the modification of experience and the ability to counter it. The reason why Adorno's initial conception of critique could only envision social change, without actually delivering it, is because metaphysics was understood as solely negative. *Within a critical metaphysics, Adorno's conception of aesthetic experience becomes both positive and negative, as it becomes transformed to a critical judgement of the modification of metaphysics within everyday action*. When critique ceases to be solely negative and takes up a positive character, it is no longer a negation of the world, but a countering of the particularization of metaphysics. A critical metaphysics proposes an entanglement of the tradition of dialectics (negativity) with process metaphysics (positivity) because it is through a dialectical judgement that one can judge the truth-condition of the process of concrescence

and counter it. Dialectics becomes connected to process because it offers the potential to influence the modification of experience, which defines our world ontologically. This unification can only be undertaken on the basis of a dialectical judgement that is aesthetic, because within aesthetic experience dialectics is both maintained and goes beyond itself. Within an aesthetic experience, subject and object become reconciled with one another, while remaining their non-identity. One could make a reference in this case to Kant, whose conception of aesthetic judgement addresses a subject within his universal condition as a human being. An aesthetic judgement in this sense directs the process of self-concrescence that makes a person a human being and generates a rational society. It is for this reason that an aesthetic judgement has the power to shape the process of self-concrescence and the concrescence of the lifeworld.

4.2.2 Animism and Metaphysical Aesthetic Judgement within Communicative Action

The reason why the development of a critical metaphysics is relevant for the theorization of aesthetics for animism is because an animistic form of life is not necessarily opposed to critique, but can indeed require a critical type of metaphysical experience in order to counter the danger of being deceived by the other. The theory of perspectivism by the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro puts forward a conception of animism, in which animism is not related to the general purposiveness of nature as a whole, but to the ability to make a judgement of the appearance – reality relation within everyday action.[321] It therefore requires a type of aesthetic experience, which critiques and counters false constellations of the appearance-reality relation. Such a type of aesthetic experience, I argue, can be theorized when we transform Adorno's negative conception of aesthetic experience to a critical metaphysics. This means a type of aesthetic experience, which takes a critical perspective on the modification of the appearance-reality relation. The metaphysical dimension of aesthetic experience does then address the purposiveness of nature in a critical way and not in terms of the contemplation of a whole. We are dealing with a type of critique, which is not limited to the rational character of aesthetic experience, but has the capacity to counter false modifications of the appearance-reality constellation. Adornian critique becomes then transformed from a temporary negation of the world to a metaphysical judgement of the ontological modification of experience itself. Within the chapter on

[321] Viveiros de Castro 2015: 279.

Whitehead I already briefly introduced the perspectivism of Viveiros de Castro. This discussion was primarily concerned with how the shared ability to take up a perspective must not be understood as a critique on the modern West, but as a universal principle that allows understanding how different forms of world making across the West and non-West are possible. However, what I did not discuss is the fact that a perspectivist reality itself constitutes a very particular lifeworld, which consists of a form of communicative action across a constellation of multiple worlds.

The perspectivism of Viveiros de Castro is based on the ontological primacy of experience, which he defines through the term 'perspective'. A perspective does not denote a viewpoint onto reality, but the ability to take up a point of view itself. In accordance with Whitehead's concept of prehension, it is through encounter with the other, that experience itself becomes possible and therefore that one can adopt a point of view. It is through this capacity of adopting a point of view, that the 'I' can become constituted. It is not an 'I' that has a perspective onto the world, but the 'I' is an effect of the taking up of a perspective.[322] The ontological primacy of perspectives therefore indicates that the subject condition is not limited to human beings, but a general condition of every entity within reality. When the ability to take up a perspective defines the condition of ontology itself, every entity becomes a potential subject.[323] However, this does not mean that humans, animals and plants are equivalent for Viveiros de Castro. Whereas it is the ability to take up a perspective that unites, the actual taking up of a perspective is what differentiates because different beings have different bodies.[324]

Following Whitehead and Deleuze, the ontological primacy of experience means the ontological primacy of aesthetic experience. An aesthetic experience is both affective (physical) and cognitive. It is the cognitive pole that denotes the universal ability of every entity to take up a perspective. This cognitive pole only becomes activated through an affective type of encounter and for this reason the taking up of a perspective also operates as a differentiation of entities from one another. Because different beings have different bodies, the perspective that can be taken up is limited by the affective dimension of one's body. In accordance with process metaphysics, perspectivism puts forward a natural relativism, which means that there is not one reality, but only a coexistence of different worlds that become constituted through the universal ability to take up a perspective. This argument can be understood on a macroscale, meaning the plurality of worlds in terms of the variety of

[322] Viveiros de Castro 2015: 10, 225.
[323] Ibid. 244-245.
[324] Ibid. 238-239, 257.

human ways of life through time and across the globe, but also on a microscale, meaning the Amerindian societies of the South-American rainforest.[325]

Within the perspectivist reality of Amerindian societies, the plurality of different worlds has to be understood in terms of the encounter between human and non-human. For the Amerindians, animals and people see the same thing, but what is seen is different.[326] This is the case because they share the ability to take up a perspective, but differ in perspective because of the different nature of their bodies. Through encounter with the other, people and animals become confronted with a different world. A form of life that is defined through encounter with the other means the task to deal with a plurality of different worlds. According to a perspectivist reality, it is the ability to take up a perspective that unites, whereas the particular way the perspective is adopted differentiates. However, the ability to take up a perspective also indicates the potential of transformation between different entities. By taking up the perspective of an animal, a human being gains the potential to enter the animal world.[327] This denotes a type of reality in which an internal essence has the ability to take up different forms of appearance. Essence means the universal condition of subjecthood of every entity within perspectivist reality; it can be defined as the soul that entails the capacity to take up a perspective.[328] Appearance can be understood as a form of clothing, which can be taken up and removed through the taking up of a different perspective. When appearance can change through the taking up of a different perspective, Amerindian perspectivism constitutes a reality defined by illusionary appearances, which conceal an internal essence.[329]

Within a perspectivist reality one must therefore take a critical attitude towards appearances as they can be exchanged and become for this reason contradictory to internal essence.[330] However, this does not mean that appearance would be secondary to essence. If this would be the case, the taking up of a perspective would be a mere form of play-acting, a way of pretending to be different than one actually is. Still, because the taking up of a perspective is ontologically prior, it cannot be reduced to a form of pretention.[331] Within a perspectivist reality, the relation between essence and appearance is not just non-hierarchical, but also reversible.[332] This means that the relation between essence and

[325] Viveiros de Castro 2015: 255-256.
[326] Ibid. 251.
[327] Ibid. 277-278.
[328] Ibid. 276.
[329] Ibid. 275, 277, 281.
[330] Ibid. 279.
[331] Ibid. 280.
[332] Ibid. 284.

appearance is not defined by illusion versus reality. When a perspective is ontologically prior, essence (the soul) cannot exist without the taking up of a perspective (appearance).[333] We are dealing with a situation in which appearances can be exchanged (through the taking up of another perspective), but also define the ontological process of concrescence of the self. A human or animal is not given, but must define itself through the taking up of a perspective. However, by the ability to take up another perspective animal and human could also enter each other's world. *A perspectivist reality is therefore defined by a type of communicative action in which human and animal have the capacity to enter each other's world through the taking up of a different perspective*.[334]

The taking up of a perspective must be understood as an aesthetic experience, which is metaphysical, as one enters ontologically a different world. The metaphysical dimension of a perspectivist experience is not defined by a contemplation of a general purposiveness, but by the judgement of the purposiveness of a world that is different than one's own. It is only a shaman who can successfully travel across multiple worlds because it entails the danger of the loss of self.[335] When one's ontological condition is defined by the taking up of a perspective, the taking up of the perspective of a different world could mean the impossibility to return to the human world. How can one then define the exchange of perspectives as a metaphysical aesthetic judgement? According to Viveiros de Castro, this type of experience is distinct from dialectics as one is not concerned with a conceptual reflection on the nature of the other, but with the taking up of the perspective of the other.[336] The taking up of a different perspective is not defined by negativity, but positivity, as it is ontologically real. However, within a reality that is defined by the changeability of perspectives (and therefore one's body) one must be able to judge the constellation of essence and appearance.

Viveiros de Castro gives the example of a mythological story, in which a man becomes deceived by a Snake-woman, who turns out to be an actual snake.[337] In order to counter such a form of deception, it is not enough to take up the perspective of the other precisely because one could be deceived by appearance and therefore ontologically enter a different world then one intended.[338] This entails the danger of the loss of self, as the taking up of a perspective is ontologically real. The taking up of a perspective must therefore be understood as a type of judgement, which is metaphysical in

[333] Viveiros de Castro 2015: 281.
[334] Ibid. 275, 287.
[335] Ibid. 291.
[336] Ibid. 219.
[337] Ibid. 282-284.
[338] Ibid. 290.

order to define a type of experience, which is both concerned with the taking up of the perspective of a different world (positivity) and has the capacity to judge the type of world one is dealing with critically (negativity). In order to judge the woman as a snake in disguise, *one has to judge the appearance-essence constellation as ontological condition*. Such a type of experience must be a metaphysical judgement that is critical because it has to counter a false metaphysical condition in which essence and appearance do not cohere with one another. This kind of judgement, I argue, must indeed be dialectical, but not a form of dialectics that is conceptual, but aesthetic. Within my discussion of critical metaphysics, I argued how one can develop a type of metaphysical aesthetic judgement in which the tradition of dialectics (negativity) and process (positivity) are entangled. A dialectical judgement, which is aesthetic, both maintains dialectics and goes beyond it. It is this type of judgement, which is necessary in order to take up the perspective of a different ontological world and be simultaneously critical of it. We are therefore dealing with a critical judgement of the metaphysical condition of a different world, which in the example is the world of the Snake-woman.

The taking up of a perspective refers to both the act of self-concrescence and to the ability to enter a different world by taking up the perspective of the other.[339] Following my discussion of Whitehead and Kant, the process of concrescence of human beings cannot be uncoupled from the quest for truth. It is through the autonomy of aesthetic judgement that one can conceive how the taking up of a perspective (concrescence of self) is coupled to a judgement of truth. This means that the taking up of the perspective of a different world only entails the potential of loss of self when it ceases to operate as a judgement of truth. *The process of concrescence of human beings is therefore not restricted to the 'human world', but to the taking up of a perspective as an aesthetic judgement of truth.* The taking up of a different perspective can in this sense not be solely positive, but must also be negative in order to judge the constellation of essence and appearance. I propose, contrary to Viveiros de Castro, that this indeed requires a type of dialectics, however not a conceptual one, but an aesthetic one. It is through the rethinking of Adorno's negative aesthetics towards a metaphysical aesthetic judgement that is critical, that one can define a type of experience in which one takes up the perspective of another world critically. *This type of metaphysical experience allows defining a critical form of communicative action between different worlds, which is the condition that defines a perspectivist reality*. Adornian negativity

[339] Viveiros de Castro 2015: 261.

becomes then more than mere critique, as it takes up the ability to counter false forms of essence-appearance entanglement.

Conclusion

Within this chapter I have been concerned with a different aspect of the autonomy of the aesthetic, which is its potential to operate as critique on the lifeworld. This condition of the aesthetic is particularly manifest in (Western) art since the twentieth century, but also within animistic societies. This is particularly visible in the case of perspectivist societies whose lifeworld is defined by the danger of being deceived. For this reason, within a perspectivist reality, one must take a critical attitude towards the other, which requires a different relation between aesthetic experience and metaphysics. In order to define a critical type of aesthetic experience for perspectivism, it was necessary to align Adorno's argument on negativity with positivity. This means that aesthetic experience becomes a judgement of the way the universal – particular constellation, which defines the world's ontological state, has been distorted. This means that the metaphysical dimension of aesthetic experience changes from the experience of the general purposiveness of nature towards a judgement of the way metaphysics has been distorted. If one acknowledges that aesthetic experience is ontologically prior, an aesthetic judgement both operates as a process of self-concrescence and as a judgement of truth. Within a perspectivist lifeworld, one's human condition is not given, but needs to be determined through experience. The taking up of the perspective of a different world is therefore coupled to the possibility of destroying one's human condition when one fails to counter the danger of being deceived. It is only through a type of aesthetic experience, which operates as a judgement of truth, that the taking up of the perspective of a different world becomes uncoupled from the danger of loss of self and operates as a determination of one's humanity.

PART II. TOWARDS AN ONTOLOGY OF STONE AGE ART: FROM THE LOWER PALAEOLITHIC UNTIL THE NEOLITHIC

5. AN ONTOLOGY OF LOWER AND MIDDLE PALAEOLITHIC ART

Introduction

In order to develop the theoretical discussion of Part I for the phenomenon of Stone Age art and aesthetics, it is first necessary to get insight into the role of the aesthetic within human evolution itself. The fact that we have evidence of aesthetic behaviour as early as the Lower Palaeolithic is at least surprising because it indicates that during the Lower Palaeolithic, early hominids were not solely concerned with the mere struggle for survival and immediate needs, but already possessed the capacity for aesthetic sensitivity and the ability to recreate the condition of the aesthetic within material form. The archaeologists Paul Bahn and Michel Lorblanchet have made the remarkable statement in this case that the beauty of a Lower Palaeolithic stone bola could be described as 'disinterested', as the attention for the beauty of form did not have a utilitarian function:

'We can even put forward the hypothesis that these could be disinterested, perhaps even useless forms existing beyond immediate material needs. This was before the marriage of the beautiful and the useful, before the rise of the functional beauty of tools that, in prehistory, was marked by the hand axe.'[340]

It is the condition of disinterestedness, which defines the autonomy of the aesthetic itself, as outlined within Kant's *Critique of Judgement*. In the previous part I already demonstrated that the autonomy of the aesthetic is not limited to Western modernity, but could be reworked for an animistic context. However, the theoretical work of Part I has to be specified for each prehistoric period, as there is no such thing as a general 'prehistoric aesthetics'. Following the idea that aesthetics is ontologically prior, the different prehistoric periods and types of prehistoric art must be approached in terms of a modification of aesthetic experience. This means that the theoretical work I have undertaken requires confrontation with the archaeological record in order to understand how such a modification of aesthetic experience can be theorized. The case of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic poses the

[340] Lorblanchet and Bahn 2017: 102.

challenge of how to define aesthetic experience and art for early hominid species rather than *Homo sapiens*. By undertaking an analysis of the role of the aesthetic within human evolution, I will demonstrate that the autonomy of the aesthetic, as defined by Kant, can indeed be applied to the context of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic, and that Bahn and Lorblanchet are indeed correct to use the expression 'disinterestedness'.

Within the first part of this chapter *Art, Aesthetics and Human Evolution* I argue in favour of the priority of aesthetic judgement for human evolution as a whole. If one understands that an aesthetic judgement does not presuppose the cognitive faculties, but activates the cognitive faculties, then it must have played an integral role within the evolution of the human mind. This means that it is through aesthetic judgement that one can envision how the capacity for reflection and therefore the human cognitive faculties could have emerged. Kant's argument that an aesthetic judgement touches a person in his universal condition as a human being could then be reworked towards the idea that it is through aesthetic judgement that our human condition itself could have emerged and developed. If the autonomy of aesthetic judgement is indeed essential in order to understand the development and emergence of the human mind, it must have been present as early as the Lower Palaeolithic. This argument means that Kant's theory of the aesthetic could not only be reworked for animism, but is essential for human evolution itself. Moreover, I propose that the capacity of aesthetic judgement not only takes up a prior role within human evolution, but also in the making of art. I will demonstrate that as soon as early hominids started to recreate the condition of the beautiful within material form, we can speak about the condition of art. Within the second part of this chapter *Theorizing a Lower Palaeolithic Hand Axe and Stone Bola as a Form of Art* I develop the theorization of aesthetic judgement and art for the early human mind further through the case of a Lower Palaeolithic hand axe and stone bola.

5.1 Art, Aesthetics and Human Evolution

5.1.1 Theorizing the Role of Aesthetic Judgement and Art within Human Evolution

Within his *Critique of Judgement* Kant argues how the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful addresses a human being within his cognitive faculties as such. An aesthetic experience is for this reason an experience, which activates people's universal condition as human beings. Kant's theory of the

aesthetic sits uncomfortably within an argument on the relevance of the aesthetic for human evolution, however, because his philosophy considers the human cognitive faculties as ground for human existence. Kant's conception of the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful only applies when the human species has evolved to a state in which the cognitive faculties are associated with the condition of an 'autonomous' individual, that is the condition of Western Enlightenment. However, within the chapter on Kant, I discussed how the process metaphysics of Whitehead allows a rereading of Kant's theory of the aesthetic. Such a rereading allows an understanding of how an aesthetic experience does not presuppose a human subject, but activates the human process of self-concrescence. Whereas I elaborated this argument through the transcendence of the distinction between aesthetic and teleological judgement (therefore reworking the autonomy of aesthetic judgement for animism), it could also be used to understand how the condition of humanity itself could have developed. *If the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful indeed addresses people in their universal condition as human beings, but is not based upon the givenness of the human cognitive faculties, it must become rethought in terms of the way the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful allows the constitution of the condition of humanity itself.* When the autonomy of the aesthetic activates our humanity rather than being based onto our humanity, there is no reason why it could not occur in early (non-modern) hominid species.

It is through the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful that one can understand how the human ability for reflection onto the world (negativity) arises out of the condition of positivity (involvement within the world). The aesthetic judgement of the beautiful allows entangling the condition of positivity and negativity because it is a type of cognition, which operates through feeling. This means that it is both positive (because it is not based on the givenness of the cognitive faculties) and negative (because it initiates the capacity to reflect on the way nature appears as beautiful). Moreover, this entanglement of positivity and negativity must itself be understood as a process of self-concrescence because it initiates the potential of a human being to think and therefore allows the condition of humanity to become developed. If an aesthetic judgement would solely be reflective it would require the givenness of the cognitive faculties, meaning that our human condition is already complete within itself. The fact that this is not the case means that negation must be aligned with the process of concrescence and therefore with positivity. This dualism of negativity and positivity is not illogical because the ontological primacy of the aesthetic itself embodies a dualism (virtual and actual). One could say that the capacity of aesthetic judgement is a becoming explicit of this dualism rather than the transformation

of a 'positive' condition into a dualism between positivity and negativity. Because the positive condition of self-concrescence itself already encapsulates a dualism, the capacity of negation is a logical consequence. The capacity of reflection can therefore be understood to be already implicitly present within the ontological primacy of the aesthetic itself. This is also visible in the fact that the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful allows to acknowledge the transcendental dimension of empirical existence. In a similar way then as the process of self-concrescence, the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful connects the transcendental (virtual) with empirical reality (actual).

Whereas the aesthetic is a characteristic of reality as a whole, it is only a human being who has the capacity to reflect upon the fact that reality is indeed beautiful. This capacity of reflection initiates the question of truth, which is related to the ability to produce art.[341] This is the case because the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful poses the question of the coherence between appearance and reality. The relation between art and aesthetics is complicated and poses one of the paradoxes of the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics.[342] Art is indeed an aesthetic phenomenon, yet cannot be explained entirely through the aesthetic, as aesthetics is more encompassing then art. By equating art and aesthetics with one another one fails to understand both phenomena, as aesthetics cannot be reduced to the phenomenon of art and art cannot be reduced to the phenomenon of the aesthetic. Adorno provides a possible way to address this complex relation between art and aesthetics through his idea that art is a mimesis of natural beauty.[343] *Art as mimesis of natural beauty means that the constellation of universal and particular within the work of art operates as mimesis of the constellation of universal and particular within nature.* Art as recreation of the aesthetic dimension of nature means that within the making of art, a human being becomes confronted with the question of truth: the coherence between appearance and reality, universal and particular. Art is a form of abstraction of the various universal-particular constellations in nature and therefore poses the question of how universal and particular can cohere with one another.[344] Precisely because the universal for Whitehead only operates as potential, this question can be solved in a number of ways (which, however, does not mean that truth would be relativistic). *It is because the making of art poses the question of truth that it has the*

[341] Whitehead 1967: 250-251, 269.
[342] Osborne 2013: 38-44; Osborne 2018: 61-62.
[343] Adorno 2013: 97; Hammer 2015: 59.
[344] Adorno 2013: 99, 105-106; Whitehead 1967: 267.

capacity to transform multiple space-times into a shared space-time, which is necessary for people to feel at home. It is this capacity, which distinguishes art from the aesthetic.[345]

Even though the capacity for aesthetic judgement also poses the question of coherence between appearance and reality (and therefore the question of truth) it is distinct from art because it does not make this truth-condition explicit in a mimetic way. Art occurs when the judgement of the coherence between universal and particular, appearance and reality, becomes transformed into a recreation of this coherence within material form. It is this recreation that allows the multiple constellations of the universal and particular within nature to be transformed into one coherent relationship. The multiple constellations of universal and particular become then transformed into a universal-particular constellation in terms of society or civilization.[346] It is through the making of art that the universal as Idea becomes concretized within the everyday life of people and that a civilization can occur. *The paradoxical relationship between art and aesthetics is then situated in the way that art simultaneously takes over the condition of the aesthetic and operates as an interpretation or abstraction of the aesthetic because it must transform the multiplicity of constellations, which defines the ontological primacy of the aesthetic, into one world*. By approaching art as mimesis of the aesthetic, one can understand how art both relies upon and takes over the structure of the aesthetic, but at the same time transforms it because the recreation of the aesthetic within material form enters the level of abstraction or interpretation, which means the question of truth.[347] The occurrence of art is therefore a necessary consequence of the constellation of positivity and negativity that arises with the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful. *As soon as the capacity of reflection becomes aligned with the making of artefacts that are concerned with a recreation of the aesthetic dimension of nature, the condition of art emerges.*

5.1.2 Aesthetic Experience, Art and the Paradoxical Dimension of the Early Human Mind

Within the passages above, I argued in favour of the primacy of aesthetic experience and art within human evolution. Without the capacity of aesthetic judgement the human cognitive faculties could never have developed. From the moment that early hominids developed the capacity to recreate the

[345] Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 179-180, 185-187.
[346] Whitehead 1967: 264, 268, 270-271; Whitehead 1978: 89.
[347] Adorno 2013: 97, 99, 105.

condition of the aesthetic within material form we can speak about the phenomenon of art. However, what I did not address is the difference between the 'modern mind' (*Homo Sapiens*) and the 'early human mind' (*Homo habilis*, *heidelbergensis*, *ergaster* and *neanderthalensis*). The problem with the term 'modern mind' is that it is associated with the mind-body or subject-object dichotomy, which implies that the condition of subjectivity is already pregiven rather than the outcome of a process of concrescence through the environment. [348] Also, the 'modern mind' is coupled to a representational perspective, which transforms prehistoric art into the externalization of a preconceived mental idea.[349] Prehistoric art would therefore emerge from the moment a certain amount of cognitive complexity is attained, which is contradictory to my earlier argument that the making of art must have been essential for the development of the human mind. However, whereas the 'modern mind' as a concept is indeed problematic, it must not necessarily be rejected when it is theorized differently. Following the idea that experience is ontologically prior, I propose to theorize the modern mind as a modification of experience: *the inclusion of a conceptual proposition within experience.*

The entering of a proposition within experience does not mean that experience becomes reduced to 'representation', but that experience is no longer bound to the immediacy of encounter. A proposition for Whitehead complicates experience as it makes it possible to conceive something as other than it actually is. Because experience for Whitehead is ontologically real, a proposition is not an (illusionary) projection, but defines what is experienced and therefore the world of the subject in an ontological sense. This is distinct from representation, as representation implies a distinction between reality and one's interpretation of it. By defining the modern mind as a modification of experience it is no longer coupled to a progressive evolutionary perspective. The inclusion of a conceptual proposition within experience can lead towards a distortion of experience, which is visible in Adorno's argument that rationality has a dialectical dimension and therefore can distort itself. In order to critique a progressive perspective, one must not reject the modern mind, but theorize how the modern mind itself works against progression. By rejecting the modern mind completely, one fails to understand the qualitative differences that are indeed present between different hominid species and different lifeworlds.

In order to theorize the modern mind as a modification of experience (the inclusion of a conceptual proposition within aesthetic experience) I undertake a rereading of the model of the

[348] Malafouris 2013: 25, 45, 239.
[349] Ibid. 27-28, 30.

prehistoric mind put forward by the archaeologist Steven Mithen. This means that I will uncouple Mithen's differentiation of early human and modern mind from a progressive scheme based on the capacity for representation. The early human mind refers to the fact that the mind of early hominids must have worked differently then our own. Despite the large time span between the different hominid species, Mithen includes *Homo ergaster*, *heidelbergensis* and *neanderthalensis* all under the rubric of the early hominid mind.[350] His distinction between the early human mind and the modern mind is based on the way the early human mind is characterized by general intelligence, combined with the capacity for domain specific intelligence (social intelligence, natural history intelligence and technical intelligence).[351] This means that early hominids did possess the capacity for complex social behaviour, the capacity for sophisticated technical skill and had an intimate understanding of the complexity of their environment. What characterizes the peculiarity of the early human mind is the fact that these three different domains could not be integrated with one another. This means that social, technical and natural history intelligence could only be used separately, but not in combination.[352]

It is this lack of ability for combination, which explains according to Mithen the absence of complex forms of material culture with early hominid species.[353] In order for complex material culture to develop, the domain of technical intelligence (which is related to the making of tools and objects) has to be integrated with social intelligence (in order to take up a role within the construction of social identity) and natural history intelligence (in order to play a role within the marking of territory or the practice of hunting). Mithen argues that it is only when these three domains have been integrated that one can speak of art and religion.[354] He uses the term 'general intelligence' to describe the operation of the early human mind within activities in which integration between the three different domains was required. General intelligence means a rudimentary form of cognition, which lacked the sophistication that must have been associated with the individual domains of intelligence.[355] This explains, according to Mithen, the paradox that the archaeological record of very early prehistory is characterized by the lack of innovation and cultural diversity, while early hominids must have possessed the technical capacity to innovate and had the social intelligence to develop more complex social strategies.

[350] Mithen 1996: 129-130.
[351] Ibid. 154, 164.
[352] Ibid. 157.
[353] Ibid. 186.
[354] Ibid. 181-182, 198, 200.
[355] Ibid. 148, 157.

However, although Mithen's work allows distinguishing between the early human mind and modern mind, my reading of his work is critical. Mithen's model does not allow understanding the priority of aesthetic experience within human evolution. I argue that the shift from the early human mind to the modern mind must not be approached through the unification of separate domains of intelligence, but through the idea of a general intelligence (based on aesthetic experience) becoming more complex.[356] The difference between aesthetic experience within the early human mind and modern mind, I argue, is that in the former case we are dealing with aesthetic judgement whereas in the latter with propositional judgement. The shift from aesthetic to propositional judgement is situated within the way a proposition becomes incorporated within the judgement of the aesthetic. This unification of aesthetic judgement with a proposition I analysed through the integration of aesthetic and teleological judgement in the chapter on Kant.

In the case of the early human mind, I argue, we are dealing with an aesthetic judgement of pure beauty. This indeed means that aesthetic judgement within the early human mind did not operate in terms of a social system in which the domains of social, natural history and technical intelligence were integrated with one another. However, this does not necessarily mean that the early human mind was incapable to produce art. Within the first part of this chapter I argued how the autonomy of aesthetic judgement is essential in order to understand the development of the human cognitive faculties and therefore must have been present as early as the Lower Palaeolithic. From the moment early hominids developed the capacity to recreate the aesthetic dimension of nature into material form, the phenomenon of art emerges. For this reason, art is not necessarily limited to the modern mind, but also a capacity of the early human mind.[357]

However, my argument on the distinction between aesthetic judgement and propositional judgement needs to be nuanced. This is necessary because in order to speak about art, a proposition has to be involved. Without a proposition, art cannot operate in terms of the depiction of truth. The incorporation of a proposition is necessary because it is through a proposition that art takes up the simultaneous movement from the universal to the particular and from the particular to the universal, which is necessary in order for art to operate as a form of religious art and therefore as a form of world making. In order to conceive of a type of religious art based on pure beauty, the type of proposition

[356] The philosopher Gregory Currie has put forward a related critique on Mithen's model of cognitive evolution. Following Currie, cognitive evolution is not based on the shift from a divided to fluid mind, but on the increase in power of the human general-purpose capacity for imagination (Currie 2004: 231-233).
[357] See also: Lorblanchet and Bahn 2017: 21, 266; Pfeiffer 1982: 121.

involved needs to be non-conceptual. If we look at the case of a Lower Palaeolithic hand axe, one can envision that a proposition is involved in terms of the way the maker needed to have a preconceived awareness of the symmetry of form he wanted to achieve.[358] The fact that this concern with the symmetry of form had been reproduced on a continuous basis, across various hominid species for about one million years, allows conceiving the symmetry of form as a proposition, which must have been incorporated within the production, experience and use of the hand axe.[359]

This type of proposition is non-conceptual; one could define it as a feeling for the symmetry of form, which could be reformulated as a feeling of the beautiful. *This means that the condition of beauty itself could be understood as a proposition, when it becomes aligned with a particular type of form that becomes reproduced on a consistent basis*. Instead of the distinction between aesthetic judgement and propositional judgement one should distinguish between a type of aesthetic judgement, which incorporates a non-conceptual proposition and a type of aesthetic judgement, which incorporates a conceptual proposition. This argument follows Mithen's work to a certain extent, as the incorporation of a conceptual proposition within aesthetic judgement can be aligned with the idea of cognitive fluidity (the integration of social, technical and natural history intelligence). However, *the acknowledgement that we are dealing in both the case of the early human mind and the modern mind with the autonomy of aesthetic judgement counters Mithen's argument that the early human mind would be defined by the incapacity for art and religion*. I will therefore both follow and critique Mithen's work, as I argue in favour of his distinction between the early human and modern mind, but argue against his idea that art and religion would be unique to the modern mind.

Art as Pure Beauty allows rethinking the Inferiority of the Early Human Mind to the Modern Mind

If we follow the perspective that the difference between the early human and modern mind is not based on the distinction between a divided mind and fluid mind, but on the different nature of aesthetic judgement, there is no reason why early humans would be incapable of producing art. This is confirmed by recent discoveries of Neanderthal art forms in terms of cave paintings and stone arrangements.[360] According to Mithen's theory this would be impossible, as the capacity to make art

[358] Pettitt and White 2012: 151.
[359] Currie 2011: 10, 24; Lorblanchet and Bahn 2017: 102
[360] Hoffmann et al. 2018; Lorblanchet and Bahn 2017: 223.

would require the integration of the domains of technical, social and natural history intelligence.[361] Still, when a hominid possesses the capacity for aesthetic judgement and when an aesthetic judgement takes up a non-conceptual proposition, the capacity to recreate the condition of beauty in material form emerges. Such a recreation could be called art because it is through mimesis of the condition of beauty that hominids are capable to contemplate the truth-condition of reality. A recreation of the condition of beauty in material form means that the ability for contemplation becomes transformed into the ability for interpretation. As soon as aesthetic experience enters the level of interpretation, the phenomenon of art emerges. The art of early humans was therefore an art of pure beauty, an art solely based upon the recreation of the condition of the beautiful that one experiences in nature.[362]

Art as pure beauty and art as social system (the integration of the social, natural and technological) are structurally different from one another and in this sense Mithen is right to argue for a distinction between early human and modern mind, but this does not mean that art would be absent within early hominid species. Bahn and Lorblanchet have made an analogy in this case with modernist art:

'Art, at first free, was then invested with an external function. Born accidentally, through play and pleasure, it attained its importance and its seriousness by making use of beliefs; the message it carried became its strength. By losing its religious content, modern art thus seems to be returning to its origins.'[363]

The case of modernist art is interesting because it indicates how the condition of art does not necessarily need to be aligned with the communication of complex symbolic knowledge.[364] However, this does not mean that the modern condition of art would lack a social dimension. The chapter on Adorno argued that the modern condition of art indeed plays a social role in terms of critique on the modern condition of the lifeworld. Modernist art therefore gives insight into how art and the aesthetic can indeed play a role within world making without operating as social system. Also, even though modernist art is not a 'religious' form of art, it can nevertheless be related to religion because it opens up towards the transcendental, countering a radical empiricism.[365]

[361] Mithen 1996: 176-178.
[362] Currie 2011: 9, 20.
[363] Lorblanchet and Bahn 2017: 21.
[364] See also Currie 2011: 19.
[365] See also Lipsey 1988.

The analogy between modernist art and art within the context of early prehistory also gives insight into the condition of our humanity itself. This is the case because modernist art emerged in order to counter the distortion of human rationality that arises with modernity.[366] Within the first part of this chapter I argued how the process of concrescence that gives rise to our humanity cannot be uncoupled from our capacity for reflection (and therefore rationality), as it is within a reflective type of experience (aesthetic judgement) that we define ourselves as human and therefore shape the process of self-concrescence. When the condition of rationality becomes distorted, it means that the human process of self-concrescence becomes distorted as well. Modernist art operated as a way to counter this form of distortion, by activating the human processes of self-concrescence within its true condition. It is for this reason that Adorno argues that aesthetic experience has the potential for critique as it guides the human process of self-concrescence and therefore works against distortion. *If one acknowledges the fact that a reflective type of aesthetic experience (that is non-conceptual) has guided the process of human self-concrescence throughout early prehistory, one could say that modernist art operates as a return to the very origin of aesthetic judgement and the basis of our very humanity.* A straightforward parallel is of course problematic, as this would neglect the difference between the early human mind and modern mind. However, the reason why such a parallel nevertheless makes sense is because of the possibility of the modern mind to destroy our human condition.

Mithen makes the argument that cognitive fluidity allows the occurrence of racism and manipulation of the natural environment.[367] Racism means that another human being is treated as an object and not as a human being whereas the manipulation of the environment means that the environment becomes approached within a technological way to serve a certain end. We are dealing respectively with the integration of social and technological intelligence (racism) and natural history and technological intelligence (manipulation environment). This can be extended to the way cognitive fluidity could not only lead to the distortion of the treatment of other human beings and the environment, but also to the distortion of rationality itself.[368] Such a distortion cannot occur within the early human mind because of the lack of a conceptual proposition within aesthetic experience, which is responsible for the hybridization of the realms of the social, natural environment and technical skill. *One could say for this reason that by returning to a condition of art that lacks a conceptual*

[366] Hammer 2015: 18-44.
[367] Mithen 1996: 224-225.
[368] See for example: Horkheimer and Adorno 2002.

proposition, modernist artists (unconsciously) relate back to a condition of the human mind, in which distortion was impossible. In order to counter the distortions that can occur through cognitive fluidity, one could return to a type of aesthetic judgement that lacks a conceptual proposition, which is what occurs within Modernism. For this reason, I propose that the early human and modern mind are indeed distinct from one another, but not completely opposed to one another. It also gives insight into the way the condition of the early human mind is not only essential for the development, but also for the maintenance of our very humanity. The fact that Modernism returns to the condition of aesthetic judgement associated with the early human mind indicates that the condition of the early human mind has the potential to correct the modern mind and in this sense is not inferior to it. Moreover, the early human mind gives insight into the process of human self-concrescence, which the modern mind can distort.

The Paradoxical Dimension of World Making associated with the Early Human Mind

Lower and Middle Palaeolithic hominids lived in small and most likely isolated groups who did not need to communicate with one another. We are looking at a lifeworld, which consisted mainly of encounter with familiar faces and lacked the need of a systematic form of communication in terms of symbolic material culture that we see in the Upper Palaeolithic.[369] *I argue that we are dealing with a paradoxical form of world making in which Earth takes up the condition of Territory and Territory takes up the condition of Earth*.[370] Territory taking up the condition of Earth is the type of world making associated with nomadic communities. It means that the world is not experienced as one coherent whole, but in terms of encounter with the other. This could take the form of encounter with place (which is related to movement) or encounter with the other members of the band (which is related to group dynamics). Earth taking up the condition of Territory means a type of world making based on harmony in which the constellation of multiple space-times (Earth) becomes transformed into a unified space-time. In the former case (Territory taking up the condition of Earth) the world is not understood as a coherent whole, but as a constellation of actors who encounter one another. The reason why I propose that these two types of world making must have operated in configuration with one another

[369] Pettitt and White 2012: 172.
[370] I discussed the concepts 'Territory' and 'Earth' in chapter 1, section 1.2.3.

during the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic has to do with the peculiarity of aesthetic judgement associated with the early human mind.

The type of aesthetic judgement associated with the early human mind is a type of aesthetic judgement, which incorporates a non-conceptual proposition. I argued how this could be interpreted as a form of religious art based on pure beauty. It is this idea of a type of religious art based on pure beauty, which gives rise to a paradoxical form of world making. *The paradox is situated within the fact that an aesthetic judgement of pure beauty allows a shared world vision to occur, which relates to the type of world making in which Earth takes up the condition of Territory. However, because aesthetic judgement lacks the incorporation of a conceptual proposition, it cannot completely deliver a shared world vision, as this requires the integration of the domains of social, natural history and technological intelligence. It is for this reason that world making in the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic cannot transcend the condition of world making based on encounter (in which Territory takes up the condition of Earth), yet at the same time can also not be limited to it, as an aesthetic judgement of pure beauty gives rise to a shared experience.* Therefore, the paradoxical condition of the early human mind is coupled to a paradoxical form of world making in which two opposed conditions must have existed in configuration.

5.2 Theorizing a Lower Palaeolithic Hand Axe and Stone Bola as a Form of Art

5.2.1 Theorizing a Lower Palaeolithic Hand Axe as a Form of Art

The hand axe (emerges at ca. 1.4 million years ago) shows some significant differences with the earlier Oldowan tradition of *Homo habilis* around 2 million years ago. In the case of the Oldowan tradition, we are primarily dealing with the production of sharp flakes from a nodule, which could be used for a variety of tasks like the processing of animal carcasses or for the production of another tool (like the sharpening of a stick).[371] The production of the hand axe on the other hand shows a deliberate concern with the symmetry of form. This means that the maker of the hand axe had a particular form in mind he wanted to create out of flint (which one could call a non-conceptual proposition) that was not the case with the Oldowan tradition. In order to produce a hand axe, one must remove in an alternate way flakes

[371] Mithen 1996: 106, 109.

from both sides of the stone, which means an increased amount of planning in order for the working process to culminate into the preconceived symmetrical form.[372] This concern with a preconceived symmetrical form is important because it indicates that the hand axe is not only a technical object, but also an object with cultural value.[373] This is related to my argument that the symmetry of form could be understood as a non-conceptual type of proposition. The fact that the same type of form was maintained across generations (for a period as extensive as one million years) means that the hand axe could be understood as a very early form of cultural tradition.

The Hand Axe as an Art of Pure Beauty

By approaching the relationship between aesthetics and art in terms of mimesis, one could make the argument that a Lower Palaeolithic hand axe can indeed be characterized as a work of art. This is the case because the production of a hand axe shows the ability not only to reflect upon the condition of beauty in nature, but also to reproduce this condition within material form. This means that art is not an invention of the modern West or even of *Homo sapiens*, but already present within early hominids who lived during the Lower Palaeolithic.[374] The philosopher Gregory Currie has argued against an alignment between art and meaning/symbolism, proposing instead that the earliest art produced by mankind was an *art of pure beauty*.[375] This proposal is important to conceive of the relation between art and aesthetics within human evolution, as it clearly indicates how art is a result of a mimetic relationship to the aesthetic dimension of nature. The earliest art is therefore solely aesthetic (beautiful), but at the same time cannot be limited to the condition of the aesthetic, as then it would cease to be art.

In order for art to be more than aesthetic (beautiful) while simultaneously being characterized through the condition of the beautiful, one must envision how the earliest art can be related to the act of interpretation/truth. This seems almost impossible as we are dealing with non-modern hominid species who had a very limited ability for speech. Still we can approach the problem through the idea that the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful already creates awareness of the purposive dimension of nature, which could be reformulated as the awareness that reality cannot be reduced to mere empirical

[372] Mithen 1996: 132-133.
[373] Pettitt and White 2012: 146.
[374] Lorblanchet and Bahn 2017: 37, 102, 266; Pfeiffer 1982: 120, 250.
[375] Currie 2011: 9.

existence. An art of pure beauty must be aligned with an early form of religion based on pure beauty. The type of proposition involved is non-conceptual and in this sense distinct from religion as symbolic system. It is a form of religion in which the condition of truth could not have been communicated or aligned with a narrative or symbolic meaning, but solely operated through feeling.

Whereas I discussed the aesthetic experience of a Lower Palaeolithic hand axe until now primarily in terms of the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful, the aesthetic judgement of the sublime must equally be taken into consideration. Within the chapter on Kant I argued that both must become entangled with one another, as it is the sublime, which characterizes the agency of art, its potential to shape human practical action, whereas it is the beautiful that poses the question of truth. If we approach a Lower Palaeolithic hand axe as a rudimentary form of religion based on pure beauty, the beautiful and the sublime have to be integrated with one another. We have both evidence of highly elaborate hand axes concerned with the beauty and symmetry of form and more mundane axes, which do show a concern with symmetry, but in a less elaborate way.[376] This simultaneous characteristic of reflection (beauty of form) and incorporation within practical action relates to my reworking of Kantian aesthetics towards a form of world making in which reflection and practice must be entangled with one another. Without the element of practice, the disinterested beauty of a stone axe would be meaningless, as it would fail to be integrated within one's actual lifeworld. However, in return, practice requires a form of reflection, as it is through a reflective type of



Fig. 3. Lower Palaeolithic Hand Axe, 1.2 million years old, Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania

[376] Pettitt and White 2012: 163, 165, 191; Mithen 1996: 137; Pfeiffer 1982: 83.

aesthetic experience that the human capacity for cognition and world making developed.

How should one then define the aesthetic experience of a Lower Palaeolithic hand axe? Because of the entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime, the aesthetic experience of a Lower Palaeolithic hand axe is structurally equivalent to a teleological aesthetic judgement as proposed within the chapter on Kant. It means that the term 'aesthetic judgement of pure beauty' is misleading, as the entanglement of the beautiful and sublime indicates that aesthetic judgement must simultaneously have operated as a teleological type of judgement. This can be understood through the fact that an aesthetic judgement within earliest prehistory cannot presuppose the cognitive faculties, but must activate the cognitive faculties in order for our human condition to have developed. This means that an aesthetic judgement does not start from a subject, but through encounter, and therefore from the outside. An aesthetic judgement must then be both objective (because it does not start from the subject, but through encounter with nature) and subjective (because the aesthetic only emerges through experience).

The condition of beauty is therefore not solely situated within the experience of a subject (as is the case for Kant), but also addresses the order of nature. When the aesthetic experience of a hand axe was both subjective and objective and included a (non-conceptual) proposition, it must have been structurally equivalent to a teleological aesthetic judgement in the Kantian sense. A type of religion based on pure beauty means that early hominids must have had an awareness of the actual order of nature through the recreation of the aesthetic dimension of nature within material form. This recreation has to take up the form of both reflection and practice in order to qualify as a form of religion, which is what we see with the hand axe. The capacity of aesthetic experience of early hominids can in this sense be characterized as both a simple form of aesthetic experience (because it lacks a conceptual proposition) and as one of the most complex types of aesthetic experience, as it is structurally similar to a teleological aesthetic judgement in the Kantian sense.

Why a Non-Representational Approach to Hand Axes is Incorrect

A representational approach to hand axes means that the symmetrical form of the hand axe is the result of a preconceived mental template that has become externalized into material form.[377] Such an approach neglects that the working with the material, the actual shaping of a stone into a hand axe,

[377] Malafouris 2013: 162, 177.

must have been integral to the meaning and role of the hand axe within Palaeolithic groups.[378] What defines a non-representational approach is that it considers the making of a hand axe as being productive of the mind of Palaeolithic people, instead of being the product of a preconceived mental idea. A non-representational approach therefore acknowledges that artefacts have the capacity to influence the perception and cognitive capacities of people and therefore play an integral role within the evolution of the human mind.[379] Within my approach to Lower Palaeolithic hand axes, I follow the non-representational approach in the sense that the hand axe must have taken up an integral role within the development of the cognitive faculties. Also, I acknowledge that the process of making must have been important and that a hand axe therefore cannot be reduced to the imposition of form. However, I disagree with the non-representational approach on two levels: (1) that empirical interaction does justice to the material properties of artefacts and can play a role in the development of human cognition; (2) that the shaping of a hand axe was not based on a preconceived idea of symmetry.

The first objection relates to my discussion of Adorno, in which I argued how the replacement of representation with immediate empirical encounter operates as a distortion of the condition of both matter and subjectivity. Matter cannot be reduced to empiricism because the idea of empiricism itself is based upon an illusion. This is visible in Deleuze's argument that empiricism is the result of a virtual-actual relation and therefore has a transcendental dimension. It is only by accessing this transcendental dimension that matter becomes acknowledged in its singularity and therefore as matter. Both Deleuze and Adorno argue that the singularity of matter can only be accessed through the autonomy of aesthetic experience. *Empirical engagement as such (which one could also call mimetic behaviour) is ideological for Adorno, as it refers to a sole positivistic relationship with matter.*[380] *This is not a justification of matter, but an elimination of matter, as one does not address matter in its singularity, but simply in terms of its empirical form.* Therefore, even at the stage of the Lower Palaeolithic, the engagement with matter must have transcended the realm of empirical givenness and opened up towards the transcendental.

[378] Malafouris 2013: 163.
[379] Ibid. 164, 169.
[380] Mimetic behaviour can be defined as the imiation of behaviour through the taking up of a set of affects. In the case of the hand axe, this means the taking up of the affective dimension of the skilled working of stone. Mimesis provides a way to communicate a set of skills when speech was not yet fully developed. It is for this reason why mimesis is considered to have played an important role within the development of the human mind (See for example Bellah 2011: 124-125 and Donald 2001). However, I argue against mimetic behaviour because it is based on the imitation of a pre-existing relation to matter, rather than a relation, which forces a subject to think. It is the latter type of relation that is necessary in order for matter to be accessed in its singularity and the human cognitive capacities to become activated.

It is only the autonomy of aesthetic experience that allows envisioning how the engagement with matter is productive of thought (and therefore of the human cognitive faculties) without cognitive capacity being presupposed. The idea that mimetic activity would have preceded the capacity for reflection is false because it would work against the development of the cognitive faculties. The idea of the primacy of practice is for this reason false, as it would reduce one's engagement with the world to mere empirical interaction. Engagement in terms of empirical interaction cannot activate the emergence of the human cognitive faculties because it does not open up the empirical world towards the transcendental, which is necessary in order for thinking to occur. It is only the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful, which allows to integrate the condition of positivity with negativity and therefore to initiate the capacity to think and the human cognitive faculties to develop.

However, this critique on empirical interaction does not mean that I reject the process character of hand axe making. A reflective type of aesthetic experience must become aligned with practice in order for human world making to occur. *The primacy of practice over reflective thinking must therefore become rethought in terms of the entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime, the entanglement of reflection and practice, which is the condition that defines human world making*. This entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime also allows understanding why a maker must indeed have a preconceived awareness of the symmetry he wanted to achieve. A representational approach is incorrect because it conceives of symmetry as a mental idea that is already complete within itself. Instead, an idea must be understood as a virtual potential that requires actualization in order to find its form. Such a perspective allows understanding why the actual making of the hand axe is more than simply the externalization of an idea, but also why a preconceived idea nevertheless guides the process of making.[381] This could be understood through my entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime as a movement from the universal to the particular and from the particular to the universal. This allows conceiving how symmetry (universal) and the practice of making (particular) are entangled without being either representational or non-representational.

[381] Also John Dewey argues that the making of art must be understood as the particularization of a vague idea into material form (Dewey 2005: 78). This is both distinct from the externalization of an idea that is already complete in itself and from the absence of a preconceived idea.

Rethinking the Hypothesis of Sexual Selection

The hypothesis of sexual selection has been proposed by Steven Mithen and Marek Kohn.[382] It is based on the idea that hand axe production cannot be explained entirely on the basis of functional terms, for so much time and energy was manifested in the manufacture of a hand axe when simple stone flakes would in most cases be sufficient for the task. Approaching hand axe production through the idea of sexual selection means that the performance of the ability to produce a highly symmetrical hand axe was a way to express a male's intelligence, health, knowledge of raw materials and technical capability.[383] This kind of expression could be seen as an indication of a male's reproductive fitness in a similar way as a peacock's tail plays a role in the attraction of femaleness (being a sign of strength and health). From this perspective, the making of a hand axe is a form of social display, which needed to be performed on a regular basis in order to affirm the male's fitness.[384]

The first problem with this hypothesis is that the idea of sexual selection fails to take into account that hand axes must have been multifunctional tools, which were used in a variety of tasks and therefore cannot be limited to the expression of fitness.[385] A second problem is the reduction of aesthetic sensitivity within early hominids to Darwinian sexual selection, as it puts people on a pair with animals, which is visible in the analogy between the hand axe and peacock tail. As I argued earlier, without the aesthetic taking up a reflective dimension (becoming a form of judgement) it could not have played a role within the development of the human cognitive faculties. Also, the perspective of fitness has the danger of reducing aesthetics to personal prestige, which would in fact be contradictory to the condition of the aesthetic itself. Aesthetics becoming personal prestige ceases to be aesthetic as it works against both social cohesion and the cognitive faculties. Therefore, in order to understand the important role of the hand axe in human evolution (it was the longest cultural tradition of human kind, being reproduced over a period of one million years, outlived several human species and spread from Africa to western Asia and parts of Europe) it cannot be reduced to personal prestige or sexual selection.

If the capacity to experience beauty would be biologically determined, than it would mean that the universal dimension of aesthetic experience would be situated within our genotype. The human

[382] Mithen and Kohn 1999.
[383] Currie 2011: 21-23; Pettitt and White 2012: 191-192.
[384] Currie 2011: 25-27.
[385] Pettitt and White 2012: 192.

capacity for aesthetic experience would from this perspective be analogous to Darwinian sexual selection. What we find beautiful is related to the way it assists us in the reproduction of ourselves as a species. Such a perspective is, however, contradictory to Kant's argument that the universal principle of the aesthetic has to be understood as 'groundless ground', which he relates to the free play of the cognitive faculties. If what counts as beautiful would be biologically determined, it would be opposed to the autonomy of aesthetic judgement because it would in fact not be a judgement, but a mere instinct.[386] This would put the unique human capacity for aesthetic judgement on a pair with the lower forms of aesthetic experience that we share with animals and for this reason would fail to address how the autonomy of the aesthetic activates the human cognitive faculties.

If one acknowledges, however, that Kant's theory of the aesthetic can be rethought in terms of the way it initiates our human condition (rather than presupposing it) than there is not necessarily a distinction between Kantian aesthetic autonomy and aesthetics in terms of biological evolution. *If our human condition is not given, but needs to be determined, than the human species must feel (unconsciously) attracted to a type of experience that affirms our condition as a human species.* Because the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful activates and shapes the human process of self-concrescence, we feel attracted to it, as it is what affirms ourselves in our very condition of being human. *The reason why we are not dealing with mere instinct is because the capacity for aesthetic experience only emerges subjectively, when a human being reflects on the way nature appears as purposive*. The capacity for aesthetic experience can therefore not be presupposed, but must be undertaken every time anew, which means that it is based on a type of ground that is groundless. The capacity of aesthetic judgement is related to biological evolution because we need to feel attracted to the experience of beauty in order to reproduce ourselves as a species. However, it is distinct from biological evolution because the aesthetic experience of beauty only manifests itself through reflection and is for this reason not pregiven. The relation between sexual selection and aesthetic judgement is in this sense paradoxical, as they are both opposed to one another and entangled with one another.

[386] Schellekens 2011: 225-227.

5.2.2 Art before the Hand Axe? Distinguishing between the 'Disinterestedness' of a Stone Bola and the Hand Axe

Whereas I argued above how a hand axe can be theorized as one of the earliest forms of art and religion (based on pure beauty) there is in fact an older type of artefact, which gives insight into an even earlier form of art. This artefact is the stone ball, which dates to the period of the Oldowan tradition (ca. two million years ago) and precedes the hand axe by several hundred millennia.[387] Stone balls were produced on a continuous basis throughout the Lower Palaeolithic, but were initially produced by *Homo habilis*. Throughout this chapter I have not given any attention to *Homo habilis*, for the artefacts produced by this hominid species (Oldowan stone flakes) are almost entirely concerned with practical need and do not show evidence of aesthetic sensitivity for the final produced form in the way the hand axe does. However, *Homo habilis* did possess the capacity for aesthetic sensitivity and this is visible in the production of polyhedron stone balls and the aesthetic attention for colour and strange looking stones.[388] The production of stone balls became more refined by *Homo erectus*, which is visible in the achievement of an almost perfect sphere. We speak in this case of a stone bola.[389]

What is significant about a stone bola is that it took far more work to be produced than a hand axe. Whereas a symmetrical hand axe could be produced in several hours, Bahn and Lorblanchet argue that the production of a stone bola could have taken days if not weeks.[390] A stone nodule had to be transformed into an almost perfect spheroid shape; which requires the creation of symmetry and balance throughout the artefact without any division between front, back, top or bottom. The complexity of manufacture accompanied by the huge time effort indicates that it was not very likely that stone bolas were produced to serve immediate survival needs in terms of a projectile for hunting. This idea is confirmed by the fact that no use-wear has been detected on stone bolas, which has lead to the remarkable statement by Bahn and Lorblancet that stone bolas could be described as 'disinterested'.[391] If they did not serve a practical function and if early hominids did undertake an incredible amount of effort to produce them, one cannot come to any other conclusion than that they

[387] Lorblanchet and Bahn 2017: 100.
[388] Ibid. 58.
[389] Ibid. 96-97.
[390] Ibid. 100-101.
[391] Ibid. 101.

were produced to have an aesthetic effect; a sole concern with the recreation of the condition of the beautiful.

Whereas I argued throughout this chapter that Kant's concept of disinterestedness can indeed be applied to a hand axe, the case of a stone bola involves a different type of disinterestedness. Although early hominids produced highly elaborate hand axes that had no practical use value, they cannot be understood apart from the production of hand axes that did serve a practical function. I explained this through the entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime, which allows hand axe production to be understood as an early form of religious art. However, in the case of stone bolas, a practical dimension is lacking, which means that we need a different type of aesthetic judgement. Although the production of tools within the Oldowan tradition did occasionally show a concern with the appearance of stone, it lacked the deliberate recreation of beauty of form of the hand axe, as it was limited to production of stone flakes.[392] *This means that it is not the integration of the technical and aesthetic, which marks the earliest origin of art, but their detachment.*[393] *This is significant because it would mean that a stone bola would be a pure form of 'disinterested' art that is solely defined by the recreation of the condition of the beautiful.* Whereas my reworking of the autonomy of aesthetic judgement for religion within the chapter on Kant can indeed be extended to hand axes (as we are dealing with both reflection and practice) this becomes more difficult in the case of stone bolas.

The production and experience of a stone bola must have been nothing more than the very first step towards the awareness of the transcendental within nature, which becomes activated through the experience of the beautiful. Whereas the hand axe could then be understood as a type of religious art based on pure beauty, the stone bola refers to a type of beauty that must have preceded religion, as it lacks the entanglement of reflection and practice. This leaves the question of the relation between the beautiful and the sublime. If the experience of a stone bola can be approached as a 'disinterested' experience of the condition of beauty, what does this mean for the condition of the sublime? As argued within the chapter on Kant, the condition of the aesthetic requires both the beautiful and the sublime, for otherwise it would transcend into mere sensation or shapelessness. It is the beautiful, which defines the appearance of form, whereas it is the sublime, which defines the agency of art and therefore the role of the aesthetic within human self-concrescence and human evolution. If the sublime would be absent, the stone bola could not have played a role within the development of the human cognitive faculties.

[392] Mithen 1996: 109.
[393] Pfeiffer 1982: 120, 195.

I will now approach this problem by making an analogy with Modernist art. In the case of Modernism, the condition of the beautiful and the sublime become united within the work of art in the sense that Modernist art takes up the condition of 'shapelessness' whithout losing the the purposiveness of form.[394] The monochrome paintings of the artist Yves Klein are a good example because they are



Fig. 4. Lower Palaeolithic Stone Ball, Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania

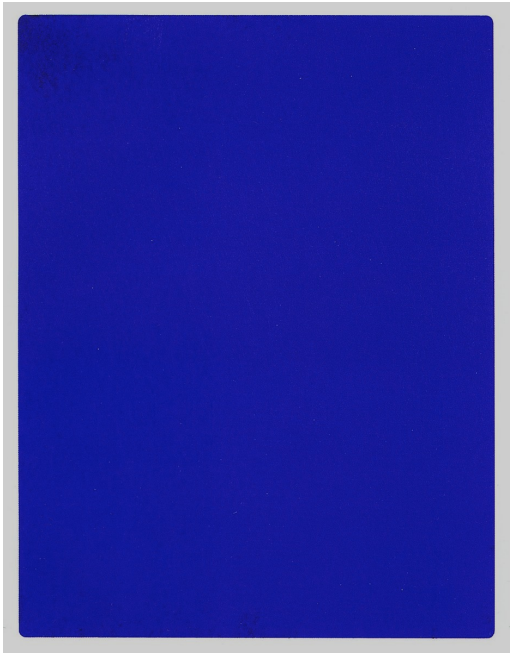


Fig. 5. Yves Klein, *Blue Monochrome* (1962)

characterized by the presence of a single colour. Because the painting is nothing but the presentation of a single colour (the famous Yves Klein Blue) it lacks a particular shape, which the eye could contemplate. The viewer becomes confronted with colour as such and for this reason the work takes up both the condition of the beautiful (because it is a work of art that is limited in space and time) and the condition of 'shapelessness' of the sublime. For Kant, such an entanglement of the beautiful and sublime is impossible because it would result into the destruction of art (the destruction of artistic form). However, the reason why this configuration nevertheless works within a Modernist context is because Modernist art attempted to initiate, through experience, a different world. The religious

[394] The common theorization of Modernist art, however, is based on the sublime (Johnson 2012: 122). Modernist art is sublime because it affirms art as a materially constructed object and therefore works against the purposiveness of form, which characterizes the beautiful. Such a theorization is incorrect because the sublime is completely devoid of form. Modernist art on the other hand is still a clearly defined object in space and time and therefore has a form. Tristan Garcia has made the argument in this regard that a work of Yves Klein gives form to colour (Garcia 2014: 249-250). Also, Adorno's argument that the aesthetic experience of the beautiful in nature holds the potential for critique indicates a situation in which the beautiful is entangled with the sublime. Without the sublime, the experience of beauty would be limited to a general purposiveness and therefore lack a critical character.

component cannot be situated in practice because Modernist art aimed to work against the actual condition of the lifeworld. In order for Modernist art to operate as critique, the sublime has to be integrated within the artwork itself, which leads to a type of art in which form is both characterized by 'shapelessness' and purposiveness. I argue that such a condition is also present within the stone bola in terms of the way the creation of an almost perfect spheroid shape could be understood as a 'shapeless form'.

A spheroid could be understood as a 'shapeless form' because it lacks any orientation of front, back, top or bottom. In this sense there is a stark contrast with the hand axe, as the hand axe, although also a simple abstract form, clearly defines its shape in terms of left and right, top and bottom. For this reason one could say that a stone bola takes up the condition of the monochrome paintings of Yves Klein: the depiction of a single dimension. In both cases experience cannot be directed to details, but only to the experience of the whole as whole. *This is significant because it means that not only beauty is prior to religion, but also art. The very first art is then an art that is entirely aesthetic, which would require an entanglement of the condition of the beautiful and sublime, which is precisely what we see with the stone bola*. The term 'an art of pure beauty' is misleading because without the presence of the sublime, the judgement of beauty would be nothing but empirical sensation and have no effect on the development of the cognitive faculties.

The simplicity of form has therefore nothing to do with the lack of cognitive complexity, but with the condition of the aesthetic itself. *A pure form of art that is not religious requires a type of form that is both 'shapeless' and purposive in order for the beautiful and the sublime to exist in configuration.* A stone bola is an excellent example of this condition, as it is both characterized by the purposiveness of form (a perfect spheroid shape) while also taking up the characteristic of 'shapelessness' (the lack of distinction between front and back, top and bottom, left and right). This means that an art of pure beauty is not necessarily associated with a rudimentary form of religion (in which the beautiful is entangled with the sublime through practice), but could be nothing but aesthetic. The earliest artefacts produced by mankind therefore give insight into the purest condition of art, which affirms the necessity of art for the human process of self-concrescence.

Conclusion

Within this chapter I examined how aesthetic experience can be theorized for non-modern hominid species and whether the earliest prehistoric artefacts can be understood as a form of art. In order for the human cognitive faculties to have developed during the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic, I argued that early hominids must have possessed the capacity of aesthetic judgement. The ontological primacy of aesthetic experience means that aesthetic judgement does not start from a human subject, but emerges through encounter. An aesthetic judgement therefore does not presuppose the capacity of reflection, but initiates it. The fact that early hominids possessed the capacity of aesthetic judgement is visible within the material artefacts that they produced. I proposed that the symmetry of form of a hand axe must be understood in terms of the ability to reproduce the condition of the beautiful within material form. Art is a mimesis of the aesthetic and as soon as early hominids developed the capacity to not only experience nature as beautiful, but also to reproduce this quality themselves, the phenomenon of art emerges. A recreation of the aesthetic dimension of nature is more than aesthetic because it requires a transformation of the aesthetic to the level of abstraction and therefore to truth.

We can speak about religion when such a type of recreation takes up a distributed character and is manifest both in the form of reflection and practice (the beautiful and the sublime), as is the case with the hand axe. A type of aesthetic judgement in which the beautiful and the sublime are entangled through practice has to be understood as a teleological aesthetic judgement. Such a type of judgement indeed incorporates a proposition within aesthetic experience, but a proposition that is non-conceptual. A non-conceptual proposition means in this case the beauty of the symmetry of form, which explains how the earliest form of religion was a religion based upon pure beauty. A stone bola is differentiated from the hand axe in the sense that the entanglement of the beautiful and sublime is not situated within practice, but within form itself, which means that form takes up a 'shapeless' character without losing its purposiveness. Such a type of art can be understood as the purest condition of art, as it is solely concerned with a recreation of the aesthetic dimension of nature, without this recreation being integrated within practice, which would transform it into a religion.

6. AN ONTOLOGY OF UPPER PALAEOLITHIC CAVE ART IN THE FRANCO-CANTABRIAN AREA

Introduction

Within the previous chapter I argued how Kant's conception of aesthetic autonomy can be extended to a Lower Palaeolithic hand axe and stone bola and that the earliest artefacts made by non-modern hominids can indeed be classified as a form of art. Moreover, I proposed that a stone bola must be understood as one of the purest forms of art in which the beautiful and sublime were entangled within the contemplation of a 'shapeless' form. This argument is opposed to the common idea that the emergence of cave art and figurative sculpture during the Upper Palaeolithic marks the 'origin of art'.[395] In contrast to the Lower Palaeolithic record, the visual culture of the Upper Palaeolithic is much closer to what the modern eye considers to fall under the rubric of art. The Upper Palaeolithic of the Franco-Cantabrean region is also called a creative explosion and is in this sense different from the Lower Palaeolithic record, in which material culture maintained the same form for several millenia (the hand axe) without any significant modification.[396] This sudden elaboration in creativity could be interpreted as the moment when humankind starts to produce art for the first time. Also, the fact that the creative explosion is coupled to the arrival of *Homo sapiens* in Europe would justify the idea that creativity and art are a unique capacity of *Homo sapiens*.[397] However, such a perspective is incorrect, as it neglects the fact that early hominids must already have possessed the capacity for aesthetic judgement. Without this capacity, the human mind could not have developed. The arrival of the modern mind does not mark the origin of art, but a complication of aesthetic experience through the shift from a non-conceptual towards conceptual proposition. This transformation is responsible for the making of figurative imagery and therefore allows visual culture to take up a more complex form.

This complication of aesthetic experience incorporates the potential for deception, as one could experience something as other than it actually is. The arrival of the modern mind and a more complex type of visual imagery is therefore not necessarily associated with the condition of art. Aesthetic experience only gives rise to art when one judges the coherence between appearance and

[395] Mithen 1996: 171, 177.
[396] Pettitt and White 2012: 170-171.
[397] Mithen 1996: 174.

reality in terms of truth. When aesthetic experience becomes to operate as a form of deception in which appearance becomes to stand for reality itself, we are not dealing with art, but with fetishism. Within this chapter I argue that the new type of visual culture, which developed during the Upper Palaeolithic, was not based on a judgement of the actual order of nature (as was the case within the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic), but on a practical type of order. The emergence of the creative explosion must be understood as a way to deal with the demographic pressure that was manifest within the Franco-Cantabrean area during the Ice Age. Upper Palaeolithic art developed in order to deal with the social tension of several hunter-gatherer groups living together within a relatively small area.[398] This means that Upper Palaeolithic art developed out of practical need and not out of a contemplation of the purposiveness of nature. Instead of Upper Palaeolithic art marking the origin of art, I argue that it is actually less true to the condition of art than the visual culture of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic.

Within the first part of this chapter *The Paradoxical Modification of Experience during the Upper Palaeolithic* I discuss the particular circumstances that characterize the emergence of Upper Palaeolithic art within the Franco-Cantabrean area. I argue that the arrival of the modern mind within this area has to be understood through a paradoxical type of world making in which the condition of Earth as Territory and Territory as Earth operated in constellation. I also proposed this paradoxical condition for the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic, but it takes up a different form within the Upper Palaeolithic. Within the second part *Theorizing Upper Palaeolithic Animism and the Aesthetic Experience of Cave Art* I argue that the aesthetic experience of cave art must be understood as a hybrid type of experience consisting of both propositional feeling and propositional judgement. Based on this analysis, I put forward the idea that animism during the Upper Palaeolithic must also have taken up a hybrid character and in this sense has to be understood as a hybrid between animism and fetishism.

6.1 The Paradoxical Modification of Experience during the Upper Palaeolithic

6.1.1 The Emergence of Upper Palaeolithic Art within the Franco-Cantabrian Area

The inclusion of a conceptual proposition within aesthetic experience means that the condition of art and religion based on pure beauty becomes transformed into art and religion as social system. This

[398] Montelle 2009: 46; Pfeiffer 1982: 191-192, 195, 228.

transformation is important because it means that the ontological condition of art changes during the Upper Palaeolithic. However, the shift from art and religion based on pure beauty towards art and religion as social system is not sufficient to define the ontological condition of Upper Palaeolithic art. The condition of art as social system is a characteristic that is applicable to all major types of art-religion that have been developed by the modern mind. For this reason, a sole concern with the incorporation of a conceptual proposition within experience fails to acknowledge the different types of world making it can give rise to. Such an inclusion can never operate within a general way, but only within a particular way. In order to develop an ontology of Upper Palaeolithic art, one needs to analyse how the incorporation of a conceptual proposition within experience produces a particular modification of experience, which gives rise to the Upper Palaeolithic world.

The emergence of Upper Palaeolithic art in Europe is connected to major changes in climatic and vegetational conditions that occur during the last Ice Age. At this time the Refuge Zone (the Franco-Cantabrian area in southwest Europe) was the most crowded area due to the vegetation: forests in southwestern Europe and steppe – tundra elsewhere. During the period 22,000 until 14,000 years ago, regions as Northern and Central Europe became covered with large ice sheets and were abandoned almost completely; ice caps also covered the Alps and Pyrenees.[399] However, the fact that Upper Palaeolithic bands were confronted with climate change and the limitation of resources is not sufficient to explain the emergence of Upper Palaeolithic art. *Homo neanderthalensis* also had to adapt to severe climatic conditions, but this did not result in the development of art as social system.[400] The emergence of art as social system is thus in principle not necessary to deal with the survival pressure associated with the Ice Age. Instead of being related to environmental pressure, it is more likely that the emergence of Upper Palaeolithic art occurred because of demographic pressure, namely the fact that a large amount of people were forced to live in a small area: the Refuge Zone.[401] The forced proximity of human groups within a relatively small area constitutes a new social phenomenon because it is no longer possible for hunter-gatherers to move freely across the landscape. The fact that resources necessary for survival (fauna and flora) were largely limited to the Refuge Zone meant that the movement of hunter-gatherers had to be negotiated in order for bands not to intervene within each other's means of survival and therefore to avoid conflict. This required hunter-gatherers to develop

[399] Montelle 2009: 27-29.
[400] Mithen 1996: 178.
[401] Montelle 2009: 31, 34.

means to communicate and cooperate with other groups in order to secure movement through the landscape and access to resources.[402]

The archaeologist Yann-Pierre Montelle puts forward three new social phenomena that emerged during the Upper Palaeolithic: *relative sedentism, alliances and networks, and aggregation and dispersion sites*. Relative sedentism means the occupation of an area for a certain period (a few months, a season), but not permanently. This phenomenon must have been related to the seasonal access to resources and the restriction in movement across the landscape. Also, the development of relative sedentism contributes to the emergence of ethnic and territorial divisions between different hunter-gatherer bands because it requires the collective approval of territorial claims by some kind of consensus.[403] This leads to the second social phenomenon proposed by Montelle: alliances and networks.[404] When it is impossible to move freely across the landscape, the band must establish a kind of relationship, agreement with the other bands. In order for alliances between different groups to occur, the structures of these groups themselves should have been transformed as well. The idea of a group as a constellation of individuals without any hierarchical structure seems almost impossible if different groups had to be integrated within a larger alliance. The third social phenomenon that emerges is the aggregation and dispersion site.[405] This is a small area where the different bands that belong to the same network came together periodically. The aggregation and dispersion sites are spatial manifestations in which information was exchanged to enhance the network of alliances and ensure territorial cohesion. The phenomenon of cave art is an example of an aggregation and dispersion site.

The emergence of Upper Palaeolithic art should be understood through this necessity for new social phenomena in order to deal with the demographic pressure of the Refuge Zone.[406] Following this perspective, the art of the Upper Palaeolithic did not emerge out of a recreation of the condition of the beautiful in nature, as was the case during the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic. This acknowledgement is significant because it requires one to radically rethink the idea that it is the Upper Palaeolithic, which marks the origin of art. *The art of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic is more true to the condition of 'art' because it has arisen out of a mimetic relationship to the condition of the beautiful in nature.* A stone bola and Lower Palaeolithic hand axe were not the outcome of survival pressure, but instead

[402] Montelle 2009: 41-42.
[403] Ibid. 35.
[404] Ibid. 36-37.
[405] Ibid. 38-39.
[406] Pfeiffer 1982: 195.

emphasized the important role of aesthetic judgement within the determination of our humanity and cognitive faculties. The function of the hand axe, although it did play a role in tasks related to everyday survival, must be understood as a form of world making in which the ability to reflect on the condition of the beautiful must have been essential. *The fact that Upper Palaeolithic art on the contrary emerged out of immediate survival necessity would make it a less pure form of art than the art of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic.* The art of the Upper Palaeolithic therefore has a practical basis and it is this acknowledgement that is necessary in order to understand the modification of experience that occurs within the Upper Palaeolithic.

Instead of being related to the condition of beauty or metaphysics, Upper Palaeolithic art was an *art of information*. Steven Mithen has argued that particular stylistic traits and subjects within the animal imagery functioned in order to recall knowledge about the natural world and store that knowledge for future generations.[407] Upper Palaeolithic art was necessary in order to deal with the increasing amount of survival information associated with the necessity to communicate within a network of different bands. However, the idea that Upper Palaeolithic art would have emerged out of the practical necessity for information storage is not opposed to religion/belief. This is visible in the fact that the animals depicted in both animal figurines and cave art did not only include animals that formed the diet of Upper Palaeolithic people (like deer), but also large mammals like lion, bison and mammoth. Also, there is evidence of images of therianthropic beings (of which the most well known example is the lion-man), which indicates that animals for Upper Palaeolithic people not only played a role in terms of resources for survival, but also in the modification of the way they experienced the world.[408] This means that not only the depiction of animals within Upper Palaeolithic art, but also the actual animals could have been associated with complex meanings that coloured people's understanding of the world. The continuity between art as information and art as religion might at first seem straightforward, as Upper Palaeolithic art must have been integrated within every sphere of life and therefore must have transformed everyday practices like hunting, preparation of food etc. to the level of metaphor, integrating the various spheres of life within a unitary vision. However, the reason why this continuity between art as information and art as religion should not just be assumed is because it neglects the fact that the emergence of Upper Palaeolithic art did not have its origin within religion (the purposiveness of nature) but within survival pressure related to population density. *Therefore,*

[407] Mithen 1996: 196; Mithen 1998c: 182.
[408] Mithen 1996: 190-192; Pfeiffer 1982: 120.

instead of simply equating the idea of Upper Palaeolithic art as information and as religion, one should acknowledge that the latter is a consequence of the former. This nuance is important in order to understand the modification of experience associated with Upper Palaeolithic art.

6.1.2 A Different Constellation of Earth as Territory and Territory as Earth

If we follow the idea that the information embodied within Upper Palaeolithic art is related to the natural world and the encounter with animals, than the modification of experience that characterizes the lifeworld during the Upper Palaeolithic must have its basis within a hunter-gathering way of life. Following Deleuze and Guattari, a hunter-gathering way of life is a form of world making in which territorialisation occurs through deterritorialisation. This could be reformulated as an Earth-Territory constellation in which Territory takes up the condition of Earth (Territory as Earth). However, one must differentiate between a hunter-gathering form of life associated with the early human mind and modern mind. Within the previous chapter I argued that the type of world making of early hominids must be understood as a constellation of Earth as Territory and Territory as Earth. This paradoxical situation is associated with the condition of the early human mind, which has the capacity for aesthetic judgement, but lacks a conceptual proposition and therefore cannot experience the world as a whole (namely the integration of the social, natural and technological).

In the case of the modern mind, such a paradoxical constellation can (in principle) be transcended towards a lifeworld that is solely based on Territory as Earth or Earth as Territory. The reason why the condition of Territory as Earth could not occur with the early human mind is because it stands for a lifeworld, which consists of a constellation of multiple space-times. Such a lifeworld means that aesthetic judgement is not directed towards the purposiveness of reality as a whole, but operates as a form of communicative action between different worlds.[409] This means that the relation between appearance and reality is not characterized by coherence, but isomorphy. It is only through isomorphy that a form of communicative action across different worlds is possible, as it requires the ability to take up the perspective of a different world. This is distinct from the type of aesthetic judgement associated with the early human mind, as a judgement of pure beauty implies a shared sense of space and time and is therefore contradictory to a constellation of multiple space-times. The

[409] The perspectivist reality of Amerindian communities is an example of a lifeworld based on Territory as Earth.

inclusion of a conceptual proposition within aesthetic experience (modern mind) therefore does not only give rise to the ability to have a conception of reality as a whole (Earth as Territory), but also to its opposite, the constellation of multiple space-times (Territory as Earth).

However, despite this distinction between a hunter-gathering form of life based on the early human mind (constellation of Territory as Earth and Earth as Territory) and modern mind (Territory as Earth), I argue that *the condition of Territory as Earth is not sufficient to define world making during the Upper Palaeolithic* because hunter-gatherer bands became confronted by the limitation of movement and the necessity to develop new social phenomena in order to deal with this changed situation. The making of art during the Upper Palaeolithic was a way to generate a shared cognitive space-time that allowed different bands to communicate with one another. Such a shared cognitive space-time is structurally different from a type of world making based on movement/encounter with the other (Territory as Earth). The creation of a shared cognitive space-time implies that territorialisation is no longer limited to the act of encounter or movement, but present in the unified understanding of the world that is shared by the various bands that make up the alliance. Territorialisation takes up the form of ethnicity and of territorial claims.

However, the difficulty with the Upper Palaeolithic is that it can also not be limited to this condition (Earth as Territory) because the development of these new social phenomena cannot be uncoupled from a hunter-gathering way of life. A new form of social organization emerged in order for hunter-gathering bands to secure their form of life. I argue that this acknowledgement leads to the paradoxical conclusion that world making during the Upper Palaeolithic must have operated as a constellation of two contradictory conditions: Earth as Territory and Territory as Earth. The modification of experience within the Franco-Cantabrian area is due *to the paradoxical situation in which a hunter-gathering way of life had to become aligned with the ability to communicate information through space and through time*. The modification that occurs, which is associated with the emergence of the modern mind, is therefore concerned with the necessity to align two contradictory types of world making with one another: a form of life based on encounter (hunter-gathering) with the systematic communication of information through space and time. *The reason why the emergence of the modern mind does not lead to a disintegration of the paradoxical constellation of Earth as Territory and Territory as Earth is because it becomes itself activated in order to deal with a paradoxical situation in which two opposing forms of life had to be reconciled.*

6.2 Theorizing Upper Palaeolithic Animism and the Aesthetic Experience of Cave Art

6.2.1 The Continuity between the Cave Environment and Hunting Environment

In order to theorize the modification of experience during the Upper Palaeolithic I rely on the work of the archaeologist Paul Pettitt and Derek Hodgson who have developed a theoretical model to understand the continuity between the perception of the environment by hunter-gatherers and the emergence of (cave) art. The main argument of Pettitt and Hodgson is that a hunting form of life is based on a highly charged visual system for detecting animals in evocative environments.[410] In order to survive, hunter-gatherers had to develop a subtle sensitivity towards animals and the environments in which they lived. This must have taken the form of being attentive to the habits of particular animals (habitat, pathways, behaviour), the way animals responded to danger or predators, and the resources that animals required in order to live within a certain environment. This type of understanding is best conceived of as *aesthetic sensitivity*.[411] Following my discussion of the previous chapter, early hominids possessed a type of reflective experience that lacked a conceptual proposition. Conceptual knowledge of animals and their environment was therefore impossible. However, a type of reflective experience that is aesthetic also has the capacity for knowledge, but a type of knowledge based on feeling. Therefore, in order for early hominids to gain knowledge of animals and their environment they needed a form of perception, which is aesthetic. This type of aesthetic experience should be understood as symbolic reference.

Whereas in the previous chapter I discussed aesthetic experience only in relation to Lower and Middle Palaeolithic art, it also plays a role in the perception of animals and the environment. This is logical because in order to gain knowledge about the animal and the environment, early hominids must be able to judge the coherence between appearance and reality. One cannot gain knowledge or sensitivity based on appearance alone, as appearance does not incorporate the extension of the environment into the past and future. Appearance would reduce the environment to its immediate state of existence, which makes it impossible to become sensitive to the habits of animals, which implies the connection between past, present and future. However, direct access to reality (circumventing appearance) is impossible, as the nature of knowledge itself is bound to the appearance-reality

[410] Hodgson and Pettitt 2018: 594.
[411] Davies 2012: 71-85.

distinction. Following my discussion of Whitehead, appearance and reality cannot completely cohere with one another and therefore the development of environmental sensitivity must operate as a form of judgement on the appearance – reality relation.

Such a form of judgement is aesthetic, as it is the aesthetic that allows connecting a non-sensuous form of perception (connection to past and future) with immediate appearance. *However, whereas such a type of judgement is indeed a reflective type of aesthetic experience, it is distinct from the type of aesthetic judgement associated with Lower and Middle Palaeolithic art. The difference is situated within the fact that in the latter case aesthetic experience operates as a judgement of the purposiveness of nature whereas in the former only on knowledge related to specific animals and environments*. Because early hominids lacked the incorporation of a conceptual proposition within experience, they lacked the capacity to integrate their specific environmental sensitivity with the idea of a natural order as a whole. The awareness of natural order, I argued, was limited to a pure form of beauty, which was disintegrated from sensitivity and knowledge of specific animals and environments. The development of environmental knowledge therefore was indeed aesthetic, but it lacked a metaphysical character. It should be understood as a lower type of aesthetic experience, which one could call symbolic reference.

Pettitt and Hodgson propose that the sensitivity developed by early hunter-gatherers towards animals and their environment can be used as an analogy for the making and encounter of cave art. Pettitt and Hodgson are primarily concerned with the ability of the hunter to detect animals within the environment and the capacity to fill in missing shapes, which allows distinguishing a partial hidden animal from its environment.[412] In a similar way as the hunting environment, the cave environment constitutes a situation in which a human being becomes confronted with features that are suggestive of contours of animals.[413] The inclusion of the natural features of the cave wall within the making of Upper Palaeolithic cave art has been well documented. This practice indicates that the isomorphy between the cave environment and animal silhouettes was deliberately provoked by the making of cave art.[414] This isomorphy between animal silhouettes and the cave environment constitutes a situation not unlike the hunting environment because the human eye becomes confronted with a situation in which it had to develop a sensitivity towards the situatedness of the animal within the environment, which is a

[412] Hodgson and Pettitt 2018: 593-594.
[413] Ibid. 595-597.
[414] Aujoulat 2004: 228-232; Pfeiffer 1982: 136, 142-143.

skill essential for a successful hunter.[415] Pettitt and Hodgson propose in this regard that precisely because a cave environment is suggestive of animal contours, it could provide an explanation for the emergence of figurative art during the Upper Palaeolithic.

The reason why a cave environment is generative of animal contours is because it is an unfamiliar place, which lacked clarity of vision not only because of the ambiguous morphology of the cave wall and cave outline, but also because of the inability to see beyond the immediacy of a torchlight. The confrontation with almost complete darkness and the impossibility to see what lies beyond one's present location makes perception within a cave environment an unsettling activity in which one cannot completely trust one's senses. Moreover, the fact that torchlight must have provided the only source of lighting means that the perception of the cave environment would have been continuously modified by moving shadows, which could have contributed to the perception of cave features as moving entities, being suggestive of moving animals.[416] Also, human visitors entering the cave must have been aware of the fact that these place were often frequented by carnivores (lion, wolf and bear), which might have contributed to human perception being attentive towards animal features.[417] One could therefore say that a cave environment is both an unfamiliar place, which unsettled perception and for this reason had the capacity to be suggestive of animal contours, and a familiar place because of the structural similarity to the hunting environment, which constitutes the everyday environment of a hunter-gatherer.

I explained above how the perception of a hunter-gatherer has to be conceived as a type of aesthetic experience in which the hunter-gatherer judges the coherence between appearance and reality (symbolic reference). It is a type of perception solely based on feeling. However, during the Upper Palaeolithic in southwest Europe, this type of perception had to be modified towards a systematic form of communication. This modification occurred through the embodiment of knowledge in figurative imagery like cave art. The making and experiencing of cave art therefore operated as a way to store and transmit information through space and time. The structural similarity between the cave environment and hunting environment is significant to understand the modification of experience that occurs because it indicates how the experience of cave art operated as a recreation of the encounter with animals within hunting-practices and therefore as a making explicit of the knowledge and experience

[415] Hodgson and Pettitt 2018: 595.
[416] Ibid. 595; Montelle 2009: 61.
[417] Hodgson and Pettitt 2018: 595.

required for successful hunting. *In both cases a hunter-gatherer becomes confronted with the task to judge the coherence between appearance and reality, which in both the context of the cave environment and hunting environment was marked by instability.* However, because the cave environment also operates as an unfamiliar space, distinct from the hunting environment, the experience of cave art must also have transformed the everyday experience of the hunter-gatherer. It is such a transformation, which will give insight into the paradoxical type of world making during the Upper Palaeolithic in which the condition of Territory as Earth (related to hunter-gathering) and Earth as Territory (related to systematic form of communication) were entangled.

6.2.2 Defining the Aesthetic Experience of Cave Art: A Hybrid between Propositional Feeling and Propositional Judgement

The reason why the experience of cave art is different from the experience associated with the hunting environment is because one encounters in experience something, which is not actually present. The argument of Pettitt and Hodgson on the structural similarity of detecting animal contours within cave and hunting environment neglects the fact that in the case of cave art the perception of animal contours is only illusionary; no animal is actually present. This is distinct from the hunting environment in which one had to develop a sensitivity to detect the actual animal one attempted to hunt. The perception of something, which is not actually present, constitutes a more complex type of experience because it requires the entering of a proposition into experience. A proposition complicates experience because it adds intensity to the perception of an actual object, without necessarily having any relationship to the object. A proposition therefore allows deception to occur, meaning that the human eye perceives something as different than it actually is. The perception of animal shapes within the cave environment requires the category of propositions in order for features of the cave wall to stand for a moving animal. The detection of animal contours within the hunting environment on the other hand constitutes a more basic type of perception (symbolic reference). Following my discussion above, the perception of the hunter is solely concerned with the attempt to unite immediate appearance with actual reality, which is necessary in order to develop a sensitivity towards animals and the environment. The inclusion of a proposition within experience is therefore not appropriate for successful hunting, as it would hinder rather than contribute to the hunter's sensitivity of the

environment. Therefore, one could say that the judgement of the coherence between appearance and reality within the hunting environment is characterized by experience as symbolic reference (which lacks a proposition), whereas the judgement of the coherence between appearance and reality within the cave environment includes a proposition because one becomes confronted with something that is not actually present.

In order to define the experience of cave art, it is necessary to understand whether we are dealing with propositional feeling or propositional judgement. Propositional feeling means that the experience of cave art is a form of deception, in which the perception of the viewer becomes deliberately tricked. The inclusion of features of the cave wall within the execution of cave art would then contribute towards the creation of an illusionary situation in which the relation between appearance and reality becomes deliberately modified in order to promote the perception of animal contours. Experience as propositional judgement on the other hand means that experience operates as a type of judgement on the coherence between appearance (proposition) and actual reality and therefore works against the promotion of an illusionary situation in which human perception becomes deliberately tricked. If we follow the analogy between the cave environment and hunting environment put forward by Pettitt and Hodgson it is propositional judgement that we need and not propositional feeling. The detection of animal contours within the environment by the hunter is a type of judgement and not an illusionary perception.

However, we also need to take into account that hunter-gatherers during the Upper Palaeolithic were confronted with the task to develop a way to communicate information through space and time in a systematic way. The development of cave art has to be understood from such a perspective. *This means that the experience of cave art is not only differentiated from the hunting environment through the inclusion of a proposition, but also through the condition of Earth as Territory.* If we follow the idea that Upper Palaeolithic art was an art of information, then it must be related to the type of knowledge associated with the hunting environment. However, the reason why it cannot be a straightforward embodiment of this information is because two opposing conditions come together within Upper Palaeolithic cave art: Earth as Territory (systematic communication) and Territory as Earth (hunting environment). It is precisely because of this paradoxical constellation that the embodied sensitivity of the hunting-environment inevitably had to be transformed.

This means that the experience of cave art must align the embodied experience of the hunter-gatherer environment (which is based on encounter with the other) with the experience of order that was shared by different bands (a shared cognitive space-time). Two different types of Territory (home) had therefore to be conflated within cave art in which Territory is established through encounter with the other (animal) and is situated within the shared experience between different bands and belonging to place. The experience of cave art must be understood as a hybrid experience in which two different types of Territory had to be entangled with one another. Following this idea of a hybrid type of experience, I argue that we are dealing with a *constellation of propositional feeling and propositional judgement*. Experience has to operate as a form of judgement because a perceiver could not eliminate his embodied existence within the hunting environment, in which experience operates as a judgement on the coherence between appearance and reality (symbolic reference). However, because the experience of cave art had to generate a shared sense of order between different bands it must also operate as propositional feeling. This can be understood through the idea that the emergence of cave art is coupled to the emergence of theatricality.

Within the work *Paleoperformance* the archaeologist Yann-Pierre Montelle argues that the controlling and communication of information through cave art required the emergence of the phenomenon of theatricality:

'Theatricality is the social mechanism responsible for the manufacture of a virtual space – a framing device used to validate otherness. A virtual space is a simulation where immediacy and a continuous present blur the boundaries between the real and the simulated.'[418]

Theatricality can be equated with propositional feeling because it means the creation of an artificial environment in which appearance becomes to stand for actual reality. The execution of cave art can be understood as a form of theatricality because one enters an artificially simulated environment in which a perceiver becomes confronted with a space in which the difference between natural and artificial form has been deliberately conflated. The conflation between appearance and reality, which characterizes a theatrical space, is necessary in order for a semiotic process of re-articulation to occur.[419] A semiotic process of re-articulation means that information related to the everyday becomes

[418] Montelle 2009: 9.
[419] Ibid. 8-10.

involved in a process of becoming other. This idea of re-articulation can be envisioned through the way the depiction of animals operates as a becoming other of the actual encounter with animals within the everyday environment. Becoming other is particularly manifest within the animal imagery itself, which, even though possessing a high level of realism, are often incomplete and include visual tricks based on light/shadow and standpoint of the viewer.[420] Also, Upper Palaeolithic cave art lacks the depiction of landscape features, which means that the animals seem to be 'floating' in an undefined virtual space, which affirms the displacement of the everyday.[421] This feeling of a virtual space becomes affirmed by the fact that the different animals are depicted in different sizes without reference to each other.

The theory of palaeoperformance by Montelle argues that this process of becoming other must be understood as a theatrical set-up between a performer and a perceiver. The prime characteristic of theatricality is that it operates as a *place to see*.[422] A place to see requires not only the presence of a perceiver, but also a performer in order to guide and enhance the process of becoming other through which the perceiver becomes removed from his normal cognitive and spatial setting. It is a performer, who allows a semiotic process of re-articulation to occur in which the everyday becomes involved in a process of becoming other through which it takes up new signification.[423] *The becoming other of the everyday therefore was a means in order to promote a particular reading, which could be shared by all members of the audience.*[424] Theatricality can therefore be understood as a technique to transform information from the condition of Territory as Earth towards Earth as Territory. It is through theatricality that information could be shared and communicated between different bands and that a shared cognitive space-time could be initiated, which transcends the boundedness to encounter associated with hunter-gathering.

In order to define the experience of cave art as a hybrid experience consisting of both propositional feeling and propositional judgement, I return to the work of Pettitt and Hodgson, who make a distinction between 'seeing as' and 'seeing in'. 'Seeing in' is concerned with the ability of the human mind to project imagery onto ambiguous surfaces.[425] Following the idea that hunter-gathering was the way of life of early and modern hominids for several thousands of millennia, the human mind

[420] Pfeiffer 1982: 140-143.
[421] Hodgson and Pettitt 2018: 591; Paillet 2006: 107.
[422] Montelle 2009: 2.
[423] Ibid. 9, 235.
[424] Ibid. 12, 234, 236.
[425] Hodgson and Pettitt 2018: 598.

must have been evolved in such a way to be particularly attuned to the type of perception necessary for hunter-gathering, which means the aesthetic sensibility to detect shapes within the environment and judge the coherence between appearance and reality. 'Seeing as' on the other hand means that one perceives something as other than it actually is.[426] Although this could at first sight be associated with the perception of animal features within a cave setting, it is actually a different type of perception because it lacks the quality of detection or judgement associated with 'seeing in'. The perception of animal contours onto the cave wall does not mean that the cave wall was perceived 'as an animal', but



Fig. 6. Cave of Lascaux, Diverticule axial, Vézère Valley (Upper Palaeolithic), France

that animal contours were detected because of the reliance of perception onto the evolved visual sensitivity associated with hunter-gathering.

However, the fact that the experience of cave art is associated with the phenomenon of theatricality indicates that 'seeing as' must also have taken place. The becoming other of the everyday through a performative setting occurs in order to promote a particular type of reading of the imagery. Theatricality operated as a way to influence perception, which means a 'seeing as'. Despite the fact that

[426] Hodgson and Pettitt 2018: 598.

theatricality conflates the distinction between appearance and reality, therefore promoting a 'seeing as', it must nevertheless also incorporate the condition of 'seeing in'. This can be understood through Montelle's argument that cave art operated as a s*ign within a sign*.[427] The idea of sign within a sign means that cave art can never merely be reduced to a sign that stands for an animal (like a bull) because through depiction the animal becomes involved in a process of becoming other in which it becomes different from itself. Cave art as sign within the sign means that the experience of cave art requires a perceiver to relate to a process of becoming other in which the everyday has become involved. The copresence of 'seeing as' and 'seeing in' means that the experience of cave art must have operated both as a form of deception (in which appearance and reality were conflated) and as a form of judgement (in which experience attempts to 'read' the sign within the sign). Such a hybridization is not illogical if we acknowledge that Upper Palaeolithic cave art had to reconcile two opposing types of Territory with one another.

6.2.3 Defining Upper Palaeolithic Animism: A Hybrid between Animism and Fetishism

If we follow the idea that Upper Palaeolithic art developed in order to create a shared cognitive space-time, the modification of experience associated with cave art had to be extended to the everyday hunting environment. This means that the constellation of Territory as Earth and Earth as Territory is not only applicable to cave art, but to the Upper Palaeolithic lifeworld as a whole. This argument might seem straightforward, but is important in order to understand the phenomenon of animism during the Upper Palaeolithic. Within the first part of this thesis I examined the relation between animism and the autonomy of aesthetic experience. This theoretical discussion cannot be directly applied to the Upper Palaeolithic. Because aesthetic experience is ontologically prior, one needs to acknowledge that animism cannot be uncoupled from the modification of experience that defines a particular lifeworld. This means that in order to define animism for the Upper Palaeolithic, one needs to approach it through the modification of experience I outlined above: the constellation of propositional feeling (seeing as) and propositional judgement (seeing in).

The paradoxical experience associated with cave art, as both being a form of deception and a form of judgement, must therefore be applicable to the Upper Palaeolithic lifeworld as a whole. It

[427] Montelle 2009: 235.

means that the experience of a hunter-gatherer would not solely be concerned with encounter with the other in which he makes a judgement about the way appearance and reality relate to one another (seeing in), but also with the fact that reality was experienced *as* a coherent whole, which means the reduction of reality to appearance (seeing as). Animism only occurs when hominids developed the ability to connect the realm of the social, natural and technological with one another, which means that it is bound to the condition of the modern mind.[428] Animism therefore requires the inclusion of a conceptual proposition within aesthetic experience, which means the transformation of aesthetic experience into a metaphorical experience. The inclusion of a conceptual proposition within experience means that the perception of the environment by the hunter-gatherer (encounter with the other) becomes transformed from symbolic reference (judgement of relation between immediate appearance and causal efficacy) towards a propositional type of experience.

In the chapter on Deleuze I argued how animism can be defined through an a-signifying type of semiotics based on becoming other. This type of animism is based on the condition of Territory as Earth and therefore not appropriate for the paradoxical type of world making during the Upper Palaeolithic. However, what is important is that an a-signifying type of semiotics based on 'becoming animal' constitutes a highly unstable situation, which can both give rise to fetishism or animism. Fetishism occurs when an a-signifying type of semiotics takes up the condition of the Face, which means that 'becoming other' does not operate in terms of an opening up towards the transcendental, but as a form of deception. What distinguishes fetishism from animism is the fact that fetishism is concerned with an illusionary reconciliation between virtual and actual (the reduction of reality to appearance) whereas animism is related to a type of experience that attempts to strive for a true reconciliation between virtual and actual (which works against the reduction of reality to mere appearance).

Fetishism and animism are therefore both related to one another and opposed to one another. This simultaneous relation and opposition is important because it indicates how two opposing forms of world making (based on deception and truth) are both encapsulated within experience as 'becoming other'. It is such a paradoxical situation, in which two opposing types of world making are reconciled with one another, which is necessary to theorize animism for the Upper Palaeolithic. Experience as 'seeing as' (propositional feeling) can be aligned with fetishism because it reduces reality to mere

[428] Mithen 1996: 202.

appearance. Experience as 'seeing in' (propositional judgement) can be aligned with animism because animism requires a type of experience that opens the actual condition of reality towards the virtual and therefore works against the reduction of reality to appearance. Therefore, in order to define animism for the modification of experience during the Upper Palaeolithic (in which seeing as and seeing in operate in constellation) I argue that one needs a *hybrid form of animism in which animism simultaneously takes up the condition of fetishism*.

In order to approach this paradox, it is useful to look at the way animism has been defined for the Upper Palaeolithic. The archaeologist Chantal Conneller has approached Upper Palaeolithic animism through the idea that there are no radical discontinuities between different substances, but that every substance is the outcome of a process of transformation of something else.[429] Conneller's approach relies on the perspectivism of Viveiros de Castro, in which different entities can share the same intrinsic essence, while appearances are exchangeable. Whereas Viveiros de Castro is mainly concerned with humans and animals, Conneller extends his theory to material substances. This means that different substances can share the same intrinsic essence and therefore stand in continuity with one another even though they might differ in appearance. This continuity between different substances could be made explicit through skeuomorphism in which the appearance of one material is transformed in order to resemble the appearance of another.[430] A related perspective is put forward by the archaeologist Jean Clottes who characterizes the Upper Palaeolithic lifeworld as a world based on the permeability of boundaries in which everything is interconnected.[431] What is important about the type of animism put forward by Conneller and Clottes is that it indicates that the normal relation between hunter and prey becomes disrupted. Within a world in which boundaries are permeable, it is not sufficient to have environmental knowledge and sensitivity in terms of animal tracks and behaviour, but one also requires the incorporation of a metaphysical understanding of the world as a whole. The permeability of the world transforms the practice of hunting, as it implies a relationship between hunter, animal and environment, which precedes the actual act of hunting. It requires that animals are not solely addressed as prey, but also in terms of their relational position within a permeable world.[432]

However, although the normal relation between hunter and prey, which defines the type of experience that had characterized a hunter-gathering way of life for several thousand millennia,

[429] Conneller 2011: 119.
[430] Ibid.121.
[431] Clottes 2016: 91-94.
[432] Ingold 2000a: 121-123.

becomes transformed, it also maintains its structure. In both cases we are dealing with a type of experience in which appearance and reality do not completely cohere with one another. In order to develop environmental knowledge, a hunter-gatherer becomes continuously confronted with the task to relate appearance and reality to one another. The permeability of boundaries within animism could be seen as a complication of the normal experience associated with a hunter-gathering way of life because the relation between essence and appearance has become characterized by transformation. This means that experience is no longer simply concerned with the attempt to judge the coherence between essence (reality) and appearance, but with the awareness that the essence-appearance relationship has to be situated within a relational context, in which essence no longer refers to a single entity, but to the continuity between entities. When essence becomes to operate as a shared continuity, appearance can be exchanged and entities be transformed into one another. The relationship between essence and appearance therefore becomes transformed from specific environmental knowledge towards the situatedness of substance within a cosmological order.

What needs to be understood is how this lack of coherence between appearance and reality (permeability of boundaries) can be theorized through a hybrid type of experience in which 'seeing as' (propositional feeling) is entangled with 'seeing in' (propositional judgement). Experience as 'seeing in' is related to the type of experience associated with early hunter-gatherers. During the Upper Palaeolithic it becomes transformed from a type of judgement based on symbolic reference (which lacks a proposition) towards a propositional experience. This transformation modifies the early hunter-gatherer experience into a metaphorical experience. At first sight one could say that such a type of metaphorical experience allows theorizing the shift from the judgement of the incoherence between appearance and causal efficacy (early hunter-gathering) towards the judgement of the essence-appearance relationship within a relational context (permeability of boundaries). However, what needs to be taken into account is that the judgement of the relation between immediate appearance and causal efficacy is bound to the encounter with a specific environmental setting whereas the characteristic of permeability of boundaries (animism) constitutes a general condition of Upper Palaeolithic reality as a whole. Within my discussion of the modification of experience within cave art I argued that the phenomenon of theatricality emerged in order to allow a shared cognitive space-time to occur, which is not limited to encounter with a specific environment. The occurrence of a shared cognitive space-time requires the promotion of a particular way of seeing, which is based on 'seeing as'. In order to

understand the permeability of boundaries as a general condition of the Upper Palaeolithic world, we therefore need a type of perception based on 'seeing as'. This means that the world is *experienced as* being characterized by the permeability of boundaries. In other words, the isomorphy between substances, outlined by Conneller and Clottes, would be nothing but an illusion, a form of deception.

However, in order for theatricality to promote a particular way of seeing, it also requires a perceiver to read the sign within the sign (seeing in). The phenomenon of theatricality therefore aligns experience as 'seeing in' with experience as 'seeing as'. This means that the experience of the Upper Palaeolithic world as a whole cannot be uncoupled from a hunter-gathering way of life based on encounter. Through encounter with the other, the world is simultaneously seen as animate (seeing as) and seen in terms of the relational continuities in which the other is involved (seeing in). This same situation occurs within cave art, which simultaneously generates a shared cognitive space-time and requires relating to the becoming other of the everyday within the theatrical setting. Within the hunting environment, the encounter with the other simultaneously generates a shared cognitive space-time (the experience of the world as animate) and generates a becoming other of the other (e.g. animal) through which it is no longer solely conceived as prey, but as metaphor (its position within a relational continuity of substances). *Therefore, a type of animism in which substances stand within a relational continuity with one another requires both 'seeing as' (in order for permeability to operate as a general condition) and 'seeing in' (in order to experience the particular relational continuities in which substances are involved).* In other words, such a type of animism has to be both a form of deception (the experience of the world as being characterized by transformation) and a form of judgement (in order to distinguish between the different relational continuities). This means that animism must simultaneously take up the condition of fetishism.

Conclusion

In this chapter I examined how the aesthetic experience of cave art takes up a paradoxical character because of the necessity to integrate a hunter-gatherer way of life within a shared cognitive space-time. Such a type of world making requires the condition of Territory as Earth (because a hunter-gatherer way of life is based on encounter with the other) and the condition of Earth as Territory (in order for a shared experience to occur and therefore a shared space-time). Whereas in early prehistory, this

paradoxical type of world making is associated with a form of art and religion based on pure beauty, within the Upper Palaeolithic the phenomenon of art and religion becomes distorted. Upper Palaeolithic art was not concerned with the actual order of nature, but with a practical type of order necessary for survival. A practical type of order is unconcerned with the actual coherence between appearance and reality and therefore the condition of truth. For this reason I argued that the idea of a shared cognitive space-time (the ability to experience reality as a whole) has to be understood as a form of deception, being based on appearance. However, because a hunter-gatherer way of life requires distinguishing between appearance and reality (in order to develop environmental knowledge and be a successful hunter) aesthetic experience cannot be reduced to deception. I argued that aesthetic experience must have taken up a hybrid character consisting of both propositional feeling (deception) and propositional judgement (truth). It is the idea that the world is characterized by the permeability of boundaries and therefore the continuity of substances, which has to be understood as an illusion, but it is the relational continuities in which a particular animal or environment is situated, which must be understood as a form of judgement. Such a type of experience means that Upper Palaeolithic art is simultaneously rational and irrational, both a form of art and a form of fetishism. Upper Palaeolithic cave art is therefore a less pure form of 'prehistoric art' than the art of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic.

7. AN ONTOLOGY OF NEOLITHIC ART IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Introduction

In the previous chapter I proposed that the structural difference between the early human mind and modern mind is insufficient to understand the modification of aesthetic experience that occurs in the Upper Palaeolithic. This is related to the way the condition of the modern mind operates as 'groundless ground', which means that it cannot operate within a general way, but only in a particular way. It is by understanding the modification of this general condition that one gains insight into the nature of ontology and aesthetics during the Neolithic. This requires posing the question where the difference between the Neolithic and Upper Palaeolithic is situated. I argued that the Upper Palaeolithic world was characterized by a hybrid type of aesthetic experience in which propositional feeling and propositional judgement were entangled with one another. This means that the Upper Palaeolithic world was not entirely rational, as it was characterized by the incoherence between appearance and reality and in this sense allowed deception to occur. I propose that the Neolithic was a more rational world than the Upper Palaeolithic and that aesthetic experience became transformed from a hybrid type of experience towards propositional judgement. This argument is concerned with the fact that the Neolithic world is no longer based on encounter with the other (as is the case with hunter-gathering), but on the idea of homeland. The paradoxical constellation of Earth as Territory and Territory as Earth, which characterizes the Upper Palaeolithic, becomes transformed to the condition of Earth as Territory. Aesthetic experience during the Neolithic can then be understood as a teleological aesthetic judgement in the Kantian sense in which one judges the coherence between appearance and reality as a form of truth.

Within the first part of this chapter *Defining the Neolithic as a Modification of Aesthetic Experience: Process as Endurance* I analyse how the modification of experience that occurs during the Neolithic has to be understood as a particular form of process based on endurance. I end my discussion of the modification of experience during the Neolithic by distinguishing between Neolithic animism and Upper Palaeolithic animism. Within the second part of this chapter *Theorizing Stone Decoration and Cup-and-Ring Rock Art as a Form of Art* I extend my analysis of the modification of aesthetic experience during the Neolithic to the phenomenon of Neolithic art. Based on the idea that a

teleological aesthetic judgement requires the entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime, reflection and practice, I argue that 'Neolithic art' must consist of a variety of different artefacts, which both encompass practical and ephemeral forms of image making incorporated within everyday practice and elaborate visual practices in which the order of nature was visualized and contemplated. I therefore undertake an examination into how the condition of 'process as endurance' is manifested differently within various types of 'Neolithic art'. I focus on two types of stone decoration (carved stone balls and the Folkton Drums) in order to analyze the different ways in which the process character of decoration can manifest itself. Secondly, I define cup-and-ring rock art as a form of art by arguing that its network character has to be understood through the autonomy of the aesthetic.

7.1 Defining the Neolithic as a Modification of Aesthetic Experience: Process as Endurance

7.1.1 The Arrival of the Neolithic: Revolution or Continuity?

Within the archaeological literature, the distinction between the Upper Palaeolithic and Neolithic has both been challenged and affirmed. The affirmation of their distinction goes back to the work of the archaeologist Gordon Childe in the early twentieth century. Childe speaks of a 'Neolithic Revolution' because it constitutes a radical alteration of people's relationship to nature, namely the development of the cultivation of plants (farming) and the domestication of animals.[433] The shift from hunter-gathering to farming and domestication means that people are no longer simply involved within the world, but actively shape and alter it. This could be understood as the start of modernity, because it indicates that a human being has the capacity to alter his own situation/condition and therefore the capacity to improve himself, or in the words of Childe 'make himself'. Such a perspective situates the Neolithic within a universal narrative of progress that culminates in the industrial revolution.[434] The characterization of the Neolithic as a 'revolution' by Childe therefore operates as an affirmation of the condition of the modern West, as being the advanced outcome of this revolution. It is because of this affirmation that the idea of the Neolithic as a revolution has been challenged.

The work of Clive Gamble *Origins and Revolutions* (2007) argues that the idea of a 'Neolithic Revolution' neglects the fact that time is multilayered, which means that time is characterized by

[433] Childe 2003: 66.
[434] Gamble 2007: 13, 16.

different rates of change and continuity. By marking the Neolithic as a revolution, the Upper Palaeolithic would be a mere leading up period towards this moment of change, which neglects the emergence of the modern mind during the Upper Palaeolithic. A different narrative is therefore needed, which looks at the Upper Palaeolithic and Neolithic in terms of continuity instead of radical change.[435] The work of Steven Mithen also argues in favour of such continuity, as the development of farming and domestication requires the ability to integrate the realm of the social with the natural and technological. Such an integration is also characteristic for the development of Upper Palaeolithic art and for this reason the Neolithic could be understood in terms of continuity rather than a radical break. The distinction between a form of life based on hunter-gathering and cultivation therefore does not mark a different relationship between a human being and nature, but only a different integration of the realms of the social, natural and technological.[436] Also, the fact that Upper Palaeolithic societies within the Refuge Zone developed a form of semi-sedentism while early farming communities were often semi-nomadic, indicates that the distinction between hunter-gathering and farming should not be undertood as two completely opposed forms of life. The work of the archaeologist Eric Higgs in particular challenged this distinction and argued that hunter-gathering and farming should be conceived as two poles on a continuum of relationships.[437]

The challenging of a strict distinction between the Upper Palaeolithic and Neolithic means that the phenomenon of 'architecture' and modification of the environment are not necessarily limited to the Neolithic, but can indeed be extended to the (Upper) Palaeolithic. The execution of cave art could for example be understood as a form of architecture, even though a cave is a natural environment and therefore not built in the strict sense of the term. Architecture therefore should not literally be understood as a 'building', but in terms of any intervention that contributes towards a transformation of the natural environment into a shared cognitive space-time that allows people to feel at home.[438] A different example is the way an artefact can take up the status of architecture, which means the way an artefact embodies a particular place even though it is not site-specific.[439] This is related to the way the material substance of the artefact refers to its place of extraction, but also to the way the modern mind allows the development of a form of material culture that allows the bringing together of different

[435] Gamble 2007: 276-277.
[436] Mithen 1996: 248, 256.
[437] Higgs and Jarman 1972: 13.
[438] Ingold 2000c: 187.
[439] McFadyen 2008: 128; Robb 2004: 137.

places, times and people. A material culture object can in this sense create a shared cognitive space-time and establish a sense of place or home even though it is neither site-specific nor a building. The rethinking of the phenomenon of architecture is also visible in the performative dimension of Neolithic architecture, which has been put forward particularly by the work of Lesly McFadyen.[440] Neolithic monuments were not static buildings that were built according to a predefined design, but were continuously in the process of being built. The display of the sarsen stones within the Avebury monument for example were involved in practices of deposition, which referenced the wider landscape. This relates to the idea that the endurance character of the sarsen stones had to be actively maintained by referencing their places of origin.[441] A performative approach allows shifting away from 'architecture as building' towards 'architecture as process'.

The idea of 'architecture as process' has been further elaborated upon by the adoption of process metaphysics within prehistoric archaeology. Because process metaphysics replaces the modern Western ontological distinction between subject and object with the ontological primacy of 'process', it allows the archaeologist to rethink the ontological condition of prehistoric artefacts from the status of 'object' to 'process'.[442] Whereas the adoption of such an approach is meant to do justice to the true ontological condition of prehistoric artefacts, I argue that it actually eliminates their particularity. This is the case because 'process' becomes to stand for the ontological condition of every prehistoric artefact from the Lower Palaeolithic until the Iron Age. In the chapter on Adorno, I argued that a reduction of material artefacts to the concept of 'process' leads to an elimination of their materiality, because an artefact becomes not acknowledged in its material specificity, but generalized on the basis of an empty concept. Therefore, whereas the idea of the Neolithic as a revolution needs indeed to be challenged, the current 'process' approaches take the idea of continuity too far, as they result into a complete elimination of material specificity and the distinctiveness of the respective prehistoric periods. As argued above, the ontological primacy of experience (or process) cannot be understood in a general way, but only within a particular way, which means that one needs to analyse the ontological modification of 'process' that occurs during the Neolithic.

[440] McFadyen 2008: 130-131; Baily and McFadyen 2010: 565, 568.
[441] Gillings and Pollard 2016: 555-556.
[442] Consider for example: Fowler 2013; Jones 2012; Jones and Diaz-Guardamino 2019; Thomas 2016.

7.1.2 The Modification of Experience during the Neolithic: Process as Endurance

Whereas the current adoption of process metaphysics within Neolithic archaeology has shifted the focus from monumentality and endurance towards the process character of material culture and architecture, I argue that the modification of process that occurs during the Neolithic should be understood through the idea of *process as endurance*. I have discussed this idea within the chapter on Whitehead. It means *a form of process in which an entity is striving to remain its continuity as that particular entity*. It can best be understood through the difference between 'continuity of becoming' and 'becoming of continuity'. A form of process based on the continuity of becoming would imply that an entity is involved in a continuous process of transformation. A form of process based on the *becoming of continuity* on the other hand means a form of process that works against transformation and ensures the continuity of an entity as that particular entity through time.

This latter form of process implies a nuancing of the concept 'relationality', as it indicates that an entity is not defined by its environment, but that through the environment it attempts to strive for the actualization and maintenance of its subjective aim, its own value. *It is a form of process based on becoming of continuity that is most appropriate for the Neolithic, as it allows understanding how a particular place and society remain their endurance character through time. Without the character of endurance, it is impossible for a long-term cultural tradition to occur based on ethnicity, ancestry and belonging to place.* The shift from hunter-gathering to sedentism is therefore accompanied by a modification of experience in which a shared type of experience becomes developed that transforms the condition of Earth (constellation of multiple space-times) into a shared space-time. From the moment people share a similar set of affects by settling within a particular place, the condition of experience inevitably changes, as place must take up the characteristic of endurance in order for people to feel at home.[443]

A modification of aesthetic experience based on process as endurance can be defined as a teleological aesthetic judgement, as characterized within the chapter on Kant. What is typical about a teleological aesthetic judgement is that it is a type of religious experience on the order of nature that is critical. A critical type of religious experience does not reduce the order of nature to mere appearance, but judges the coherence between appearance and reality and therefore operates as a judgement of

[443] Hodder 1998: 72; Renfrew 2009: 126.

truth. Such a type of experience has to be based onto the beautiful, as it is within the judgement of beauty that one judges the coherence between appearance and reality without eliminating their distinction. The experience of the purposiveness of nature during the Neolithic has to be understood as a critical type of experience in order for the Neolithic landscape to take up the condition of homeland. Otherwise, a type of order based on endurance and harmony would generate a closed world that is incapable of change, and therefore would reduce order to mere appearance. Such a type of order cannot establish the condition of home, for home requires a type of framing as groundless ground, which means that it acknowledges that reality cannot be reduced to mere empiricism. It is only the judgement of the beautiful, which is able to deliver a type of order based on endurance and simultaneously work against the reduction of reality to mere appearance. This is the case because the condition of the beautiful only manifests itself within a judgement of the coherence between appearance and reality and therefore by definition works against deception.

However, the reason why we are not dealing with a mere aesthetic judgement of the beautiful, but with a teleological aesthetic judgement is because the experience of the order of nature must both take up the condition of reflection and practice, which means that the beautiful has to be entangled with the sublime. It is the sublime that allows Neolithic art to take up the character of agency and influence people's practical action, which is necessary in order for a lifeworld to occur. Still, it is reflection and therefore the beautiful, which is necessary in order for the experience of the order of nature to take up the condition of truth and therefore be critical. It is this entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime within teleological aesthetic judgement, which allows conceiving why many forms of Neolithic art are embedded within everyday practices and in this sense lack a 'static' form. *By equating the practical dimension of Neolithic art with a type of order based on 'flux', one misconceives the fact that this practical dimension must be understood in terms of an entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime and therefore through a type of order based on endurance.*

Within my discussion of Upper Palaeolithic art, I argued how a type of order based on flux (the permeability of substances) has to be conceived through a hybrid type of experience (propositional feeling and propositional judgement). Such a type of experience is both rational and irrational, and therefore cannot be equated with a teleological aesthetic judgement in the Kantian sense. By acknowledging the Neolithic world as a rationalization of experience, it becomes possible to conceive why the practical character of Neolithic art must be understood through a specific type of process

(process as endurance), which is based on a type of judgement on the coherence between appearance and reality (instead of the instable relation between appearance and reality that characterizes the Upper Palaeolithic). By defining the modification of aesthetic experience during the Neolithic as a teleological aesthetic judgement, it becomes possible to conceive why process as endurance is not limited to sedentism, but can also take the form of a different type of visual culture, such as during the Neolithic of Britain and Ireland. A teleological aesthetic judgement means that a constellation of multiple space-times becomes transformed into a shared space-time. This indicates that we are no longer dealing with a paradoxical form of world making, but with the condition of Earth as Territory. It is Earth as Territory, which is necessary in order for a landscape to take up the condition of homeland, as it implies the ability to experience place not as a constellation of multiple entities, but as a coherent whole.

7.1.3 Distinguishing between Neolithic Animism and Upper Palaeolithic Animism

The idea that the modification of experience that characterizes the Neolithic world has to be conceived as a form of rationalization allows understanding why Upper Palaeolithic animism and Neolithic animism are distinct from one another. As argued above, a form of process as endurance means that an entity is both defined by limitation (as being distinct from the environment) and by its relation to the environment. *A type of animism based on process as endurance therefore means that animism cannot be based on relational continuity (the permeability of boundaries), but becomes to operate as an internal condition within matter.* Within my discussion of the animacy of stone in chapter two, I argued how the condition of animacy emerges through a negation of stone's endurance character. Stone takes up the character of endurance in order to stand for a particular landmark. However, because the medium of stone played an integral role in the contemplation of the order of the Neolithic landscape, the experience of stone as enduring object has to become aligned with the experience of the order of nature as a whole. I argued that such an association gives rise to the phenomenon of animacy, as it is through animacy that the endurance character of stone can simultaneously take up a process character, which is necessary in order to make manifest a type of order based on process as endurance.

The fact that the appearance of stone in terms of colour, shape and light was important for Neolithic communities indicates that the experience of stone must have taken up the character of the

beautiful. It is through a judgment of the beautiful that appearance is aligned with reality (the actual with the virtual) and for this reason an aesthetic judgement connects the appearance of stone to the inherent order within nature (supersensible). *It is through the judgement of stone as beautiful, that stone's endurance character becomes associated with animacy*. Such a type of animism is structurally different from Upper Palaeolithic animism in which the animacy of stone was based on stone's transformative dimension. Such a type of animism is not internal, but concerned with the isomorphy between substances in which stone can turn into animal, which is manifest for example in the isomorphy between cave art and the rock surface.[444] Moreover, such a type of animism is not entirely rational, as it is based on the mere appearance of nature being characterized by the permeability of boundaries, whereas Neolithic animism occurs through a judgement of the actual purposiveness of nature and is therefore based on truth.

This structural difference between Neolithic animism and Upper Palaeolithic animism is also visible in the equation between the animacy of stone and subjecthood during the Neolithic. The idea that a standing stone would take up the ontological status of a human being is most clearly visible in the Neolithic of Brittany (France) in which standing stones were decorated in the form of a human figure.[445] Even though the standing stones in Britain and Ireland lack such figuration, Chris Scarre has argued that this should not be seen as evidence that such an association was absent.[446] *Such an equation between the animacy of stone and the ontological status of a human being is not illogical if one conceives that the modification of experience during the Neolithic is characterized by a growing sense of self.* Whereas in the Upper Palaeolithic the focus was on the other (animal), a type of experience based on limitation indicates that human beings must also have become aware of their own limitation as distinct from the environment. Because stone is both characterized by animacy (process) and endurance it allows Neolithic communities to become aware of their own notion of self, as both being defined by limitation (endurance) and process. Therefore, it is not just the 'animate' character of stone that is responsible for the equation between stone and human being, but the constellation of process and endurance, which is manifest within the experience of the order of nature through the medium of stone.

[444] Conneller 2011: 97.
[445] Scarre 2009: 12, 16.
[446] Ibid. 13, 16-17.

7.2 Theorizing Stone Decoration and Cup-and-Ring Rock Art as a Form of Art

7.2.1 The Process Character of Stone Decoration: Carved Stone Balls and the Folkton Drums

In order to further elaborate on the idea that the process character of decoration during the Neolithic has to be understood as a form of process as endurance, associated with the condition of the beautiful, I will now discuss two different types of artefacts: stone balls (eastern Scotland) and the Folkton Drums (Yorkshire). These two types of artefacts give an indication of the way stone decoration during the Neolithic took different forms and in this sense cannot be generalized. In order to discuss the two types of stone decoration I rely on the work *Making a Mark* (2019) by Andrew Jones and Marta Diaz-Guardamino. Jones and Diaz-Guardamino argue that we have to acknowledge the process character of these artefacts, namely that it is the practice of engagement with stone (the practice of decoration) instead of the final form that must have been important.[447] Also, they interpret the process character of these artefacts as evidence of a 'relational ontology', which means that the Neolithic world was a world in which different materials stood in relational continuity with one another.[448]

However, following my discussion above, the drawing of such a conclusion is problematic because it neglects the particularity of the Neolithic world, as being different from the Upper Palaeolithic. Also, the alignment between 'process' and 'relational ontology' risks making the mistake of equating Neolithic ontology with process metaphysics in general. Such an interpretation makes it impossible to understand the Neolithic as a form of rationalization and as giving rise to a very particular form of animism. By arguing against 'representation' and in favour of 'process' one has the risk of falling into the trap of what Adorno calls a positive ontology based on mere engagement. Such a reduction would mean an elimination of both human rationality and materiality. Whereas I do not dispute the process character of stone decoration, I argue that this process character has to be approached through a type of aesthetic judgement in which reflection and practice were entangled. This will allow connecting their process character to the condition of endurance.

[447] Jones and Diaz-Guardamino 2019: 13-23; Thomas 2016: 159-175.
[448] Jones et al. 2011: 248; Jones and Diaz-Guardamino 2019: 192; Thomas 2016: 168, 205, 217.

This type of artefact is rather special given that it constitutes the largest group of decorated stone artefacts during the Neolithic, yet their actual role within Neolithic communities remains completely unknown.[449] These artefacts have been classified as ritual objects related to the display of social prestige and power of particular Neolithic groups. However, this idea has recently been questioned by Jones and Diaz-Guardamino. They indicate that stone balls have been recovered in the contexts of settlements and are therefore domestic in nature. Also, the depositional context does not show any evidence of ritual use or special status of the object or location.[450] They also point out that stone balls were often abandoned at various stages of working and therefore were never 'finished'. If stone balls were ritual objects of power, one would expect that they were at least finished and that there was a concern with the display of their final form. The apparent lack of final form means according to Jones and Diaz-Guardamino that it was the process of making that was most important.[451]

This observation is significant because it suggests that the making of a stone ball was not directed towards the production of a final or ideal form. Instead, we are dealing with a kind of practice in which a stone was carved according to the general rule of dividing a sphere into spheroid shapes. This activity of division could take many forms and the choices that were made must have been a result of the active working with materials. The form of stone balls therefore was the outcome of a dialogue with materials and not preconceived in advance.[452] Based on this observation, Jones and Diaz-Guardamino put forward the interpretation that instead of being ritual objects of power, carved stone balls were didactic objects related to learning the techniques of stone working. The practice of dividing a stone into several spheroid shapes was then a way to explore and understand the properties of stone working. This is visible in the fact that the making of a carved stone ball requires the combination of different types of stone working (hammering, pecking and fine working by incision) and in this sense allowed people to learn and share a set of skills, which was used in a variety of tasks like architecture, stone axes and mace heads.[453]

[449] Jones and Diaz-Guardamino 2019: 103.
[450] Ibid. 113-114.
[451] Ibid. 114-116.
[452] Ibid. 115-116.
[453] Ibid. 119-121.



Fig. 7. Carved Stone Balls (Neolithic), Aberdeenshire, Scotland

Following my argument above that Neolithic art must have operated both as a form of reflection (on the order of nature) and as a form of practice, one could argue that the process character of the carved stone balls is evidence of the way a practical engagement with materials was essential in order for the type of order, which characterizes the Neolithic world, to give rise to a lifeworld, and be understood implicitly by everyone. However, such a perspective is not entirely sufficient because it does not explain the difference in decoration between for example linear zigzag motifs within Neolithic houses (which is a type of decoration based on accumulation of engravings and therefore about the process of execution instead of final form) and the curvilinear decoration that characterizes carved stone balls. When stone decoration takes the form of imposition or accumulation of engravings the continued act of decoration damages earlier work. This is not the case with carved stone balls as 'process' is coupled to the development and growing complexity of form. This difference cannot be ignored, as it demonstrates that although both the mere accumulation of engravings and the carved stone balls are defined by the process of making, we are nevertheless not dealing with the same type of process. The fact that carved stone balls indeed lack a concern with final form and were involved in various stages of working has to be connected to the idea that 'process' nevertheless had a sense of

direction. Earlier decoration was not obliterated, but continued and complicated. I argue that the process character of carved stone balls has not to be understood in terms of learning the technique of stone working, but in terms of learning the modification of process that characterizes the Neolithic world.

I argued that such a type of process has to be conceived as a form of process as endurance. This means that process is not characterized by a continuous process of change and transformation, but by the maintenance of continuity. One could think about the process of growth of a plant, in which the form of the plant is indeed involved in a process of change, but nevertheless remains its continuity through time. *I argue that the process character of carved stone balls has to be understood as a form of process, which has a sense of direction and in which form is indeed not static, but nevertheless remains its continuity through time.* Whereas a carved stone ball does not have a final form, the different stages of working do show consistency in terms of the way the division into spheroid shapes becomes developed and gives rise to increasing complex shapes and decoration. Form is in this sense not involved in a continuous process of change and transformation, but in a form of process in which form both develops and remains its continuity through time. If the process of making lacks a sense of direction it would be impossible to conceive how, despite the lack of final form, all the carved stone balls show a remarkable consistency regardless of their stage of working.

Therefore, I follow Jones and Diaz-Guardamino that the carved stone balls were didactic objects, but not in terms of the learning of the skills of stone working, but in terms of learning the modification of process that characterizes the Neolithic: process as endurance, which means a form of process in which change and continuity are entangled. The process character of carved stone balls is then not evidence of a world based on 'flux', but of a world based on 'endurance'. The carved stone balls do show a concern with the purposiveness of form even though they lack a final form. The idea of the purposiveness of form is visible in the way they lend themselves quite easily to be approached as art or ritual objects. Even though the work of Jones and Diaz-Guardamino has challenged this interpretation, one cannot neglect the fact that the form of carved stone balls is more than the outcome of a mere process of engagement. The interpretation of learning affirms this idea, as learning both requires practical engagement and reflection. Mere engagement as such would imply that the order of nature was already understood implicitly, whereas reflection requires the deliberate visualization of the

order of nature as such. *In the case of carved stone balls we are dealing with an intermediate situation, which is more than engagement, but less than a depiction of truth.*

The process character of carved stone balls points towards the condition of the sublime, but the purposiveness of form towards the condition of the beautiful. Because carved stone balls lack the shapelessness of linear zigzag decoration (mere accumulation of engravings) they are more than sublime, but because they lack the visualisation of the order of nature that is manifest within cup-and-ring art and megalithic architecture, they are less than beautiful. *This means that the shapelessness of form that characterizes the sublime was entangled with the purposiveness of form that characterizes the beautiful.* It is such an entanglement, which allows understanding the process character of carved stone balls as a form of learning and to envision why, despite the lack of final form, there seems indeed to have been a concern with the purposiveness of form. This is different from the entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime within a Lower Palaeolithic stone bola in which the sublime was not manifested within practice, but within final form as such. Therefore, although both linear engraving and carved stone balls can be classified under the rubric of stone decoration, they nevertheless constitute two different types of decoration. This difference is not illogical if one acknowledges that a type of order based on endurance must also work against itself in order to not become a static type of order.

The Folkton Drums

The Folkton Drums are three decorated chalk cylinders, which have been found within a child burial placed in a barrow and probably date to the late Neolithic (beginning of the third millenium BCE).[454] This type of artefact is unique within its kind, with only one other 'drum' found inside a Neolithic pit at the Levant site in Sussex.[455] The decoration on the Folkton Drums consists of linear geometric engravings, curvilinear designs and 'eyebrow' motifs. The work of Jones and Diaz-Guardamino has detected evidence of erasure and reworking in the practice of decoration, with most notably the erasure of an 'eyebrow' motif on drum two.[456] Based on this evidence of erasure and reworking they argue that the decoration has to be understood as a form of experimentation that evolved through the process of

[454] Jones and Diaz-Guardamino 2019: 67, 81.
[455] Ibid. 67.
[456] Ibid. 69-70.



Fig. 8. The Folkton Drums (Neolithic), Yorkshire, England

working with the chalk.[457] This means that the Folkton Drums take up a 'process' character in the same way as the linear decoration and the carved stone balls. However, a sole attention for the 'process' character of the decoration lacks concern with the particular nature of the artefact and why it took the particular form of a 'drum'. Following my discussion of linear decoration and the carved stone balls, the process character of decoration can operate in various ways and it is only by understanding its particularity that one gains insight into the specific form and character of the decoration. What sets the Folkton Drums apart from the pervious discussed decorative practice is the fact that we have here a copresence of both linear and curvilinear engravings. Also, the 'eyebrow' motif indicates that a drum might have taken up the condition of 'subjecthood' in a similar way as an erected megalithic stone. This association between stone and subjecthood is not something that is present within the carved stone balls. It points towards a form of animacy, which is internal to stone itself, instead of being relational.

This association between stone and subjecthood requires looking beyond the process character of the drums and align them not only with practices of decoration, but also with the condition of megalithic architecture. This association is confirmed by the drum-like shape of the artefacts. When

[457] Jones and Diaz-Guardamino 2019: 70.

one thinks of a drum as a music instrument, it is a form that operates as a frame or enclosure of space, which is necessary to produce sound. The shape of a drum is less about the actual shape than about it being a form that frames or encloses something else. Although the Folkton Drums consist of solid chalk and in this sense do not have an inside, they nevertheless take up the condition of an enclosing or framing form. What is significant is that this idea of enclosure or framing is also a condition that is taken up by megalithic architecture and passage graves.[458] We are dealing with a framing of space/landscape, which is often explicitly visible in terms of the different circular layers of which both stone circles and passage graves consist.

Both the eyebrow motif and the drum-like shape of the Folkton Drums draw an analogy with monumental architecture, which is not seen with other types of decorated artefacts. The reason why this connection is significant is because it allows explaining the copresence of linear and curvilinear decoration. The copresence of the circular and the linear is manifest within a type of visual culture in which the order of nature is visualized explicitly, as is the case in megalithic architecture. This entanglement of the circular and the linear tends to be absent within stone decoration because of its concern with practice over reflection. The fact that we do see such an entanglement within the Folkton Drums means that these artefacts are both situated within the category of decorative artefacts and the category of megalithic architecture. The Folkton Drums would in this sense be a hybrid artefact that both took up the condition of stone decoration and of site-specific architecture.

This hybrid character of the Folkton Drums means that we are dealing with a different constellation of the beautiful and the sublime, as was the case with the carved stone balls. The copresence of the linear and the curvilinear accompanied by the condition of framing or enclosing form means that we are dealing with the beautiful. It is through the beautiful that the purposiveness of form (and therefore the purposiveness of nature) can be visualized into material form. Also, the condition of the beautiful has an architectural quality, as it establishes a plateau in which one can feel at home. This architectural quality of the beautiful is visible within megalithic architecture, but must also have been present within the Folkton Drums. The Drums perform in this sense a highly specific function, as they allow the architectural quality of megalithic architecture to become transformed into an artefact, which could be deposited within a grave. This quality could not be fulfilled by carved stone balls, as their sense of 'order' is bound to practical engagement. We therefore need a type of artefact, in which order

[458] Richards 2013: 16-18.

is manifest within form itself and is unbound to practice. However, in order for the beautiful to take up an architectural quality, it has to be aligned with the sublime. Therefore, an artefact solely characterized by the purposiveness of form would be incapable to take up an architectural quality. If the entanglement of the beautiful and sublime would be present within form itself, we would be dealing with a 'shapeless' form, as is the case with a Lower Palaeolithic stone bola. *In the case of the Folkton Drums, I argue, we are dealing with an entanglement between the beautiful and the sublime in the sense that the beautiful is the result of an improvisatory action and takes up a distributed condition (namely the fact that we are dealing with three drums instead of one).*

Andrew Jones has argued that the improvisatory character of the decoration could be seen as an indication that the Drums were produced fairly rapidly and buried.[459] *The process character of the decoration is different from carved stone balls because we are indeed dealing with a 'final form', but a form that was the result of improvisatory action.* This means that the significance of the Folkton Drums was not manifest within the practice of making as such, but that the improvisatory character of making, accompanied by the fact that the Folkton Drums have to be understood as a multiple object (being three objects rather than one), allowed them to both take up the condition of the beautiful and the sublime within the context of a grave without being a 'shapeless form' or being bound to practice. This entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime allowed the architectural quality of megalithic architecture to be extended to the context of a grave. This architectural quality is important because it could be associated with the condition of 'subjecthood' that these Drums might have possessed.

I argued that Neolithic animism has to be conceived as an internal form of animism; an internal form of animism means that one becomes aware of one's value as both related to and distinct from the world. This idea of the value of 'self' being both distinct from and bound to the world comes particularly to the fore in the case of death. It poses the question of the human soul and what happens to the soul after death. The idea of the soul being both distinct from and bound to the world allows conceiving why megalithic sarsen stones were associated with the dead or ancestors.[460] Stone becoming ancestor means that the distinctiveness of the soul is both acknowledged and conceived as part of the Neolithic world/landscape as a whole. If we follow my proposal that the Folkton Drums took up a similar architectural quality as megalithic architecture, it allows conceiving the Drums as containers of the soul. In order for them to take up this role, they must have been structurally different from the other

[459] Jones and Diaz-Guardamino 2019: 70.
[460] Gillings and Pollard 2004: 69.

type of decoration that I discussed. By generalizing the process character of stone decoration, one neglects how this process character operated in different ways and served different functions.

7.2.2 An Ontology of Cup-and-Ring Rock Art: A Network Character based on the Autonomy of the Aesthetic

Cup-and-ring rock art is characterized by its extremely visual simplicity (solely consisting of cup-mark, ring-mark and radial line), and in this sense lacks the visual complexity of Upper Palaeolithic cave art. It is a modest type of rock art, which is relatively small in scale and does not take up a prominent position within the landscape. Because cup-and-ring art tends to be situated on horizontal rock surfaces, it is not visible from a distance, but only if one stands up-close to the actual rock outcrop.[461] This also indicates that prior knowledge of its location must have been essential in order for cup-and-ring art to be perceived. Richard Bradley has argued that cup-and-ring art cannot be understood in isolation, namely on the level of the individual motif or carved rock outcrop, but only as landscape system.[462] This means that cup-and-ring art is not meaningful in itself, but only through its landscape position and relation to other cup-and-ring art panels. Instead of being concerned with the contemplation of the beauty of form, cup-and-ring art has to be understood as a form of communication that enabled Neolithic communities to relate to and navigate through the landscape. Cup-and-ring art can therefore not be conceived apart from the use and movement through the landscape, which means that it cannot be reduced to an examination of the cup-and-ring motifs or its 'aesthetic' dimension.[463]

However, whereas a sole concern with cup-and-ring art as such is indeed inappropriate, I nevertheless argue that one needs to be careful not to put too much emphasis on the relational character of cup-and-ring art. If cup-and-ring art would only be meaningful through its position within the landscape or relation to other rock art panels, it becomes a mere means to an end. In order to understand cup-and-ring art as a form of art, on needs to acknowledge how it is more than a means to an end and has also meaning in itself. This requires posing the question of the aesthetic and indeed of the beautiful again. Following my argument that the order of nature during the Neolithic was based onto endurance (the coherence between appearance and reality), it is the aesthetic judgement of the

[461] Waddington 2007: 50.
[462] Bradley 1997: 47.
[463] Ibid. 5.

beautiful, which becomes essential in order to conceive how such an order can become manifest. I argued above how it is a teleological aesthetic judgement, which allows rethinking the aesthetic judgement of beauty towards the experience of the order of nature in which practice and reflection were entangled. I argue that cup-and-ring art, despite lacking features that we normally conceive of as beautiful, offers a very good example of how this type of experience was manifest during the Neolithic.



Fig. 9. Cup-and-Ring Art Panel with Views to the Cheviot Hills (Neolithic), Chatton Park Hill, Northumberland, England. (Photograph by Dr. Aaron Watson)

I would like to approach this problem through the question where the frame or border of cup-and-ring art is situated. Following the current relational approach to cup-and-ring art, the frame has to be understood as a 'network' (or actor-network), as in order to understand the meaning of a cup-and-ring art panel, one must take into account its position within a cluster of rock art panels and places within the landscape.[464] However, following my discussion of aesthetics in Part I, we can only speak of art when art itself operates as frame. Art as frame means that the encounter with art constitutes a plateau in which the condition of Earth becomes transformed to Territory. It is through art that the various processes of concrescence, which define the condition of Earth, can become transformed into 'one world', which is necessary for the Neolithic landscape to take up the condition of homeland.

[464] Jones 2006: 223; Jones 2012: 87.

Therefore, in order for cup-and-ring art to take up a concern with the genealogy and identity of the Neolithic landscape, it had to take up the condition of frame itself. This idea that cup-and-ring art operates itself as frame can be easily misconceived, however, as being a visual marker of boundaries in the landscape or pathways to be followed. Even though cup-and-ring art would indeed operate in this case as a frame or boundary, it would be nothing but a mere empirical phenomenon and in this sense lack the quality to transform the landscape into a 'homeland'.

The idea that cup-and-ring art itself constitutes a frame requires taking a different viewpoint towards its relational character. Following my discussion of Whitehead, aesthetic experience operates at various levels of complexity and the most complex type of aesthetic experience (aesthetic judgement) cannot occur apart from these lower types of experience. With lower types of aesthetic experience I mean one's everyday existence within a lifeworld in terms of the movement through the landscape and the recognition of places within it (symbolic reference). If we follow the idea that an aesthetic judgement cannot exist outside the lower types of aesthetic experience, it always has a relational character, in the sense that it builds upon past experiences, which could be reformulated as one's embodied memory. *An aesthetic judgement of beauty is therefore not opposed to relationality, but requires it in order to occur.* This acknowledgement offers the basis to rethink the relational character of cup-and-ring art as a form of aesthetic autonomy. It means that the relational dimension of cup-and-ring art is not manifest empirically within the rock art itself (cup-and-ring art being an element within a larger network), but only comes to the fore within aesthetic experience.

A teleological aesthetic judgement is characterized by the simultaneous movement from the particular to the universal and from the universal to the particular. This means that through the encounter with cup-and-ring art one gains awareness of the order of the Neolithic landscape as being characterized by endurance. However, in order for this to occur, one needs to already possess a sense of this order implicitly, which is related to one's embodied memory within the lifeworld. The aesthetic experience of cup-and-ring art therefore must have activated this embodied memory explicitly through encounter with the particularity of rock art. It is through rock art that this embodied memory becomes integrated with an awareness of the order of nature. Endurance and relationality have therefore to be understood in constellation, which can only occur through the autonomy of aesthetic experience.

It is through a reflective type of aesthetic experience that one's embodied existence within a lifeworld takes up the condition of a common experience and that one can judge the coherence between

appearance and reality. This is necessary in order for the Neolithic landscape to take up the condition of homeland. By solely focusing on the relational character of cup-and-ring art, one neglects this necessity of reflection and therefore the autonomy of the aesthetic. Andrew Jones has remarked in this regard that cup-and-ring rock art is structurally different from other practices of stone decoration.[465] This is visible in the fact that cup-and-ring rock art panels are not the result of an accumulation of engravings in which older motifs were erased through imposition. Also, the idea that it would not be about the final form or final composition of motifs, but on the practice of engraving itself, must be rejected. This is visible in the fact that most of the cup-and-ring motifs are of a single phase, lacking processes of reworking, and that motifs were only very rarely superimposed. The composition of cup-and-ring art was executed according to a set of rules and in this sense was indeed meant to endure. The addition of carvings to a rock art panel was then less about the act of making as such, but a way to ensure the continuity of cup-and-ring art through time. Motifs were not erased or merely accumulated, but added to by respecting the composition and rules that governed the composition.

Whereas the practices of stone decoration discussed earlier were very much concerned with the present (the activity of making), one could say that cup-and-ring art was a type of engraving concerned with the past. This is visible in the respect for older engravings and layout of the composition and the way the features of the rock itself seem to have been regarded as an older eroded rock art tradition even though no such tradition was actually present. The relational character of cup-and-ring art could in this sense be reinterpreted as a way to maintain the continuity of the Neolithic landscape as homeland. *Relationality in this sense is coupled to endurance and not opposed to it.* Richard Bradley has proposed that cup-and-ring art might not actually refer to the relationships of people in the present, but stood for an ideal type of order that reflected past ways of inhabiting the landscape.[466] This is important because it indicates that cup-and-ring art was less about the involvement within people's everyday activities (as was the case for stone decoration), but a way to visualize the continuity of the Neolithic landscape as deriving from the past. In order for cup-and-ring art to mark the order of the Neolithic landscape in terms of continuity with the past, it needed to be aligned with process in order to avoid becoming a static memorial. It is through the autonomy of the aesthetic, that one can experience a type of order in which process and endurance are entangled with one another.

[465] Jones and Diaz-Guardamino 2019: 179.
[466] Bradley 1997: 131.

Whereas I argued that the process character of decoration was a way to integrate a type of order based on 'process as endurance' within everyday action, I argue that cup-and-ring art has to be understood through a type of aesthetic experience in which practice was aligned with a reflective judgement on the order of nature. A reflective judgement on the order of nature requires the condition of the beautiful, as it is through the judgement of beauty that one can judge the coherence between appearance and reality as a form of truth. In order to relate the condition of the beautiful to cup-and-ring art, one must understand that *the beautiful takes up a distributed character and in this sense cannot be limited to an individual rock art panel*. If we approach cup-and-ring art as a system of communication, it means that individual rock art panels cannot be understood in isolation, but only in relation to others and therefore as landscape system. This means that it is not a single rock art panel that constitutes a plateau and operates as 'frame', but the whole constellation of rock art panels. In order for the Neolithic landscape to take up the condition of homeland, a system of signs must take up a practical dimension and in this sense no sign or composition of signs can constitute a world on its own. At first, this argument might seem like a return to the network approach to cup-and-ring art, which I criticized. However, we are dealing with a difference in nuance, which is important. Instead of the relational character of cup-and-ring art being concerned with empirical attachments (which an actor-network approach implies) one must understand it as a cluster of aesthetic experiences.

It is through the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful that one's embodied memory of the lifeworld can become integrated with the experience of the order of nature. Yet, because a rock art panel cannot be understood in isolation, but only in relation to others, the judgement of the beautiful (and therefore the experience of the order of nature) has to be a distributed type of experience. A single rock art panel is not beautiful in itself, but only as part of a landscape system. A different way to approach this condition of beauty is through the idea that the beautiful is entangled with the sublime. It is the purposiveness of form of cup-and-ring art (the copresence of the curvilinear and linear) that points towards the beautiful, but it is its functioning within a landscape system that points towards the sublime. It is precisly because the beautiful takes up a distributed condition that one cannot ascribe beauty to a single rock art panel and why cup-and-ring art does not seem beautiful to the Western eye. *When the beautiful takes up a distributed character, cup-and-ring art both takes up a network character, but also frames itself. It requires envisioning how its network character is not a means to an end, but takes up itself an autonomous dimension. Cup-and-ring art is therefore not framed by a*

network, but cup-and-ring art constitutes itself a network that is characterized by the autonomy of the aesthetic. This difference in nuance matters, because it allows conceiving how cup-and-ring art as landscape system can be theorized as a form of art. The condition of art, the beautiful, and the autonomy of the aesthetic, are not situated on the level of the individual panel, but take up a distributed character.

Conclusion

Within this chapter I argued that the modification of experience that occurs during the Neolithic has to be understood as a rationalization of aesthetic experience, which I defined as a teleological aesthetic judgement. A lifeworld based on teleological aesthetic judgement gives rise to a new form of process (process as endurance), which means a type of order in which appearance and reality cohere with one another. The art of the Neolithic was a way to make explicit the coherence between appearance and reality within material form. However, in order for this coherence between appearance and reality not to become a static relationship, we need a form of art based on both reflection and practice, which could be reformulated as the entanglement between the beautiful and the sublime. It is the beautiful, which allows contemplating the purposiveness of nature, but it is the sublime, which incorporates this purposiveness within practical action. This means a form of art that is both characterized by the purposiveness of form and by the process character of form. Aesthetic experience as teleological aesthetic judgement allows conceiving a different type of animism than Upper Palaeolithic animism or perspectivist animism. Within a teleological aesthetic judgement, the condition of animism arises out of the judgement of the order of nature. Animism must therefore be understood as a form of truth, which allows integrating the various processes of concrescence (Earth) into a shared space-time. This is different from perspectivism, in which the condition of animism arises out of a lifeworld that consists of a constellation of multiple space-times and from Upper Palaeolithic animism, in which animism stands for a practical type of order in which the idea of a shared cognitive space-time (relational continuity) is based on appearance and therefore an illusion.

8. TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF PREHISTORIC ART

Introduction

In this final chapter I analyse how the phenomenon of 'prehistoric art' can be defined. The definition of this term constitutes a theoretical problem within prehistoric archaeology, as it requires to resolve theoretically how the Western concept of art can be extended to prehistory. For the resolution of this problem I rely on the theorization of aesthetics as being 'autonomous' in the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics. Whereas 'aesthetic autonomy' is indeed an invention of Western modernity, it is possible to extend it to prehistory (which I analysed in Part I). This means that the extension of the concept of art to prehistory cannot be uncoupled from the question of how the origin of art in prehistory is related to the autonomy of art and the aesthetic in Western modernity. A definition of prehistoric art therefore needs to take the form of a theoretical statement on the relation between prehistoric art and the autonomy of art in Western modernity. I propose the following definition: *Prehistoric art is contemporary art unliteralized*. This definition resolves the theoretical opposition between the Western concept of art and prehistory while simultaneously avoiding the trap of categorisation (which would be contradictory to the condition of art itself). It encapsulates my reworking of Western philosophical aesthetics, as the relationship proposed situates prehistoric art in relation to the culmination of art's striving for autonomy in contemporary art. It is such a type of definition that we need as the term 'prehistoric art' is meaningless both in an archaeological and philosophical sense without an understanding of its relation to our Western category of art. Its relevance for archaeology is situated within the fact that it allows extending the concept of art and aesthetic autonomy to prehistory and provides a theoretical framework to make cross-cultural comparisons between prehistoric art and Western Modernism/contemporary art. Moreover, it indicates that the cross-cultural comparisons between prehistoric and Western art that have been undertaken up till now in prehistoric archaeology must be radically rethought.

Within the three previous chapters I demonstrated that there is no general 'prehistoric aesthetics', but only different modifications of aesthetic experience, which give rise to different worlds. I put forward three different types of aesthetic experience: (1) aesthetic judgement of pure beauty (Lower and Middle Palaeolithic), (2) a hybrid type of aesthetic experience consisting of both

propositional feeling and propositional judgement (Upper Palaeolithic), and (3) teleological aesthetic judgement (Neolithic). A fourth type of aesthetic experience ((4) aesthetic judgement within communicative action) could be added, which I discussed for perspectivist societies in the first part of this thesis. Because the modification of aesthetic experience is coupled to different forms of world making, it gives rise to different forms of art and different forms of animism. The conceptualization of a general form of 'prehistoric art' is from this perspective impossible. I argued that the purest condition of art is visible in the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic, in which art was nothing but a recreation of the aesthetic dimension of nature. Because this type of art is based on an aesthetic judgement of pure beauty, it does not incorporate a conceptual proposition, and for this reason cannot be understood as a form of animistic art. The inclusion of a conceptual proposition complicates aesthetic experience because it not only transforms art as pure beauty into art as social system, but also contains the potential for the incoherence between appearance and reality. This potential for deception means that the phenomenon of art and the aesthetic can be distorted, which takes the form of fetishism. A fetishistic object is not an art object because it is unconcerned with a recreation of the appearance-reality relationship as a form of truth. The arrival of the modern mind therefore means that the phenomenon of prehistoric art cannot be assumed, but must be examined critically through the rational character of aesthetic experience and world making. This realization has initiated the idea that the art of the Upper Palaeolithic could not completely be aligned with the condition of art because it has a hybrid character that is partly associated with fetishism.

However, although there is no general form of prehistoric art, it is nevertheless necessary to examine whether one can detect a shared principle across the different prehistoric art forms that I discussed. Without such a principle, the category of prehistoric art becomes meaningless. It would mean that the art of the Upper Palaeolithic is as different from the Neolithic as it is from the art of the Middle Ages. The fact that this is not the case, requires acknowledging that prehistoric art cannot be reduced to different forms of world making, but is indeed characterized by a general principle. This idea of a general principle that takes the form of different particularizations is related to the condition of art and the aesthetic itself. It means a form of rationality that cannot be uncoupled from subjective experience and therefore must be particularized. In order to come to a definition of prehistoric art, one needs to examine whether there is continuity between the different ways this principle was particularized during prehistory. I propose the following three general characteristics, which form the

basis to develop the general definition of prehistoric art: (1) a type of art that is unconscious of its own autonomy, (2) war-machine that works against State-formation, and (3) representation of relations.

8.1 Is there Continuity from the Lower Palaeolithic until the Neolithic?

a. Prehistoric Art as Art that is Unconscious of its Autonomy

As the first general characteristic of prehistoric art I propose that *prehistoric art is a type of art that is unconscious of its own autonomy.* Within the first part of the thesis I analysed that the autonomy of the aesthetic and art is not limited to Western modernity, but can indeed be extended to an animistic lifeworld. The autonomy of art does not stand for the detachment of art from the spheres of religion and politics, but is situated within the fact that art is an empirical object that cannot be reduced to its empirical dimension, but opens up towards the transcendental. The reason why this first general characteristic might seem provocative is because the autonomy of art and the aesthetic has always been critiqued within prehistoric archaeology.[467] By approaching prehistoric art through the idea of 'autonomy' one would impose modern Western values on the prehistoric past, which means that one would assume that prehistoric art was only meant for 'disinterested' contemplation and did not serve a practical purpose. Upper Palaeolithic cave art or Neolithic rock art would then have no function apart from the feeling of pleasure associated with the experience of their form, which is contradictory to the fact that they played a role within communication and the storage of information. In order to counter such a misinterpretation of prehistoric art, without reducing it to the straightforward embodiment of a message, archaeologists approached aesthetics as everyday aesthetics.[468] Everyday aesthetics is concerned with the importance of the senses (sight, touch, smell, taste and sound) in one's everyday activities. This is different from the autonomy of the aesthetic, which is a type of experience that connects the empirical with the transcendental and therefore distinct from both conceptual knowing and empirical sensation. Prehistoric art cannot be reduced to everyday aesthetics (empirical sensation) because the opening up of empirical reality towards the transcendental is necessary in order for prehistoric art to take up an active role in the constitution of the social. This is the case because the transcendental prevents a lifeworld from becoming a closed system in which reality would become

[467] Bradley 2009; Gell 1998; Hamilakis 2013, 14; Robb 2017; Skeates 2017, 610.
[468] Jones and Cochrane 2018; Hamilakis 2013; Skeates 2010; Skeates 2017.

reduced to mere empiricism or appearance. It is through the entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime that one can understand why aesthetic autonomy can be transformed from disinterested contemplation to practical action (see chapter Kant).

The difference between art that is explicitly autonomous and art that is unconscious of its own autonomy is situated within the fact that the becoming explicit of autonomy cannot be uncoupled from the distortion of the lifeworld through capitalism.[469] The becoming autonomous of art and the aesthetic emerged during the eighteenth century as a counter-movement to the growing rationalization and abstraction of the Enlightenment.[470] By becoming a sphere in its own right, art affirmed the idea that a different type of rationality and experience is possible, which is distinct from the conceptual abstraction of logic and science. The becoming autonomous of art in an explicit way is therefore associated with a distorted condition of the lifeworld, which it intends to counter, whereas an unconscious type of autonomy implies that such a distortion was non-existent. Because the autonomy of art and the aesthetic is essential for the human process of self-concrescence and the lifeworld, it needs to become autonomous in an explicit way when the lifeworld (and therefore also the human process of self-concrescence) becomes distorted. *The becoming autonomous of art in an explicit way has therefore to be understood through the incapacity of modern Western societies to experience the truth-condition of metaphysics and establish a lifeworld in which people feel at home.* The capacity of the autonomy of art and the aesthetic to operate as a form of world creation has become transformed to the art object itself, which could be understood through Adorno's remark that Modernist art entails the potential of a different world. The becoming autonomous of art and the aesthetic therefore means that these principles have disappeared from the lifeworld itself and it is for this reason why the autonomy of art takes the form of an art object that is detached from (rather than integrated within) the everyday. In a lifeworld in which this distortion does not occur, there is no need for the autonomy of art to be limited to an individual art object, which explains why prehistoric art can take up a distributed character and be integrated both into the environment and practical action. In order to operate as a form of world making and establish a shared space-time in which people feel at home, art must always have had an autonomous character. One could therefore say that prehistoric art was an autonomous form of art, which was unconscious of its own autonomy.

[469] Adorno 2013: 211-212, 307.
[470] Heumakers 2015, 16.

b. Prehistoric Art as War-Machine that works against State-Formation

The idea that prehistoric art is a form of art that is unconscious of its own autonomy points towards a second general characteristic, which is *the condition of war-machine*.[471] Defining prehistoric art as war-machine means that it is through the development of visual imagery that State-formation and the centralisation of power was actively countered and the dispersal and segmentary character of groups maintained. Following Deleuze and Guattari, State-formation is not a higher form of social complexity, which prehistoric communities were incapable to achieve, but a principle that stands for the striving for coherence between appearance and reality, content and expression.[472] This means that without the principle of State-formation the phenomenon of art could not occur, as the making of art means a recreation of the relation between appearance and reality within material form and is therefore in principle concerned with the attempt to make appearance and reality cohere with one another. We can only speak about art and beauty when the appearance-reality relationship is characterized by truth.[473] However, at the same time appearance and reality also cannot completely cohere with one another, as this would mean the reduction of reality to appearance and the closing down of the world to a mere empiricism.[474] Art therefore requires the striving for coherence between appearance and reality (and therefore the principle of State-formation), but must also work against it, as through art, people make visible the transcendental character of empirical reality and therefore the fact that reality cannot be reduced to the immediacy of actual existence. By characterizing prehistoric art as war-machine, one should therefore understand it as a type of social organization in which the principle of State-formation is both incorporated and countered. In order for prehistoric art to take up an active role within the constitution of the social, without leading towards a State-society, it must operate as war-machine.[475]

The condition of the war-machine sets prehistoric art apart from other art forms because it means a condition of the social in which the potential of art to work against signification and social structures forms the basis of the social itself. This is distinct from the condition of art within State-societies and the modern condition of art. Within the modern condition of art, art operates as critique on the lifeworld and the distortion of rationality. The condition of war-machine is than not situated

[471] The concept of the war-machine is developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari as the principle that opens up the empirical towards the transcendental and therefore prevents the lifeworld from becoming a closed system; see chapter 1, section 1.2.1 for a detailed explanation.
[472] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 249.
[473] Whitehead 1967: 265, 293.
[474] Ibid. 258, 274.
[475] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 416-417.

within the social itself, but within the potential of art to critique the social. In the case of State-societies, the phenomenon of art either becomes less important for the constitution of the social because of the development of writing or takes up the condition of the Face, which means that we are no longer dealing with art, but with representation or fetishism.[476] In the latter case, art stops being art because the coherence between appearance and reality has become transformed to the reduction of reality to mere appearance. Such a type of visual culture can either be a form of deception based on interpretation (in which visual culture becomes reduced to a concept), or a form of deception based on devotion (in which visual culture becomes reduced to appearance as such). A form of deception based on devotion means that the condition of the war-machine is indeed present, but becomes aligned with the condition of the Face. Such a type of war-machine is not necessarily opposed to prehistory, but can indeed occur when animism becomes transformed into fetishism.[477] The condition of the war-machine is therefore in itself not sufficient to define prehistoric art, but only when it operates as a critical tool to differentiate between a lifeworld based on art or deception.

c. Prehistoric Art as Representation of Relations

The third characteristic of prehistoric art, which I propose, is *the process character of form of prehistoric art*. With process I mean the fact that prehistoric art did not have a final form, which was made for passive contemplation, but a type of form that took up a distributed character in the sense that it was incorporated within acts of practice. In the chapter of the Neolithic I have given the example of carved stone balls, in which carving was not directed towards a final form, but increasingly complicated through the process of carving (see 7.2.1). A different example is the cup-and-ring rock art in which rock art motifs were added through time. Also, the form of cup-and-ring art took up a network character, as it cannot be understood apart from the movement through the landscape (which is a different way in which form can take up a process character) (see 7.2.2). In the case of Upper Palaeolithic cave art, the process character of form is situated within the theatrical setting in which the cave paintings were encountered. This means that the movement through the cave, the play of light and shadow, the perspective of seeing, the theatrical effects (sound, smell, story-telling) all played a significant role in the experience of the imagery and gave them a process character (see 6.2.2). In the

[476] Deleuze and Guattari 2013: 132-134, 148, 154-155.
[477] See chapter 1, section 1.2.2 for a detailed analysis.

case of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic, the process character of the hand axe is situated within the fact that the symmetry of form cannot be understood apart from the making, use, re-sharpening and discarding of the hand axe (see 5.2.1).

This third characteristic (*the process character of form*) does not mean, however, that prehistoric art lacked the purposiveness of form (the coherence between virtual and actual, appearance and reality and therefore the depiction of truth). The entanglement of purposiveness and process can be envisioned through the entanglement of reflection and practice, the beautiful and the sublime. It is the beautiful, which points towards the purposiveness of form, but it is the sublime, which is responsible for the capacity of art to have an effect on people's practical actions and therefore to shape the lifeworld.[478] The entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime means that prehistoric art can neither be a mere process of engagement with materials (as this would be opposed to the beautiful), but also not be limited to the purposiveness of form as such, as a static type of form, distinct from process, would be incapable to operate as a form of world making.

I propose the concept 'representation of relations' as a way to address this third general characteristic of prehistoric art. My use of the term 'representation' relies on the work of the philosopher Tristan Garcia, who has defined representation as the capacity of art to operate as form.[479] With the concept of form Garcia means that an art object is an object that has the capacity to make present another object (and in this sense is an object that operates as form). What is important is that Garcia's concept of form can operate both in an artistic sense (artistic form) and ontological sense (ontological form).[480] With ontological form Garcia means the realm of the virtual, which provides the condition for an entity to take up actual existence and therefore become an object.[481] He uses the metaphor of a shapeless mould in order to describe the idea that the virtual provides the condition of form, but is itself without form.[482] Artistic form operates as an empty mould, which means that art gives form to another object not in the sense of an illustration, but in the sense that the giving form to

[478] For a detailed analysis see chapter 3, section 3.2.
[479] Garcia 2014: 248.
[480] Ibid. 248-249.
[481] Garcia, however, does not use the term 'virtual', but 'world' in order to describe the realm that provides the condition of form without belonging to actual reality (Ibid. 75-76). 'Virtual' and 'world' are not entirely equivalent as Garcia's metaphysics aims to provide an alternative to both substance metaphysics and process metaphysics (Ibid. 11). However, because I argued that process metaphysics cannot be reduced to relationality, but indeed has a concept of essence (as potential) it is not impossible to translate Garcia's concept of 'world' into the 'virtual'.
[482] Ibid. 77, 142-143.

another object allows art to become more than an empirical object and connect empirical reality with the realm of the virtual.[483]

For the purpose of prehistoric art, Garcia's concept of artistic form cannot be limited to prehistoric art as such, but must become extended to the lifeworld as a whole in order to incorporate the idea that prehistoric art operated as a form of world making. This means that artistic form must be rethought from the idea that it operates as form for another object towards the idea that artistic form determines the virtual realm of potentiality into a particular lifeworld (giving form to ontology). This means that art (as an empty mould) gives form to the virtual (determines it into a particular lifeworld), whereas the virtual (as a shapeless mould) gives form to art (as the virtual makes expression possible). Empty and shapeless mould therefore complete each other as the shapeless mould makes art possible (the shapeless mould giving form to the empty mould) whereas the empty mould gives form to a virtual potentiality (giving form to the shapeless mould). In order to understand this connection between artistic and ontological form, art must take up a distributed condition and therefore cannot be limited to the purposiveness of form. I argue that this requires to understand that artistic form operates as form in two different ways: (1) as purposiveness (which means that it is more than an empirical object), and (2) as form of a realm of relations (which means that prehistoric art extends into the environment and acts of practice). The best example is the cup-and-ring art of Neolithic Britain, in which the purposiveness of form (cup-and-ring art motif) takes up a distributed character, as it must be understood as landscape system. The form of the rock art panel is therefore both situated within its formal character and within its network-character and it is this constellation that allows cup-and-ring art to give shape to a shared space-time (see 7.2.2).

This necessity of artistic form to operate both as relation and as purposiveness is visible in the fact that form itself has always a social dimension. Following my discussion of Deleuze and Whitehead, no entity can determine itself (take up its form) without encounter with the other.[484] Relations therefore cannot be excluded from form, as it is through relations that form becomes determined. The purposiveness of form is situated within the way a virtual potential strives for self-determination, whereas the relational dimension of form within the way this determination can only occur through encounter with the other. 'Representation of relations' therefore does not mean the

[483] Ibid. 249-250. The idea that artistic form connects the actual with the virtual is based on the fact that art incorporates the condition of form (which belongs to the virtual) into actual reality. It is therefore not the actual object that art makes present, which is important, but the operating of art as form.
[484] Deleuze 2014: 190, Whitehead 1978: 51-52..

replacement of the purposiveness of form by external relations. This would mean a form of art in which art is nothing more than a material object that opens up a realm of external relations. A good example is installation art (e.g. Minimalism) in which not the object itself (which is nothing but a plate of steel), but the relation between viewer and object defines the work of art.[485] The relational character of prehistoric art on the other hand is not concerned with the lack of purposiveness, but with the necessity of purposiveness to take up a distributed character in order to become integrated within acts of practice. This allows understanding why the relational dimension of form cannot be reduced to meaning, but takes up itself the character of form.[486]

Based on the three characteristics outlined above ((1) art that is unconscious of its own autonomy, (2) war-machine that works against State-formation, and (3) representation of relations), can we indeed say that there is continuity across the art of the Lower Palaeolithic, Upper Palaeolithic and Neolithic? All three characteristics need to be present in order to speak about art in a prehistoric context. This is situated in the fact that the autonomy of the aesthetic and art is required in order for prehistoric art to operate as social agent (which cannot be achieved through an everyday aesthetics based on the senses). Also, prehistoric art can only operate as social agent through the condition of the war-machine, as it is this condition that indicates why prehistoric communities were not State-societies. This leads to the third characteristic (representation of relations) as prehistoric art can only operate as social agent when it takes up a distributed condition within the lifeworld. I argued that the condition of art is most applicable to the earliest prehistoric record (Lower Palaeolithic) and Neolithic. In the case of Upper Palaeolithic cave art, the three characteristics become partly distorted, as I defined cave art as a hybrid type of art based on fetishism (see 6.2.2 and 6.2.3). This is most clearly visible in the characteristic of war-machine, which must have taken up the condition of the Face in order to operate as a form of deception (the illusion of a shared space-time). Prehistoric art as a general category therefore does not mean that all characteristics must always be applicable to any type of prehistoric imagery. Instead, the characteristics proposed must be understood as a critical tool to judge whether the condition of art can be extended to a particular artefact. This indeed allows to draw connections across the different prehistoric periods (and in this sense we can speak about prehistoric art in a general way),

[485] Fried 1998: 153-154.
[486] Garcia, however, argues that the inclusion of art into a network of relations should not be understood as the form of art, but as its meaning. The meaning of art requires the perception of a viewer, whereas the form of art exists independently of a viewer (Garcia 2014: 246, 256). However, following my argument that art requires the entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime, artistic form cannot be conceived independently from human action.

but also to make a statement about whether one type of artefact deserves more the status of art than another. This lead to the surprising conclusion that Upper Palaeolithic cave art deserves less the status of art than the earliest prehistoric record.

8.2 A Definition of Prehistoric Art

Based on the three general characteristics of prehistoric art outlined above ((1) art that is unconscious of its own autonomy, (2) war-machine that works against State-formation, and (3) representation of relations) I now construct a general definition of prehistoric art. I argued above that such a definition needs to take the form of a theoretical statement on the relation between art in a modern Western context and the origin of art in prehistory. This is necessary as the concept of art is a Western invention, which can only be extended to prehistory when the relation between prehistory and the Western concept of art has been understood. Throughout the thesis I occasionally made a cross-cultural comparison between prehistoric art and Modernist art.[487] This comparison is based on the idea that the becoming autonomous of art in Modernism is not situated within its detachment from the everyday, but in its potential for social agency (the potential of a different world). In the case of prehistoric art, this potential of world making does not take the form of critique, but of the constitution of the social itself. However, the autonomy of art in the context of Western modernity cannot be reduced to Modernism, but has become developed into contemporary art. With contemporary art I mean the art that developed in the West after the 1960s as a reaction against Modernism.[488] The idea that the becoming explicit of the autonomy of art takes the form of the detachment of art from the everyday is in this sense incorrect, as contemporary art is characterized by the elimination of the visual distinction between an art object and everyday object. In a general way, contemporary art can be understood as a 'debordering' of the arts, in which the different artistic media (painting, sculpture, architecture, drawing) start to lose their medium specificity and take up a hybrid character. It means that the condition of art itself becomes challenged, as what does or does not count as a work of art can no longer be defined solely on a visual basis.[489] The transcendence of medium specificity is coupled therefore to a debordering of the

[487] See chapter 4 and chapter 5, section 5.1.2 and 5.2.2.
[488] Osborne 2013: 19.
[489] Danto 1997: 113; Garcia 2014: 256.

distinction between art and everyday life.[490] This leads to new art forms like participation art, performance art, installation art, land art etc. Also, from the 1960s onwards, we can see a growing 'aestheticization of everyday life' within Western societies.[491] This takes the form of architecture, design, fashion etc. The inability to judge something as a work of art on a visual basis becomes then extended to the lifeworld itself, as also the everyday can no longer be clearly differentiated from the realm of art.

At first, the loss of the visual distinction between art and the everyday could be understood through the idea that contemporary art reacts against the autonomy of art, which characterizes Modernist art. However, such an interpretation is false because when contemporary art would lack the autonomy of art and the aesthetic, the loss of the visual distinction between an art and everyday object would mean that art becomes reduced to an empirical object and therefore stops being art. Instead of a reaction against the autonomy of art and the aesthetic, one should say that contemporary art constitutes an extension of this autonomy into acts of practice, the environment and the everyday lifeworld.[492] Such an extension I also discussed within my reworking of aesthetic autonomy for prehistory. It is visible in the fact that this autonomy must have taken up a distributed condition during prehistory in order to operate as social agent and give shape to the lifeworld. This allows to understand why the becoming explicit of the autonomy of art and the aesthetic does not necessarily take the form of an individual art object detached from the everyday (Modernism), but also of the isomorphy between art and the everyday (contemporary art). The three characteristics proposed for prehistoric art are in this sense also applicable to contemporary art, as they are concerned with the integration of the autonomy of art into the lifeworld. It is this structural similarity, which explains why prehistoric archaeologists developed an interest in contemporary art.[493]

However, even though prehistoric and contemporary art indeed share a structural similarity, this similarity is also false, as it neglects the fact that the debordering of the autonomy of art and the aesthetic within contemporary art cannot be uncoupled from capitalism. The autonomy of art and the aesthetic was invented by the West in the first place as a reaction against the distortion of rationality associated with capitalism.[494] Art needs to be autonomous (being detached from the everyday

[490] Adorno 2013: 25, 203; Rebentisch 2013: 21.
[491] Debord 1994; Foster 2013; Shusterman 2005.
[492] Rebentisch 2012: 12-13, 262.
[493] Bailey 2018; Bonaventura and Jones 2011; Bradley 2009; Renfrew 2003; Renfrew, Gosden and DeMarrais 2004; Russell and Cochrane 2014.
[494] Heumakers 2015: 346.

lifeworld) in order to critique this lifeworld and hold the promise of a different state of existence.[495] The capacity of art for world making has become transformed to the art object itself, which gives Modernist art its potential for a different state of existence. As soon as this autonomous dimension becomes integrated within the everyday (capitalist) lifeworld, art loses its capacity for critique. Adorno has in this case made the argument that contemporary art transforms art back into fetishism.[496] When the status of art can no longer be judged on a visual basis, but is depended upon the curation or assemblage of an object within a certain situation, art takes up a relative quality and therefore stops being art.[497] The integration of the autonomy of art into the lifeworld can only lead to an increase of distortion, which is based on the misconception of the relation between artistic form and ontological form in contemporary art.

Through the work of Tristan Garcia, I argued that artistic form gives form to an ontological condition (ontological form), whereas ontological form provides the condition that makes art possible (see 8.1 c). Artistic form and ontological form operate in this sense as a mould for one another, in the sense that artistic form is both the product of and the mould of ontological form, whereas ontological form is both the product of and mould of artistic form. What happens in contemporary art is that this relation between artistic and ontological form (as being a mould for one another) becomes replaced by the equation between artistic and ontological form. This means that artistic form (empty mould) simultaneously takes up the condition of ontological form (shapeless mould). Contemporary art would then operate as a mould that is both shapeless and empty. Art as a shapeless, empty mould means that *anything could be art*. This condition is present in contemporary art in the sense that contemporary art cannot be defined on a visual basis and is unconcerned with the depiction of truth (the coherence between virtual and actual, appearance and reality). The form of contemporary art is therefore 'anything', which is the same as the lack of form.

The isomorphy between art and the everyday in contemporary art therefore means the loss of artistic form, whereas in prehistory the integration of art into the lifeworld was based on the distributed character of artistic form. Art can only give shape to the lifeworld (ontological form) through the fact that it is an object that operates itself as form (artistic form). When the capacity of art to operate as form disappears, art loses its capacity to give shape to the lifeworld and for this reason the integration

[495] Adorno 2013: 30, 42, 115.
[496] Ibid. 24.
[497] Garcia 2014: 256.

of contemporary art into the lifeworld is incorrect. Contemporary art therefore takes up a paradoxical character, as it makes the integration of the autonomy of art and the aesthetic within the lifeworld explicit. I argued that such an integration is the true condition of the autonomy of the aesthetic and in this sense one could say that the 'autonomy' of contemporary art is more correct than the 'autonomy' of Modernist art, as Modernism lacked this integration. However, from another perspective, one could say that contemporary art destroys the autonomy of art and the aesthetic because the integration of the autonomy of art in the lifeworld lacks the capacity of art to operate as form.[498] Contemporary art therefore at the same time makes explicit that the integration of art within the lifeworld requires the autonomy of art and the aesthetic, and destroys this autonomy through the loss of artistic form, which characterizes art as art in the first place.

I argue that this paradoxical condition of contemporary art can be understood as a making explicit of the autonomy of art and the aesthetic in a literal way. A literal form of knowing means a form of knowing that is simultaneously correct and incorrect. For example, a literal interpretation of the expression 'Break a leg' means that one interprets it as a wish of bad luck, meaning that the person making this statement really wants me to break my leg. However, such an interpretation is false because the expression 'Break a leg' actually means the exact opposite, namely the wish of good luck. A literal form of knowing is correct in the sense that the interpretation 'bad luck' is based on a correct understanding of the actual words (breaking and leg). However, the interpretation is incorrect because one fails to understand these words metaphorically. The idea that contemporary art makes the autonomy of art and the aesthetic explicit literally means that it has actually misunderstood the autonomy of art and the aesthetic. Based on this idea that contemporary art makes the autonomy of art and the aesthetic explicit in a literal way, I want to propose the following definition of prehistoric art:

Prehistoric art is contemporary art unliteralized.

This definition constitutes a theoretical statement on the relation between the origin of art in prehistory and the culmination of the becoming explicit of art's autonomy in contemporary art. It indicates that what the contemporary West has striven towards (a making explicit of the autonomy of art and the aesthetic) was understood correctly within prehistory and incorrectly today. It means that contemporary

[498] Adorno 2013: 72, 109, 142, 216; Fried 1998: 151.

art and prehistoric art indeed share the same characteristics, but nevertheless are opposed to one another. Although the definition itself is very short it allows resolving the theoretical opposition between the Western concept of art and prehistory while simultaneously avoiding the trap of categorisation. Prehistoric art is not categorized, but defined through a dialectical relationship with contemporary art. It is a type of definition that opens up thought on the relation between Western art and prehistory. It indicates that prehistoric art can indeed be aligned with Western art and therefore encapsulates the idea that prehistoric art is an autonomous form of art that is unconscious of itself. However, it also encapsulates the idea that the Western autonomy of art is itself not entirely correct and therefore both challenges and relies on the Western concept of art.

CONCLUSION

Within this thesis I examined the research question how the term 'prehistoric art' can be defined. This required a theoretical analysis into the way the Western concept of art can be extended to prehistory. Whereas the Western conception of art has been opposed within prehistoric archaeology for its 'autonomous' dimension, being distinct from the everyday lifeworld, I argued instead that it is precisely this autonomy that we need in order to understand prehistoric art as social agent. The autonomy of art is coupled to the autonomy of the aesthetic in the sense that both stand for a particular type of rationality, which operates through feeling. Within the first part of the thesis I argued how the autonomous dimension of the aesthetic constitutes the basis of metaphysics and human world making itself. When aesthetic experience is ontologically prior, the human capacity of aesthetic judgement cannot be uncoupled from the human process of self-concrescence. The autonomy of aesthetic judgement therefore indicates that the human capacity of reflection and ontological continuity with the lifeworld are not opposed to one another, but entangled with one another. I argued that this resolves the theoretical opposition between two very different philosophical traditions (dialectics and process metaphysics).

This integration of dialectics and process metaphysics counters the current tendency within archaeological theory (and the humanities in general) to transcend the ontological distinction between human and non-human and to prioritize practice over reflective thinking. The reduction of the human process of self-concrescence to practice leads to both the elimination of the condition of subjectivity and objectivity. A subject only establishes himself as a subject when he addresses the transcendental dimension of empiricism, which requires a type of experience in which a subject is forced to think. In return, it is only through a reflective type of experience by a subject that one can address the transcendental dimension of objectivity, which is necessary in order to acknowledge an object in its singularity. By reducing an artefact to its empirical dimension, one does not acknowledge its material specificity, but eliminates it, as the reduction of matter to mere empiricism leads to a generalization of matter, which is visible in the current reduction of archaeological artefacts to 'relationality' or 'process' from the Lower Palaeolithic until the Iron Age. The current attention for the material properties of

archaeological artefacts therefore paradoxically leads to the precise opposite of what it attempts to achieve because it is based on a misconception of the nature of objectivity.

I argued that it is the autonomy of aesthetic judgement, which allows envisioning a type of experience in which a subject becomes determined as a subject, and an object as an object. The autonomy of the aesthetic has this capacity because it is a type of reflective experience, which is both subjective and objective. An aesthetic experience is objective because it does not start from the subject, but through the encounter with a material object. However, an aesthetic experience is subjective because the condition of the aesthetic only manifests itself when a subject reflects on the constellation of the universal (transcendental) and particular within objectivity. Because the condition of the aesthetic is simultaneously objective and subjective, it allows envisioning a relation between subject and object in which both are reconciled with one another. It is for this reason why the autonomy of the aesthetic is essential for both the human process of self-concrescence and human world making. If one follows the idea that a subject only determines himself as a subject when he is forced to think, and that aesthetic experience is ontologically prior, the human process of self-concrescence has to be based on an aesthetic judgement of truth. It is within aesthetic judgement that the capacity of reflection becomes activated through the encounter with an object. This is important because it indicates how the autonomy of aesthetic judgement must have been essential for the development (but also maintenance) of the human cognitive faculties.

Also, it is through an aesthetic judgement of truth that human beings gain the potential for a shared type of experience, which transforms the constellation of multiple space-times into a shared space-time. An aesthetic judgement does not address people on the basis of their individual desires and needs, but within their human condition as such and for this reason provides a type of experience that unites the various processes of concrescence into a common world. I therefore argued that the autonomy of aesthetic judgement and art are not detached from the constitution of the social, but provide its basis. It is through the autonomy of art and the aesthetic that the social takes up a form in which it reacts against the closing down of the world to mere empiricism or interpretation. It also allows conceiving how the modifications of experience during prehistory and the modern West are not ontologically opposed to one another, but rely on a general principle (the autonomy of aesthetic judgement). It gives insight into our common human condition throughout human evolution, while simultaneously acknowledging ontological alterity across different lifeworlds. The autonomy of art and

the aesthetic should therefore not be understood as limited to the modern West, but as a principle that allows reflecting critically on the lifeworld under examination. It offers a standard for cross-cultural analysis without relying on the modern West as standard of judgement. This idea makes a significant contribution to archaeology and anthropology as it provides a principle to judge the rational character of the 'world' under examination and therefore allows countering both cultural (or ontological) relativism and Western universalism. It makes it possible to pose the idea of direction in human evolution anew and provides a platform in which the opposition between cultural differences and human universalism can be overcome.

By acknowledging the ontological primacy of aesthetic judgement for human world making, it becomes possible to understand why animism does not stand for a general metaphysical condition, but is coupled to the human capacity of aesthetic judgement. This idea provides a significant contribution to archaeology and anthropology as it counters the idea that animism would be an ontological condition of reality itself based on the continuity between human and non-human. Instead, I argued that the condition of animism is bound to the modification of human experience and therefore indeed based on a reflective type of experience. Such an approach to animism allows analysing how animism cannot take a general form, but only a particular form. Within this thesis I theorized three different types of animism by differentiating between perspectivism, Upper Palaeolithic animism and Neolithic animism. Such a differentiation of animism has never been developed before in archaeology or anthropology, which is visible in the fact that a general conception of animism (based on relationality) has been applied to every prehistoric period from the Palaeolithic until the Iron Age. In a similar way as I critiqued the attention for material properties within archaeology for being an elimination of materiality, one could critique a general approach to animism as being an elimination of the differences between the respective prehistoric periods instead of doing justice to the actual ontological condition of the lifeworld under examination.

In order to differentiate animism, I constructed four different types of aesthetic experience: (1) aesthetic judgement within communicative action (perspectivism); (2) aesthetic judgement of pure beauty (Lower and Middle Palaeolithic); (3) hybrid type of aesthetic experience consisting of both propositional feeling and propositional judgement (Upper Palaeolithic) and (4) teleological aesthetic judgement (Neolithic). The first type of aesthetic experience gives rise to a form of animism based on communicative action across multiple space-times. The condition of animism is situated within the lack

of a shared space-time and therefore the lack of an 'empirical world'. The second type of aesthetic experience is distinct from animism, as animism can only occur when aesthetic experience incorporates a conceptual proposition, which means that animism requires the modern mind. I theorized the modern mind as a modification of experience: the inclusion of a conceptual proposition in experience, which is based upon the process metaphysics of Whitehead. Whitehead uncouples the category of propositions from a representational perspective and defines it as an intensification of experience, which makes it possible to experience something as other than it actually is. This is related to animism, as the condition of animacy is not empirically present in the encounter of a piece of stone, but requires a complication of experience through the incorporation of a proposition, which alters what is empirically given. The modern mind is therefore not a precondition of aesthetic experience or art, but only of 'animistic art'. Also, the modern mind allows deception to occur, which was not possible with the early human mind. This possibility of deception is visible in the third type of aesthetic experience, which is related to a form of animism that is based on the illusion of the continuity of substances. Animism operates in this case both as a form of deception and as a form of judgement in order to align a hunter-gatherer perception with a shared cognitive space-time. This type of animism is distinct from perspectivism as the condition of animacy is not situated within the constellation of multiple space-times, but within the illusionary experience of a unified space-time that is based on the continuity of substances. The fourth type of aesthetic experience is coupled to a form of animism in which animism is a result of an aesthetic judgement of truth on the order of nature. This means that the condition of animacy is associated with a shared space-time based on truth in which appearance and reality cohere with one another and therefore differentiated from a type of animism based on a constellation of multiple space-times or deception. I argued that this modification of animism is related to the rationalization of experience, which defines the Neolithic.

However, despite this importance of understanding the particularization of aesthetic experience and animism, I also argued that one must be able to detect a general principle, which is shared across the different prehistoric lifeworlds. Without such a principle, the term 'prehistoric art' becomes meaningless. I put forward three general principles: (1) art that is unconscious of its own autonomy; (2) war-machine that works against State-formation, and (3) representation of relations. These three general principles allow conceiving a form of life in which the autonomy of art and the aesthetic provide the basis of the social itself. It means a lifeworld in which art's capacity of social

agency is directed against the centralisation of power and the reduction of reality to mere empiricism. Also, when the autonomy of art and the aesthetic constitutes the basis of the social itself, art cannot be limited to the purposiveness of form, but must take up a distributed character. I indicated that this takes the form of the entanglement between reflection and practice, the beautiful and the sublime. It allows conceiving how prehistoric art is simultaneously characterized by the purposive character of form and the process character of form.

I concluded my examination into prehistoric art by proposing the following general definition: *Prehistoric art is contemporary art unliteralized*. This definition defines prehistoric art in relation to the Western striving for art's autonomy. It is based on the fact that in both contemporary art and prehistoric art the autonomous dimension of art and the aesthetic takes up a distributed condition and is therefore integrated within the lifeworld. However, this apparent similarity between prehistoric and contemporary art is also false because it neglects the fact that contemporary art is characterized by the loss of the purposiveness of form, which means that contemporary art is integrated within the lifeworld through a debordering of the arts in which the ontological distinction between art and the everyday becomes disrupted. In the case of prehistoric art on the other hand, I argued that the distributed character of the autonomy of art and the aesthetic must be understood as an entanglement of the beautiful and the sublime, which means that prehistoric art is both characterized by the process character of form and the purposiveness of form. The idea that prehistoric art is contemporary art unliteralized means that contemporary art has made the distributed character of the autonomy of art and the aesthetic explicit, but at the same time has destroyed it because of the isomorphy between artistic form and ontological form. This means that the autonomous dimension of contemporary art does not operate in terms of world making (plateau-constitution), but in terms of the stimultation of the isomorphy between art and the everyday, appearance and reality, virtual and actual.

The distributed character of contemporary art is in this sense differentiated from prehistoric art, as it fails to address the relation between appearance and reality as a judgement of truth, which is necessary for art to take up the capacity of world making and establish a shared space-time. The distributed character of contemporary art is therefore based on a misunderstanding of the relation between art (artistic form) and reality (ontological form). Art is not related to reality through the extension of art into the everyday, but through the recreation of the virtual-actual relationship into material form. The autonomy of art and the aesthetic takes up a literal form in contemporary art

because it is based on a direct (literal) integration of art into reality, whereas in the case of prehistoric art this integration was based on the depiction of truth. For this reason one could say that the autonomous dimension of contemporary art is also a destruction of the autonomy of art, as it has lost the condition that defines the autonomous dimension of art and the aesthetic, namely the depiction of truth, which is necessary for art to operate as world making. One could therefore say that contemporary art works against the establishment of a shared space-time in which people feel at home and contributes towards the disintegration of the lifeworld into a constellation of multiple space-times.

The idea that 'prehistoric art is contemporary art unliteralized' does not only provide a theoretical statement on the relation between prehistoric and contemporary art, but also operates as a theoretical statement on the direction of human evolution and the contemporary condition of the lifeworld. The fact that the Western striving towards the autonomy of art and the aesthetic (which one could read as the Western invention of art) has resulted into a literal understanding of this autonomy could be interpreted through the idea that the Western striving towards rationalization and human freedom has resulted into a literal form of absolute knowing. Because the autonomy of the aesthetic is ontologically prior, the idea of literalism is not necessarily limited to the realm of art, but defines the modification of experience as such and therefore the modification of the lifeworld. It would mean that not only contemporary art could be addressed through the condition of literalism, but also other phenomena like post-humanism, democracy, human freedom etc. It would mean that *the contemporary lifeworld could be understood as a modification of metaphysics, in which the truth-condition of metaphysics has been particularized in a literal way.* A literal form of world making means that the contemporary lifeworld simultaneously operates as the most correct and most incorrect form of world making. This constitutes a paradoxical condition as it defines the contemporary lifeworld both as the culmination of the process of human evolution and as a regression to a level below earliest prehistory.

This idea that the contemporary lifeworld has regressed to a level below earliest prehistory might seem provocative, but it is a consequence of the destruction of the autonomous principle of the aesthetic. I argued that the autonomy of the aesthetic was already a principle of which very early hominid species in the Lower Palaeolithic were capable, which is visible in the artefacts they produced. Whereas early hominids did not have the capacity of (fully syntactic) language, did not yet possess the capacity to integrate the realms of the social, natural and technological and lacked diversity in visual culture, they nevertheless produced one of the purest forms of art ever made by humankind. When it is

the particularization of the general principle of the autonomy of aesthetic judgement and art, which defines and shapes our human condition, a destruction of this principle can lead to nothing less than a destruction of our very humanity. The ontological primacy of aesthetic judgement indicates that our human condition is based on a type of ground, which is groundless and can in this sense be lost or destroyed. A literal understanding of the autonomy of the aesthetic and art would in this sense mean a regression to a level below earliest prehistory because the aesthetic and art no longer shape our human condition and operate as a form of world making, but have become transformed into its opposite: *the disintegration of the lifeworld and the distortion of the human process of self-concrescence*. The definition of prehistoric art proposed therefore offers insight into the way it is not only the distortion of nature we should be concerned with (the Anthropocene), but also the distortion of our very humanity. The study of prehistoric art and aesthetics has in this sense the potential to operate as a form of critical theory on the distortion of art and aesthetics today. However, this should not take the form of a 'return to prehistory', but of a 'new humanism' in which the structural similarity between the Western tradition of philosophical aesthetics and prehistory is acknowledged. It is the development of a new humanism, which has the potential to initiate *a process of unliteralization*, which takes the form of a new striving towards absolute knowing in which literalism is transformed into truth.

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