Chapter 1: The Evaluation of Theories that are Applicable to the Study of Art in the Maya Area.

1.1 Understanding stylistic devices.

It is the intention of this chapter to provide the groundwork for the analysis and interpretation of a body of pre-Colombian and post-conquest artistic material culture in Southern Mexico. It has been within the European art historical tradition to apply philosophical and sociological themes and theories to the development of stylistic devices and modes of representation. As a consequence, the role and function of art are discussed within specific cultures and time periods, throughout European history. The implications of art – its production and reception – are surely obscured by the individuality of perception, and the complex nature of society, even when thinking around a modern context. The use of art as an archaeological artefact necessarily increases this problematic.

The two main perspectives in Classical art theory are materialist (Marxist) and idealist (Hegelian); which are the strongest driving forces behind art production, are they economic or autonomously creative? It is within the framework of this question that elements of form, such as the emotive rendering of action within portraiture (pathos) and the development of techniques such as naturalism and stylisation, have been interpreted, in the hope that, through these techniques, art has the potential to elucidate the character of ancient societies.

The present chapter will discuss this art historical lens, in order to later deconstruct trends in the interpretation of ancient Mesoamerican art. It has, for example, been emphasised by many scholars that Classic Maya art was produced within a complex hierarchical society, and so primarily carries religious and military messages (for example, Marcus 1974, Looper 2003, Newsome 2001, Demarest, 2005, Vargas Pacheco 2010, Vega Villalobos 2012). Recent research has also explored nuances in the iconography, which point towards alternative conceptions of personhood and the materials involved in the negotiation of power roles (for example, Stuart 2012 and Bassie-Sweet, Hopkins and Josserand 2012, Houston et al 2006). In spite of the fact that, "…even within any one religion diverse attitudes toward art are manifested by different strata, carriers and structural forms" (Tanner 2003, 50), the broad connection between material culture and

the self are as integrated into religious practice as they are in the development of stylistic devices. As such, it is unsurprising that these cultural manifestations have been correlated in art historical and archaeological analyses. However, much of the discussion surrounding art production, specifically in the Mesoamerican archaeological record, remains predominantly concerned with function and intention, as well as social implication. While this is clearly a valid emphasis for a civilisation whose public art does largely regard political themes, this thesis will shift the focus and attempt to analyse style and experience using philosophies drawn from contemporary Maya thought.

Archaeological and anthropological studies of the relationship between material culture and Being – corporeality and personhood (for example, Hodder 1991, Butler 1990, DeMarrais et al 2005, Tilley et al 2008) – certainly question the facility of understanding non-European art and provide a theoretical basis for alternative hypotheses. This investigation will argue that the material culture of ancient Mesoamerica, which archaeologists and art historians call art, requires just such a philosophical approach to its construal. It is first necessary to briefly deconstruct some of the broad analytical techniques inherent in European art historical thought, which dominate perspectives on pre-Colombian stylistic development.

Naturalism and Stylisation.

The development of naturalism and the connotations of stylisation are significant aspects of the interpretation of art, specifically within religious art, and are therefore apt for discussion. For example, the development of naturalism in Classical Greece after the archaic and geometric periods has been correlated with the development of democracy, rationality and autonomous creativity – resulting in an increasing complexity and self-consciousness in art production (Morris 1994, 93, Cook 1972, 6-7, Boardman 1996, 22-23, Tanner 2006, 25-26). The ancient Greeks developed an ethos of art appreciation that promoted rational engagement with art. They also wrote a history of art, and these writings, in turn, transformed the social functions of art in the Classical World (Tanner 2006), although this discussion does not necessarily accurately describe the development of Greek art, much of which is now lost to us (Osborne 1998, 11). Stylised medieval religious portraits were similarly abandoned in the Renaissance, in favour of more naturalistic or realistic representation, in congruence with renewed intellectual interest in antiquity, and the rise of humanism. As such, autonomous creativity and the intellectual tradition in art, in both Classical Greece and the Renaissance, are present in the make-up

of European philosophy. However, a contradictory relationship between religion and art has formed at the root of the understanding of these developments. As humanism and artistic rationalisation developed, the agency of art (in the religious context) has been progressively undermined; "…art as a carrier of magical effects is not only devalued but even suspect" (Tanner 2003, 47). A supporter of the Catholic faith, in viewing a piece of religious art, should form an attachment with the content, rather than the image itself, although the nature of expressive art may produce a psychological affinity in the recipient.

In light of the fact that European artistic rationality is linked (historically) to the development of naturalism, it is useful to outline the effects that are thought to be encouraged through naturalism, as opposed to stylisation. Artistic and architectural stylisation and symmetry have been related to social and political organisation; for example, the symmetrical structure of the Egyptian pyramids has been aligned with the political control of the Oriental despots; "symmetrical organisations facilitate the ruling of many from a single point" (Simmel 1950 in Tanner 2003, 56). This may also be reflected in religious iconography; the highly stylised images associated with the medieval Catholic Church are attributed to religious despotism. Images were restricted in style and content in order to appeal to the masses and promote ideological conservatism (Tanner 2003, 47). Post-modernists have disputed these ideas, principally on the basis that aesthetics are culturally specific. Parsons (1968) has usefully shown that social order based on force or fraud, or on individual self-interest, is hardly theoretically tenable, indicating that this perspective of the hermeneutics of art/architecture is incomplete.

As such, naturalism has been marked as a product of the emergence of the autonomous artist and of social and political rationalisation (Weber's theory of linear perspective in Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, 1958). Naturalism can, however, also be attributed to religious function. Tanner (2001) suggests that the life-like aspect of statues in ancient Greece initially fulfilled the necessities of a religion that promoted experiential engagement. It has been persuasively argued that, in ancient Greece, naturalism produced deeper religious engagement with idols (such as the Aphrodite sculpture described by Pausanias) (Tanner 2001, 262). Statues may have been developed naturalistically in order to make religious experience more intense, alongside the use of music and other emotive devices (for example, olfactory sensations): "sensory and material frameworks associated with this (Classical Greek) culture shaped practices of viewing and the sensory apprehension of statues" (Tanner 2001, 261). This hypothesis is supported by depictions in votive reliefs, in which the viewer/worshipper and the deity are shown together (unlike archaic votive reliefs, where they are almost always contextually

separated) (Berger 1970, 104, Mitropoulou 1977, 86). This is the opposite of "a contemplative aesthetic detachment" (Tanner 2001, 263) and so largely stands in contrast to the ways in which academics view and rationalise ancient or culturally distant "art" objects. Interestingly, modern artists have tried to make the viewer aware of the various ways in which we relate to an experience. Take, for example, a famous quote from Mark Rothko: "A painting is not about an experience. It is an experience."

Although a sophisticated art historical tradition has developed alongside the emergence of naturalism, it cannot be directly correlated with an escalation in the intellectualisation or rationalisation of a society. Stylistic devices can reflect religious or social purposes, but the heightened use (and style) of naturalism employed in Classic Maya public art should be warily associated with politics and power.

Linear Perspective and the Emotive Reception of Art and Aesthetic.

Similarly to the use of naturalism in sculpture, the use of linear perspective onto flat surfaces, in which the vanishing point and the viewing point are geometrically synonymous, is a pivotal artistic development in Early Modern Europe. The implications of this device within the power relationship between object and viewer have been disputed (for example, Damisch 1972, 1987, Van Alphen 2005). Many artistic and philosophical discourses treat perspectival rendering as the power to produce a realistic form, for landscape and architecture (for example, Panofsky 1975), or at least a tool to aid the creation of that form (Brunelleschi in Van Alphen 2005). However, the appraisal of linear perspective involves two constructions, that of the display itself and the necessity of the viewer to be stationary, and thus in Damisch's conception "…the viewer depends on perspectival constructions for the illusion of her or his unified subjectivity" (1972, 11). It is in this way that the power relation is inverted and the viewer is subject to the image.

It has, furthermore, been argued that it is this precise construction of space that has become the visual symbol of artistic essence (Van Alphen 2005, 1-6). The example used by Damisch (and further unpacked by Van Alphen) is that of clouds painted by Mantegna on the ceiling of the palace of the Duke of Mantua or in Antonio Allegri de Correggio's Vision of the Holy John Patmos (in Parma). Clouds, within this European context, have three distinct functional levels: symbolic/allegorical, theoretical and visual; "the cloud always functions as a kind of hinge in the relation between earth and heaven, between here and there, between a world that is obedient to its own laws and a divine space that cannot be known by any science" (Damisch 1972, 146). In both of the aforementioned

cases, the view of the clouds from below emphasises the endless and unknown space that stretches above them. Empty space here, paradoxically, is accented by form (Van Alphen 2005, 6). This raises interesting issues about the effect of stylistic devices on a viewer's conceptualisation of space and "objects". The result of this visual construction, according to Van Alphen, has an existential or philosophical impact; "If the /architecture/ came to symbolise the reach of the artist's knowledge, the /cloud/ operated as the lack in the center of that knowledge" (Krauss 1996, 335).

This existential focus in European art also arises in the formation and appreciation of aesthetic. Aesthetic judgment is one of the most common aspects of art appreciation and there are numerous descriptions of the physical impact of art and architecture. Figural beauty, furthermore, is one of the fundamental aspects of the pursuit of naturalism in sculpture. The Greek word *agalma* (that is translated as figural sculpture) means an object for the gods to take delight in. The afore-mentioned Aphrodite, described by Pausanias, was capable of producing sexual arousal in her admirers and it is arguable that beauty in art has functioned as a synecdoche (*toto pro parte*) for genitals and sexual desire (Van Alphen 2005, 14). As beauty is linked with art, and ultimately sexuality, these themes also stretch to conceptions of love. Van Alphen uses the popular narrative of the golden apple, in Classical Mythology, to describe the philosophical grounding of Western Civilisation; "the myth addresses…the issue of the essence of beauty. By choosing Aphrodite as ultimate beauty, the myth makes a statement about the nature of beauty, its relationship to desire and the judgments about both…Beauty should be understood within the tension between form and the unformed as being activated by love and sexual desire" (2005, 16). Here, artistic conventions and the way they are developed incorporate the most inscrutable aspects of social sentiment. It is unsurprising, therefore, that existential and philosophical ideas about art are so diverse, and have the tendency to be abstract.

In his deconstruction of the use of perspective for landscape, Van Alphen asks where the viewer is left after he/she has been seduced into the field both visually and bodily; "But where do we find ourselves at the end of these two different itineraries…? In both cases, at the liminal zone of the picture's surface. There is not much to see there…we end up at the ultimate horizon where earth and sky dissolve into a hazy nothingness. There is not much to see there either. What we have seen, however, at the moment that we arrive at that point, is a vision. A vision of vision" (Van Alphen 2005, 95). The viewer is thus left in contemplation of his/her relationship to the object, then to religion/death (in the case of the clouds) or love and sexuality (in the case of the beauty of

the human form) and, finally, is forced to react intellectually to the construction which has promoted these thoughts, however subconsciously.

There are also certain artistic programmes that raise the possibility of alternative intellectual and emotional responses, an example of which has been analysed by Tilley et al (2008). The premise for his approach to the rock carvings at Simrishamn in Sweden is fundamentally phenomenological. In order to engage directly with each of the images on the rocks, the viewer is forced to be in almost perpetual movement. Thus, the questions "…were not in any direct way related to the meaning of the image at all. They were concerned with what the rock and its carving were doing…: their bodily or kinaesthetic influence…" (Tilley et al 2008, 16). Many of the images were, for example, upside down. The effect of this construction broadens the questions inherent in the artistic dialogue described above. Where Van Alphen suggests that "art thinks" (2005, XVI) and that the intellectuality of art lies as much in the object as it does in the mind of the viewer, perhaps an archaeological or conceptually inclusive perspective can expand the parameters of artistic function further. The dance-like movement through space described by Tilley (2008, 17) poses questions regarding the agency contained within worked matter, and the role of this agency on the corporeality of the participant, and thus his or her existential experience. Here, it could be argued that phenomenology brings the debate closer to the ritual engagement discussed by Tanner in the case of ancient Greek ritual. It could, therefore, be argued that Neolithic Swedish rock art performs functions that are closer to this scenario. We should deduce that artistic programmes can promote introspection through alternative modes of existential sentiment to those outlined with regard to, for example, Mantegna's clouds. The ways in which visual and material culture promote existential thought in Maya societies, pre- and post-conquest, need to be examined. The specific philosophies that influence art reception and participation will be analysed through ethnographic research.

Agency and Intention in Art Production.

It has been advocated, therefore, that the specifically European intellectual or contemplative aspects of art appreciation be set aside, to a certain extent, for the purpose of the current study. It remains to appoint values to the agency that stimulates engagement and an intellectual dialectic between the creative materiality and people (in the pre-Colombian Mesoamerican context). To put reception aside briefly, the agency of the material culture under interpretation would, traditionally, be separated into two forms:

the factors deliberately communicated by the artist and Maya societal ideas transmitted unconsciously by the artist. These choices are the multifaceted result of a dialectic of visual culture and conceptions surrounding the artist. After production, the reception of the viewer/participant (who is outside of the art production system) implies the creation of his or her own illusion from the presented image (Gombrich 1999, 154). This interpretation is made partly as a product of acculturation, the process of facilitating the understanding of common cultural symbols, and partly through unique personal experience or intellectual character. "By what practices is the boundary between the intentional and the contingent marked in the material of the object itself, and what articulations of the social world are thereby implicated in the structuring of artefacts" (Brain in Tanner 2003, 138). Evidently, in any archaeological analysis the first field of artistic intention is, for the most part, occluded. Many anthropologists of art have negated the value attempt completely; "The impossibility of learning much about prehistoric artists' intentions or values, moreover, so severely limits the scope available for studying prehistoric art that it will rarely be referred to in the following chapters" (Layton 1991, 3).

In many ways, the meaning and effect of art in modernity/post-modernity is similarly hidden. Modern European art is frequently concerned with the philosophies inherent in the expression of individual subjectivity in portraiture (examples – of which there are many – include Pablo Picasso and Claude Cahun), making modern art an interesting starting point in discussions of ancient/non-European art (Renfrew 2003). One such example is Lucien Freud, whose paintings demonstrate how archaeologists can more comfortably apply the deconstruction of subjective portraiture for material, culturally investigative, studies. Freud's almost total use of oil painting adds body, and so agency that is reminiscent of corporeality (Being), to his subjects (Van Alphen 2005, 35). The effect of this sort of materiality makes his painting comparable with sculpture, on some levels. His self-portrait with cupped ear in the background (Figure 1) arguably foregrounds sound, an element of sensorial experience that cannot be, or is not, portrayed within the body of the piece. In this way, the painting "…confronts us with the idea that portrayal is necessarily a betrayal of the quality of essence because it dislocates the "essence" of subjectivity to the visual" (Van Alphen 2005, 36). Theoreticians such as Gell and Merleau-Ponty have emphasised, in non-European art, the agency inherent in the technology of art production and the response and dialectic that results from this (for example, Merleau-Ponty 1973, 138). Gell uses the Armet shield as an example, explaining that engagement with the design on this object necessarily generates terror, real emotion, in the viewer (1998, 31). Criticisms have been made of their focus on the eye, however, particularly by Tilley, who advocates, as

mentioned above, a focus on the bodily reaction to certain artistic programs such as those from the Scandinavian Neolithic (2008, 33-34). The effect of viewing this rock art implies looking up, or down, crouching, bending, turning, twisting and so on (Tilley et al 2008, 42-43). The agency of the rock itself is evident, also in the way that the image is shaped to correspond to its natural features, indicating that the viewer and artist are forced to engage with the rocks themselves, outside of the content of the images worked into them. The landscape and context (Tilley 1994, et al 2008, 2010) also have an impact upon the field of experience: "Rock art is a relational nexus of images, material qualities of rocks, and landscapes" (Tilley et al 2008, 20). It is through specific understanding of cultural values, as well as the context of the art in this data set, that agency can be discussed.

Autonomous Creativity.

The Classic Maya are one of the few historical civilisations in which artists signed their work (Miller and Martin 2004, 121), another, most notably, being Classical Greece (Osborne 1998 and 13-21). It should be noted that, in both cases, much of the "art" that was produced in these societies was not signed (Spivey 1997, 5). As has been shown, to extract an encompassing definition of the term "art" or "artist" is problematic even when dealing with civilisations that are not as temporally and culturally distant as that of the Classic Maya (nor, equally, that of ancient Greece). The development of realism and naturalism has been linked to autonomous creativity (rather than functional direction), as well as with a direct attempt to engage viewers in religious or emotional fervour (as in the case of Classical Greece). If it is even the case that these artistic techniques are linked with individual expression in pre-Colombian Mesoamerica, it would still be necessary to understand whether this expression was dictated (by, for example, a governing elite) or whether artists worked with a significant amount of personal choice. Using a culturally specific framework, this thesis will investigate the amount of agency intrinsic to an object alongside the agency that has been created in the process of its conception and construction. "The fit between the form and function, or form and intention, or form and meaning, relies on a practical sense that underlies any intentional adjustment of an artefact or technology and the "objective" demands of a task, by determining the mutual configuration of task and technique" (Brain in Tanner 2003, 138).

Image and Idea.

Within a discussion on the transmission of existential, political and social messages through artistic material culture, it is necessary to question the way we conceive of images in contrast to ideas. This subject is touched upon, to some extent, through the topics of linear perspective and material agency but the intention here is to expand our understanding of the reception of Maya art by unpacking the illusion of materiality and personhood through images.

The platonic tradition distinguishes between the *eidos* and the *eidolon*: the former being a "suprasensible reality" of "forms, types and species", and the latter providing merely a "likeness" or "semblance" of the *eidos* (Peters 1967). The tendency to view an image as the mirror of a natural form in this manner was re-established by the Reformation thinkers of 17th century England, but has been contradicted in modernity and postmodernity: "language and imagery are no longer what they promised to be for critics and philosophers of the Enlightenment – perfect, transparent media through which reality may be represented to the understanding" (Mitchell 1986, 8). They are now considered to be impenetrable enigmas, infused with complicated layered meanings derived from a multiplicity of sources (from producer to spectator, as mentioned above). An example within modernity can be illustrated by the camera obscura: its three layers of subject/object and reality/image are superimposed on each other (Mitchell 1986, 16). This has been further theorised in terms of consciousness itself and its role in existential thought. Reality could hypothetically exist without consciousness (although this has also been contested by rational philosophers such as Descartes (1644-1986) but the world of images/imagination and conceptualisation relies on consciousness and Being. Subjective man/woman is thus attributed the ability to conjure ideas and make them powerful; "how do we transform images, and the imagination that produces them into powers worthy of trust and respect?" (Mitchell 1986, 30). Perhaps the question could be extended; how do images transform our ideas, the building blocks of those values we aspire to trust? Concerning ideas relating to fetishism, Mitchell's formulation shows that, in our European understanding, idols and icons do not possess the power to create religious feeling and worship but, rather, we impose it upon them; "The reason why idols are called images lies in the fact that what was sought in them was deemed to subsist in them, and not in their shape or configuration" (Maimonides 1:22).

We associate animism and fetishism with "a stage of religious development…with a low grade of consciousness and civilization" (Haddon 1910, 91). The alternative cultural

constructions of impactful material culture have been made explicit persuasively by, for example, Layton in The Anthropology of Art (1991 and Corbey et al 2008). He separates the two over-arching components that are thought to constitute art: aesthetics and the communication of ideas through the apt use of images (1991, 4). Within this division there are then various layers of analysis (such as the distinctions made between iconography and iconology by Panofsky 1975). Of the two over-arching components, there have been some actors in the art historical discourse who have claimed that one of these constituents is more structural than the other; Aristotle asserts that "the structure distinctive of poetry…lie(s) in its ordering of ideas rather than forms" (Layton 1991, 5). The relative role of each of these aspects has fluctuated throughout the development of the art historical tradition and although postmodern artistic philosophies decreasingly support the value of aesthetic, the analysis of non-European art is still concerned with an aesthetic informed by European artistic and intellectual development. The postmodern backlash against traditional aesthetic norms is seen, for example, as an intellectual engagement with art history. However, the failure to exercise the stylistic devices inherent in the European definition of "aesthetic value" has been interpreted as primitivism and a sign of less complex intellectual and scientific structures in ancient/non-Western traditions. As European art history correlates its development with the birth of philosophy and the tenets of modern society, a decline in naturalism, perspectival form, and so on, indicates civilisation collapse or similar political and religious instability. Layton uses the example of the Kalabari of southern Nigeria to show that images have the potential to be related to ideas in alternative ways. Sculptures within this context are carved as houses for spirits and there is a pragmatic apathy towards sculpture as a visual object (Layton 1991, 7).

The relationship of the idea to the image as an object.

Layton continues his discussion into the philosophy of idea in relation to image within the context of the image as an object or piece of material culture (1991, 28-34). An example he uses is of Eskimo animal carvings in ivory: Ethnographic research by Carpenter (1960) shows that people from this culture help the animal (image) to manifest itself in the ivory; "it was always there: he (the artist) didn't create it; he released it; he helped it step forth" (Layton 1991, 32). The artistic relationship to objects is found in this process, and so the fact that the animal form carvings are then discarded and left behind as the community resettles is not considered artistically relevant, in this cultural context (Carpenter 1960, 362). Similarly, in the case of literature, European societies frequently do

not consider the object (a book) the source of the artistic beauty; “It may be that one has a copy of Ulysses on one’s table, but one couldn’t conclude from that that the novel…were simply one’s own copy…For if one lost one’s copy of Ulysses, Ulysses itself would not be lost” (Layton 1991, 28). Ulysses could not survive, however, the loss of all copies (Layton 1991, 31). This example may seem irrelevant because it concerns an art form, literature, which will not be treated within the present data set. Conceptually, however, interesting questions are raised, and here Ulysses (where Joyce references Homeric epic) is an apt example. Orally transmitted narratives, such as epics, are strongly fluid. In the case of material culture, the discussion commonly centres around variation in the reception and interpretation of audiences, which are wide-ranging owing to many factors, not the least of which, using an historical or archaeological lens, is the passage of time. In this case the art itself is perpetually transformed, by its very nature. In the context of pre-Colombian Mesoamerica, where free-standing stone stelae, as well as monuments and other pieces of material culture, are often ritually terminated (see Freidel, Schele and Parker 1990, 459 and Stross 1998, 31-40), it might be just as valid to consider material culture to contain, in some cases, values similar to those that academics have attributed, for example, to oral narratives. Here, we could posit that the destruction of a particular piece of creative material culture would not be negative, as, by definition, that material would be involved in the creative process of construction and destruction. It would be these actions themselves that would have reinforced the creative quality of the ideas surrounding art and art production. Conceptions of the containment of ideas to materials and objects should, therefore, be subject to analysis.

The Representation of Time and Space.

It is certainly also useful to consider the ways in which space and time are configured in more modern European art compared with the art of the pre-Hispanic people of Southern Mexico. Discussions concerning the use and conditions of the frame in medieval to modern art suggest that the surrounding void of an image has a significant influence on the image-sign of the body. The image-sign is “…still more evident where several figures are presented; then the intervals between them produce a rhythm of body and void and determine effects of intimacy, encroachment, and isolation, like the interval space in an actual human group” (Shapiro 1994, 12). The visual tension created by the characters in an artistic depiction would then encode social conceptions of interactive engagement and the meaning of space. An example of this is shown through the surreal

mediation of space in the medieval portraits of the holy family and the kingdom of heaven; see Figure 2 painted by Cimabue in 1280 CE. This composition of space, in part, marks the conceptual distance between the viewer and the otherworldly. The space perspective used, initially in antiquity and later developed in the Renaissance, is necessary in part as a result of the tendency to use flat lifeless material, onto which the image is imposed. This departs, for example, from the dimension provided for rock art by natural formations on the base medium (Shapiro 1994, 3). It has been suggested that this choice stems from the way European thought organises the material environment. In terms of spatial arrangement, it has been postulated, to continue to use Shapiro's theory, that Europeans live on a more horizontal than vertical plane (Shapiro 1994, 15). This could, therefore, influence the order in which artists express themselves pictorially.

An exploration of the meaning of this attempt to reproduce space and distance on a flat object is, furthermore, significant of the intellectual nature of artistic engagement, as Van Alphen (2005) asserts; "There are moments or cases in Western art…where the depiction of landscape or architecture becomes the privileged pictorial practice…I will interpret these moments as self-reflexive. The depiction of landscape or architecture is, then, not an end in itself as a representation of space, but it is the means by which the space of representation is explored, challenged and exposed" (Van Alphen 2005, 75). Attention to detail in landscape and architecture is, for the most part, notably absent from the pre-Colombian Mesoamerican relief sculptural and painting tradition, at least within the extant record. The forthcoming analysis will touch on the intellectual and emotional implications of the way space is managed, therefore, in this artistic context.

Deconstructing images on the basis of temporal perspective is also relevant. Representations of specific people captured in a moment (time-slice) are common, and in many cases represent a more extended time-slice of the indicated person. For example, "the Duke of Wellington upon the occasion of his victory at Waterloo" (Goodman 1976, 27). It is most common for portraits to be made in this vein, especially thanks to the development of naturalism. The viewer may imagine that the subject was captured in life, with the individualistic, life-like expressions increasing this perception. There are also various examples, in European art history, of a denser reference to time. David's "The Coronation of Napoleon" is one such example. Through the intense realism of the scene, which shows creases in the carpet and people who were present at the actual ceremony, the idea of immediate action is thoroughly conveyed. References to the past in connection to the present are also, arguably, made, in the figure just behind Napoleon, who has Julius Caesar's face. The future of the empire (that moves away from the past – the Roman

Empire – and the present) is alluded to by Napoleonic symbols. The artist is clearly asking the viewer to encapsulate various temporal ideas in his/her reception of the painting. The painting is not just a time-slice.

A similarly complex temporal situation is created in ancient Greek art. The development of movement in Classical art culminated in the Hellenistic taste for the representation of a moment in time that has been displaced from the climax of the narrative. The effect of this is to enhance pathos and intensity in the viewer; an example might be Laocoon (shown in Figure 3). Here the central figure twists in his struggle to escape the serpents that are on the point of devouring him. The detail of anatomy and representation of movement here elicit anticipation in the viewer, lending the sculpture a sense of ongoing action. The inception of this artistic tradition had a widespread impact on European art history and so necessarily affects our particular conception of and relationship to time. The static moment and the continuous existence are separated with respect to our sense of artistic power and rationality, particularly when we engage with images.

Through the immediacy promoted by realism, each individual is attributed to the time in which they lived and not related (in their pictorial representation) with any other existence in the past or future. Powerful ancestors who are, for propagandistic reasons, incorporated into political portraits, can be reduced to mere symbolism, usually through object association (as, for example, in portraits of Elizabeth I of England).

As briefly touched upon, portraits in the post-Renaissance European tradition are commonly defined by an attempt to communicate the individuality of the subject. The artistic portrait is not just documentation, as is the case, for example, of a photograph for functional purposes (Van Alphen 2005, 21). Modernists, or expressionists, very loosely speaking, transmit the emotion or subjectivity of the artist, as well as that of the subject, a relationship that is questioned in one of the most significant artistic programs in Western art, by Warhol, in his repetitive generic images of famous icons; “The ironic mythification leads to a disappearance of all subjectivity on both sides of the portrait: that of the portrayer and that of the portrayed” (Van Alphen 2005, 28). The individuality of the person portrayed in a portrait and the artist’s perception of that person, or scene, is accentuated by the immediacy of the action. As in the case of Warhol, the subjectivity and essence of both subject and artist are stripped by timelessness and repetition.

These are just some examples of the ways in which temporal concepts are negotiated through portraiture and images in Western art. Throughout Mesoamerican history, on the basis of alternative conceptions of how the body and personal essence

existed through time, there would certainly have been a divergent development of time in portraiture, which will be explored.

Discussion.

It is the intention of this investigation to draw some differences between the meaning of naturalism (among other stylistic devices) as it was employed by the Classic Maya and the significance and effects of stylistic devices in European sculpture. Evidently there are broader social, political and religious themes demonstrated in the development of any artistic style. These are not, however, explicit or deductive through the archaeological record, and so any attempt to reconstruct social structure with this approach could be problematic. It is just as important to attempt to reconstruct, in spite of a natural anachronistic bias of interpretation, the effect that artistic styles may have had on an audience on the basis of cultural perspectives and how the people of post-conquest Southern Mexico may have received certain European themes. I hope to show that Maya sculpture and painting was executed using sophisticated techniques, the interpretation of which falls outside of European artistic rationality. The analysis of Maya art should, however, go as deep as the analysis of works made within the European tradition.

Concerning the question of the role of the artist, it follows to attempt to deduce how the creativity of the artist, and her/his personal input into style and sentiment, might be portrayed and manifested in the consequent emotional discourse between object and spectator/participant. This is an interesting question, as it incorporates a salient discussion regarding the subjectivity of the experience of making art, and receiving it. It can also raise the issue of the extent to which the artists were involved in an artistic programme. This thesis does not preclude the possibility that pre-Colombian Maya artists were involved in centralised religious and political control. It does suggest, however, that a shift in interpretational focus might be interesting. At any rate, the role of the artist may imply a certain amount of sub-conscious communication of shared worldview. That is, the religious/existential/social sentiments inspired by Classic Maya public art may have been influenced, to some extent, by the unconscious dogma of the author of the objects. Furthermore, just as we can imagine the existential dialectic that would have developed between object and spectator, a similar dialectic may have existed throughout the production of that object. This discussion is particularly important in the study of post-conquest artistic programmes, given that Catholic ideas and images were being organised

and executed using the workmanship of artists with a very different (Mesoamerican) worldview.

What valuable interpretations can we make about how ideas and images were understood and used by the Classic Maya? In which way can we link these interpretations to artistic and creative sensibility among the contemporary Maya of Southern Mexico? It is necessary to consider that imagination and consciousness take on different roles in the interpretation of visual messages. Art historical discourse is now global and plural, but has its basis in the discussions initiated in Classical Antiquity. This has created a rich resource for reflection into the multifaceted aspects of creativity in thought and in material culture. This is the sophistication with which art in the Maya area needs to be approached and, within a culturally specific framework, some of the ideas discussed in this chapter can be applicable.

1.2 The Relationship Between Being and Material Culture.

Engagement with creative material culture is necessarily linked to the specific understanding of personhood and materiality. The fundamental experience and treatment of these values has been shown, in anthropological research, to be divergent cross-culturally. This deconstruction can be of value in an understanding of the reception of Classic Maya public art and art in post-conquest Mesoamerica. Identity has been shown to demonstrate elements of dividuality: permeability and partibility (Busby 1997, Fowler 2004, Strathern 1988, Butler 1990) (as opposed to the indivisible individuality of western conception (Corin 1998, 83)). These aspects of personhood are shown to be negotiated through material culture and social interaction. The theories have particularly interesting implications for societies that have been classified as “animistic”[1], such as that of the Maya. This text will outline how these theories have been applied to present-day societies and, in so doing, suggest how, while the concepts cannot be applied fully, their integration into material culture studies can aid an interpretation of the phenomenology of art, as it was – and may continue to be – experienced by the Maya. Personhood and materiality

[1] Using a word that is not appropriate but implied in literature (for example, Evans and Webster 2001, 217, Tiedje 2008, Sillar 2009.

will be discussed through contextual archaeology and phenomenological (existential) experience, (using the Husserl (1931) and Heidegger (1962) discourse).

The Divisibility of Self; Partibility.

The concept of partibility has been used to explain a state of personhood in which the members of a community have shifting identities; it is the sum of multiple parts that can fluidly move among them. Partibility is manifested, for the most part, in marriage and other ceremonial exchange relations, such as after death. In Melanesia, for example, people "are frequently constructed as the plural and composite site of the relationship that compose them. The singular person can be imagined as a social microcosm" (Strathern 1988, 13-14). This theory has been used to show that masculinity and femininity have a role within each "divisible" member of the community, thus indicating that gender is culturally constructed, and is not determined biologically. The theory has been criticised for its fictionally idealised distinction between the individual unitary sex/body in Europe and dual gendered partible body in Melanesia (Butler 1990, 102). More recent theories provide broader and more flexible introspections relating to the field of experience and conceptions of self, in the field of material culture studies (for example, DeMarrais et al 2004). The question of personhood can, therefore, be useful in relation to the role of material culture. Just as parts of people can be exchanged in ceremonial activity, so can material objects, which can be part of one or more people (this has been discussed in the social relations of the 'Are'are of the Solomon Islands) (Fowler 2004, 28). Interestingly, this implies that objects are created out of persons as opposed to being in contradistinction to persons (Tilley 1999, 103). Objects are thus attributed the role of subjects; the tendency to view them as inert and dead should, therefore, in some cases be avoided. Production can be defined as a discourse in which persons and objects create each other and proceed to negotiate their existence dialectically (Tilley 1999, 103). The agency of the object is accounted for (as in post-processual archaeology) and is attributed an escalated level of social power; "Material objects form a powerful metaphorical medium through which people may reflect on their world in a way simply not possible with words alone" (Tilley 1999, 103).

Indigenous Meso and South American religions or worldviews have been classified, certainly Eurocentrically, as animistic; for example, Tiedje 2008, Sillar 2009). The discussion regarding partible persons that extend to objects is, deductively, relevant in the discussion of Mesoamerican art appreciation. The material culture produced by the Classic

Maya was projected and received within a society that, naturally, maintained a culturally distinct understanding of the conceptual building blocks of that which art historians have traditionally considered “art”. Arguably, interactive engagement may have had more weight if the object itself were imbued with a form or level of personhood. How this personhood was produced, manifested and negotiated will be the subject of this investigation. The implications with respect to the role of the artist in pre-Colombian society are one interesting perspective in the attempt to understand public art as it may have been received and experienced.

The Divisibility of Self; Permeability.

Another aspect of dividuality that can relevantly be discussed with respect to the Maya worldview is permeability. This has been investigated among Hindus in India and concerns a person’s partibility in terms of substance codes: Personal identity is transacted and manipulated through these codes (Fowler 2004, 32). “By Indian modes of thought, what goes on between actors are the same connected processes of mixing and separation that go on within actors” (Marriot 1976, 109). Personhood is thus conceived from a more natural perspective, as the human body and its surroundings are ultimately linked, with regard to substance and energy. Although this may not seem to have direct relevance to the appreciation of public art by pre-conquest to post-conquest Mesoamerican civilisations, it demonstrates an outlook on community that may correspond to some aspects of Mesoamerican social thought. The Hindu belief that substances of the body are reintegrated into the earth is reminiscent of the Mesoamerican worldview of cyclicality and reciprocal interchange between nature, gods and people. It has been suggested that permeable people in the past have sacrificed animals and offered artefacts related to this sacrifice as an exchange with the supernatural or natural world (Fowler 2004, 138). The Maya performed auto-sacrifices, such as that depicted in the Yaxchilán Lintel 24, demonstrating similar ideas of substance negotiation. If materials are linked on a fundamental level, this may indicate that subject-object boundaries were, to some extent, flexible. Furthermore, it may be conjectured that, if the substances of distinct members of the community were divisible/dividual, those substances within an individual might metaphorically represent a community. Fowler supports this principle using Foucault’s Technologies of the Self (1988), in which it is suggested that social institutions shape our bodies and that it is impossible to separate our bodies from social technologies;

"…tattooing might be directly analogous to marking the land through rock art production" (Fowler 2004, 39).

These themes, involving transubstantiation, are also evident in the negotiation of various workable materials. There are examples to demonstrate that the dichotomies that many archaeologists draw between, for example, basketry and pottery may not have been attributed to materials in temporally and culturally distant civilisations; "Things appear not as themselves but through fields of resemblances, which exist beyond the divisions archaeologists make of materials, so that the characterisation into pottery, stone, metal or basketry may not have been held by people in the past whose sensory awareness ranged across the whole of the material world in which they lived" (DeMarrais et al 2004, 38). This supports the premise that our structured differentiation of object types, as well as subject/object roles, may be Eurocentric. It also emphasises the importance of developing reception theories, on the basis that alternative world views not only affect the production but also the experience of material culture.

Discussion.

The concepts of both partible and permeable person are a theoretical tool in the understanding of human and material culture relations. Our concept of individuality can be used alongside these ideas to negotiate a possible understanding of identity in any society: personhood styles are not static and these concepts will have diverged and converged in different ways throughout history (LiPuma 1998, 57). This subject will be applied to pre-Colombian art through an analysis of stylistic devices, pre- and post-conquest, and of the creative spheres within modern Mexican communities (Santa Elena, Yucatán).

Anthropological research on the canoe of the Wala in northeast Malekula, Vanuatu, shows how artistic material culture can acquire personhood, and reflect various and layered aspects of society in its construction and lifespan. A brief summary of its social implications may be useful to highlight how the same theory of personhood may be useful, as well as in some senses ineffective, in a study of Classic Maya art. The basic symbolism of the wooden canoe is deductive: it is a material metaphor for the forest that surrounds the people of Vanuatu, and is transformed into motion (Tilley 1999, 109). The prow of the canoe is carved into the shape of a bird and is protected by roots. This represents not only land and sea (as the form is taken from a native sea bird) but also the common Melanesian thought of rootedness and journey (Tilley 1999, 112). There are rites and

magic performed in the creation of the canoe and as this process unfolds the canoe transforms from an object into a subject. (These rites involve sacrificing and the exclusion of women, reflecting an actual rite of passage) (Tilley 1999, 114). The canoe thus acquires subjective identity (just like the gendering of boys in pubescent rites of passage in the same and similar societies). The canoe is given a proper name, gendered and receives mortuary rites in the event of wreckage. An old vessel is thought to have died a natural death if left to rot in its shelter (Tilley 1999, 124). It is clear, from the style of treatment conferred upon the canoe, that it is a powerful social object (or, moreover, subject). The canoe has social agency and is not objectified. A strong social image is produced through the creation of the artistically fashioned matter, and is a theatrical representation and mirror of religion, culture and society. The personification of the canoe imbues the mirror/representation with a life force that may initiate a discourse between material culture and social behaviour.

Pre-Colombian Mesoamerican public art may not be as symbolically deducible as the wooden Wala canoe, and it would be impossible for an archaeologist to make concrete assumptions of the symbolism in an ancient context. It is not unlikely, however, that material objects of social value may have produced similarly powerful living entities. To follow Foucault, in this sense, it is not just bodies that can be part of social technologies; worked matter can perform a similar function, and become an active rather than passive mirror of society.

Phenomenological and Archaeological Studies.

Another example of art and material object that may be relevant in a discussion concerning their interaction with people might be that of the rock carvings at Hogsbyn, Scandinavia. It has been argued (Tilley 1999, 153) that the pictures only make sense to their viewers if they are read south to north. The positioning of the depictions creates an abstract representation when viewed overall and, as the viewer progresses north, the next carved rock becomes apparent, only to display substantially more detail when approached closely (Tilley 1999, 153); thus "…the encounter with each carved rock, by which one must pause to look, becomes a process of revelation" (Tilley 1999, 153). This induced processional movement arguably indicates that the place was the focus of ritual events, a consecrated space "…whose meanings would be manipulated as part of a choreography of movement" (Tilley 1999, 154). The positioning and spatial arrangement of the rock carvings creates a specific narrative. The position of the art, by the water, may have

incremented the effect of the artistic experience. If, indeed, this art was used for initiation rites, or some similar ritual, it may follow that the rocks are fundamentally markers of social timelessness, and were perceived as such by the participants of the rituals enacted by the society that created them (Tilley 1999, 154). The rituals may have had material and social effects on the people who interacted with them. The probable theatricality of the interaction with this material culture may indicate that the people involved in the rites did not regard the rocks as lifeless inanimate features of the landscape. The landscape was actively engaged with, supporting the possibility that these objects were experienced within a style of personhood that does not exist in the same way in the modern Western world.

This example is relevant to the deconstruction of archaeological conceptions of public art on the basis of the use of narrative structure, and intuitive artistic and religious experience. The religious experience that may have been governed by the reading of the Hogsbyn carvings can also be observed, arguably, in the case of the Maya. Writing on public artworks such as stelae, which are common in Mesoamerican artistic material culture, may have created a sacred temporal space that complemented the power of the carvings. Narrative structure was also employed in the positioning of a number of stelae in a group, an original format that forms an interesting perspective of Mesoamerican conceptions of time, past, present and future. Tilley's phenomenological approach to the carvings in Scandinavia has merit in terms of his appreciation of surrounding landscape; just as the surrounding lake may accentuate the influence of the Hogsbyn carvings, Mesoamerican art is very prominently linked to the natural environment. This context is also very prominent in contemporary Mesoamerican discourse, both in the case of pre-Colombian public art and in the case of the reception of post-conquest Catholic art.

Briefly discussed has been Tilley's more recent research at Simrishamn in Sweden (2008). His "phenomenologically informed kinaesthetic approach" (2008 16) raises a number of issues pertinent to the deconstruction of anthropological, archaeological and artistic terms. Just as the Vanuatu canoe is attributed subjectivity and holds a role within the community, it is Tilley's suggestion that the images carved onto the rock face at Simrishamn have a forceful relationship with the personhood of the viewers; "the images themselves were orchestrating a spatial dance, bodies were moving in relation to them…" (Tilley 2008 17). Here the author advocates the possibility that art is not, in this context, an object for contemplative detachment, nor is its effect felt solely in the visual field. Instead, as the viewer bends, twists, turns, crouches and climbs, the body is forced to respond to the carvings, not just the eye and mind. As the body responds to the images, further, contextually specific, factors accumulate in the experience. Environmental factors include

the shape and texture of the ground beneath the person's feet, and the temperature and climate. Associated, and culturally influenced, aspects such as the shoes and clothes worn by the participant also become relevant (Ingold 2000). To investigate these details in the case, for example, of the reception of Maya art, might be over-ambitious. However, the impact of these particulars should not be underestimated in an attempt to understand some of the experience of Being (in relation to art, or otherwise). The phenomenological implications of bodily experience in anthropology (expounded, for example, by Ingold 2000 and Tilley 2004) deserve close attention. For the purposes of the present discussion, it is interesting to view the relationship between the rock carvings and the body of the viewer, or participant, in terms of permeability; "Where are we to put the limit between the body and the world, since the world is flesh" (Merleau-Ponty 1973, 138). The rock carvings at Simrishamn provide the careful participant of the images with an awareness of their corporeality and how that aspect of personhood relates to the world around it.

The images carved into the rocks at Simrishamn conform to, or are influenced by, the natural formations of the material itself. The implications of this in terms of the artwork's agency have already been discussed. It is interesting to approach this aspect of art production in relation to nature and culture. It has been widely commented that the dichotomisation of these two concepts is the result of an academic (intellectual) bias created by the European Cartesian tradition (see Nettle 2009). However, the construction of artistic or functional objects out of natural materials could be seen as a domination of culture over the natural. Architectural objects are perhaps the best example of this, as they require a larger effort to overcome the hindrances presented by natural phenomena (for example, bodies of water, forest, land and so on). The spirit of this dichotomisation in Europe predates Cartesian dualities; Greek historical/literary narrative frequently emphasises man's struggle against nature (for example, Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis). It is very plausible that the community who produced the images at Simrishamn, not being participants in this cultural history, had an alternative relationship to the rocks upon which they carved. Here Tilley argues that the use of the rock surface as a guide for the images is worthy of attention, and that it is relevant to an analysis of the meaning and effect of the site (2008, 20). Furthermore, he advocates that, although a philosophical consideration of phenomenology cannot give specific answers about particular cultures, social relationships and so on, the body and its centrality to the perception of human experience is a useful point of departure. A closer attention to landscape, and material culture that is (at least partially) built in response to it, enters into this enquiry. Following theories of permeability, fluid conceptions of the material

environment call for a reformation of thoughts on the cultural manipulation of nature; worked and unworked matter can be attributed accentuated agency. In response to further questioning of anthropological constructions (Ingold 2000, Dillon 1998), Tilley argues against the classification of "primitive" worldviews such as animism, totemism, anthropomorphism and so on, since the values that constitute these worldviews are inherent, although unacknowledged, within modernity; "that is the essence of the reversibility relation; not that the tree I see sees me, but that I am visible from the standpoint of the tree as it is from mine because we are both made of the same stuff: the flesh of the world" (Dillon 1998, 170).

The relevance of the theories put forth here to Mesoamerican personhood is undeniable; the choice of location, style and composition of pre-conquest Maya architecture, to take an example, as well as the iconography, show an alternative relationship to the natural environment. Stone (1995) has shown that areas of religious power in the Maya area involved a physical process; "revelatory ekstasis in pilgrimage locations such as caves, where one rather obscure text records the couplet *il-b'i(h), il-way*, "see the road, see an aspect of the soul"" (Houston 2006, 141). This recalls the link between movement and creative response to the environment discussed by Tilley with regard to Simrishamn and is also perhaps evidence of the dividuality of personhood, in that the "soul" has aspects. Here, part of the soul can be accessed by engagement between body and the position of materials in space, that is, movement through that space and the engagement with an ever-changing material environment can affect and develop your personhood.

An object, or piece of art work, is set apart within our conception of art appreciation, by its display. Public, or socially invested, art is objectified by the people that produce it and interact with it, on the basis that display naturally sets an object outside of normal interpersonal interaction by its presence as an outstanding feature; "…display has the effect of abstracting objects from the overall flow of life, so that they can then be singled out for attention, due to their visual and other aesthetic qualities, or their connections to particular peoples and events" (DeMarrais et al 2004, 36). This process of separation, in itself, forms what we conceive of as the object (DeMarrais et al 2004, 36). Personhood attributed to (what "Western" anthropologists would term inanimate) materials may involve a different natural dialectical process. The nature and process of display thus raises interesting perspectives concerning the role and status of this type of personhood, and the role of those in its most frequent contact. It is, therefore, relevant to discuss public art on the basis of concealment, as well as display (DeMarrais et al 2004, 41).

Existentialism through conceptions of personhood.

Relevant to the discussion of personhood is the existential debate concerning modes of Being and understanding. Heidegger's concept of intentionality (which refers to the empirical ego relationship to the object of the empirical world) suggests that it is "psychologically impossible to distinguish between subject and object (the world)" (Barbosa da Silva 1982, 54). Thus, understanding is a mode of Being, and Being cannot exist without the constant objectification of the material world. This is in contrast to Husserl's life-world, where understanding is a mode of existing. In this philosophy, the self is formed through experience; the conscious mind creates self through existence and relevance of the material world. Both of these theories presuppose that humankind is incapable of relating to, or understanding, an object if it is not of instrumental value to him/her. The object is a Being, only in that it reflects the nature of the human agent and, in doing so, it gains and induces understanding (Barbosa da Silva 1982, 60). According to Heidegger, people create a self by objectifying the other. Husserl takes this relationship further, to suppose that the material world, its "objects", is intrinsically part of the experience of self. The self is contingent on materiality not solely because it objectifies the other, but because materiality creates bodily and intellectual experience. This philosophy suggests that it is experience that constitutes Being. Humans, therefore, constantly remodel themselves through their interaction with objects (Hoistad 1973, 452). According to Heidegger, humans lose themselves in this process; "For men to exist as a *thing*, among other *things*, is for him to lose contact with Being" (in its authentic sense) (Barbosa da Silva 1982, 62). Although humans lose their authenticity of Being through this experience, "practical and theoretical understanding is because they presuppose a pre-understanding which is nothing else than man's fundamental way of existing, an existence which is related to existences of all Beings through man's privileged relation to Being-itself" (Barbosa da Silva 1982, 63). A person's existence, and his/her experience of personhood, relies on a relationship to the things that surround him/her. These philosophies attribute privilege and agency to people because they are not the essence of Being-itself. They have lost this essence in their objectification of the surrounding world. We can deduce that the object world, by contrast, has no agency, and does not exist, because objects do not use their conscious to objectify other objects (or people-subjects). Within this framework, objects have no subjectivity.

The implications of this theoretical standpoint for the understanding of art and religious experience in Mesoamerican society lie in an appreciation of European

perceptions of Being. As shown above, within traditional European philosophical conception, objects and people together constitute the state of Being. As a result, there is no essence of being outside the material and conscious world in combination. The body and mind of a person and the material world surrounding it are linked. While the conscious mind experiences, and so exists, by objectifying the material world, the material world lacks agency. As such, outside of the human conscious, there is no experience. Without experience, there is only Being-itself, no Being-in-itself, which is the basis for constructing personhood. If, indeed, Heidegger's philosophy can be applied to the Maya, the relationship between people and objects is based on the premise that the material world is indisputably understood, but is merely a reflection of personal and community personhood. It does experience and therefore does not exist; it has no personhood of its own. Arguably, these European philosophies have merit in terms of interpreting how, in any cultural context, social messages can be subconsciously understood and how materiality subconsciously defines the development and experience of personhood. These theories undoubtedly lend weight to the role of material culture and the natural environment in the experience of Being. This text will suggest, however, that Maya philosophy may allow for distinct forms of Being and Self. As we have seen in the anthropological discussions above, personhood can be extended to pass through materials (in the sense of permeability) or be divided between entities (partibility). These aspects of Being are outside of the relationship of the human conscious to materials in the way that is described by Heidegger and Husserl. People may be more than just affected, reflected or defined through objects; they may be countered by agents – forces of personhood.

Gender and Personhood.

The subject of partible personhood, as mentioned, has been factored into the gender debate in anthropological and archaeological discourse (see Butler 1990 and Joyce 2001). In line with the deconstruction of gendered dichotomies that have been associated with the Enlightenment (similarly, and involving, the nature/culture dualism), partibility has been presented as a means by which sexuality has been problematised (Strathern 1988). While some post-processual gender theories in archaeology propose that the body is like a "…mannequin, to be dressed and inscribed, invested with social meaning" (Gilchrist 1999, 72), there have been some interesting criticisms of this negation of the role of the body; "Archaeology has been reduced by Foucauldian notions of control, where power relations are mapped on the body as a surface which can be analyzed as a

forum for display" (Meskell 1998, 141). Here, she advocates the investigation of how experiences are formed through the body as a medium. The body should be seen as a context for the reception of culture (and the natural environment), not as a non-agent that acts as a recipient for social forces/categories (Meskell 1998). Meskell's subject is that of the *nagual*, a commonly discussed theme in the anthropology of Mesoamerica. The complex implications for perspectives of the body in the context of bodily transformations will also be discussed in the interviews at Santa Elena.

Through this lens, or perhaps in spite of it, it remains to associate the experience of corporeality (sexuality in this case) with portraiture in material culture; how is personhood negotiated between the two? A series of photographs by Cindy Sherman recreates film scenes that are not, in fact, taken from actual films. The copy that does not, in fact, have an original reflects the intellectual content of the photograph; that is, "the images suggest that there is a particular kind of femininity in the woman, whereas in fact the femininity is in the image itself, it is the image" (Williamson 1983, 102). It appears that Sherman intends to criticise the way that femininity is constructed and stereotyped in modernity (Van Alphen 2005, 28). Furthermore, the photographs deal with issues relating to how these stereotypes are perpetuated, insidiously, by the media. This process stunts the development of un-dominated, sexual identity. To continue the line of the thesis, it is very plausible to argue that the structures inherent in "Western" culture regarding concepts such as materiality and personhood are not applicable to pre-conquest Mesoamerica. Neither, perhaps, is the structure relating to the perpetuation of stereotypes through public image applicable. There is material to support the premise that there existed/exists fluidity within and between materiality and the experience of Being. This relationship necessarily has an impact upon the values inherent in the portrait of a person, whether real or in image. European portraiture searches to represent originality, through naturalism, expressionism or, in the case of Sherman, by deconstructing the stereotypes which the public has, historically, been bombarded with. Within the Mesoamerican context, it would be interesting to explore the possible values, within portraiture and art, that exist in the image and in the experience of the viewer/participant. The issue of gender roles in an archaeological context undeniably merits more thorough investigation. Here, the discussion serves to make a link between the possible partibility of identity between public art (figural representation) and the viewers and participants in figural art programmes. What was the impact of an image on the personhood of the viewer, if the material image was attributed agency or life-force?

Emotion and Intellectuality.

Throughout the discussion there has been an implication that the intellectual appraisal of art, its calm and objective contemplation, is fundamentally Eurocentric. Modern conceptual artists (notably, for example, Brian Eno, whose minimalist musical and visual works hope to generate emotion and surrender) subvert this value. It is arguable that they do so because it is such an engrained aspect of the increasingly cerebral art historical process. Conversely, it could be argued that the nature of aesthetic response is emotional, and that it is the art itself that is created within an intellectual process and thus "thinks" (Van Alphen 2005, XIV). It seems necessary to clarify that the distinction between emotion and intellectuality (rationality) is at risk of being as empty or shallow a dichotomy as that between nature or culture, or male and female. Recent theoreticians such as DeMarrais et al argue for its destruction; "Intelligent, rational thought is not always controlled and linear and emotions are not always beyond our control. The boundaries between emotions and rational thought may well be blurred. A state of intellectual inspiration is both emotional and cognitive: as ideas take a new form there is considerable excitement about seeing the world in a new way" (2005, 35). The current discussion (partible and permeable personhood) implicitly suggests an associated division, between cultured self and the body. The flexibility of these concepts can be expanded, necessarily linking the body and the experience of Being to community and to the material world; "Emotions are (often experienced individually but are always created through relations. The multiplicity of our links to others and within ourselves are hard to put into words, but are often knowable through the body and its performances. The body, of course, does not exist in a vacuum, but through links to the material world" (DeMarrais et al 2004, 36).

Discussion.

It is the intention of this thesis to support and dispute aspects of the theories that have been raised in this chapter using various examples from the extant repertoire of art in the Maya area, using some examples from the Classic period, and its development after the huge stylistic and thematic overhaul brought on by the conquest. This chapter describes the relationship between persons and their material environment and the effect of this relationship on their state of Being as it has been put forward by some European philosophers (such as Heidegger and Husserl). Arguably, personhood was and is experienced distinctly among the Maya. Ideas formulated by anthropologists (for example,

Fowler 2004 and Strathern 1988) regarding partibility and permeability (divisibility) may be partially useful in broadening theories of personhood so that we can create less Eurocentric theories when looking to non-Western societies. The deconstruction of "Western" existential values and investigation into conceptual possibilities is invariably useful, as the dichotomy between subject and object that has existed as part of a long European theoretical history may be invalid, or at least questionable, in the Mesoamerican context. For example, there may be alternative ways of experiencing the agency of the material world. Traditional European theories allow for the involvement of the "inanimate" or "object" world in the creation of self and the experience of Being. Being itself is inseparable and even contingent on the material world lived in by an individual. Being is also mediated and constructed through the engagement of the conscious with other people. Various types of evidence – ethnographic, historical and archaeological – can be used to demonstrate the divergent existential attitudes of Mesoamerican communities, although the term "animism" employed in the interpretation of this worldview is anachronistic and misleading. On the basis of fluidity of personhood, which can be transferred from one entity to another, or can inhabit multiple entities, there is no strict division between the self (subject) and the external material world (object/other). The influence of a person's surroundings should not, therefore, be restricted to purely a reflection. External entities (persons and "inanimate" bodies) might be seen to have a living agency. We might imagine that, in this living world, the possible effects on personhood could be volatile and unexpected. If this were the case, it would make for a less determined existence.

European philosophical thought has focused heavily on Being, and the experience and implications of that state. These theories imply that objects have a direct and significant influence on this state of Being. Creative material culture (art) can be said to be particularly forceful, in part because of the existential weight of the messages carried through it (as seen in Chapter 1.1). Furthermore, creative material culture has been worked for multiple (not just functional) purposes, by persons. Therefore, this particular type of worked matter can be particularly useful in thinking about the construction and reception of personhood. The construction of the self that happens as a result of the interaction between a person and creative material culture is of particular interest if the "object" in question is conceptually attributed a life force. Chapter 2 will explore the nuances of conceptions of personhood and its relationship to materials in the contemporary community of Santa Elena, Yucatán. Evidence drawn from interviews with member of this community, within the context of ethnographic literature conducted in the

Maya area, suggests that the experience of Being is more fluid than traditional “Western” conceptions. The analysis of these interviews will take advantage of the discussions examined in this chapter.

1.3 Being in the Natural and Worked Environment and the Construction of Identity.

Having already outlined theories of personhood and the possibility of accentuated agency attributable to “objects”, especially those that have been worked on by people (creatively), it is the intention here to discuss this in the context of historical development. There are many archaeological theorists who tackle this issue (for example, Sillar 2009). Sartre’s attempt to tie the existential philosophies outlined in Being and Nothingness to the economic, social and political developments of the 20th century, in his Critique of Dialectical Reason, will be used in this endeavour. Although the work is very expansive, and uses concrete historical examples, for which it has been widely critiqued (for example, McBride 1991), it is a useful material to base discussion upon. This work is principally concerned with ubiquitous material objects produced by humans, as opposed to specifically emotive art works. However, the dialectical process that is described and critiqued by Sartre in this volume can be compared to the context of Mesoamerican pre- and post-conquest society, with respect both to artistic production and historical development. Furthermore, contemporary artists have engaged with concepts of materiality and its role within the construction of identity and community. This chapter will sketch an outline for the possible significance of art as a material mediator throughout history, as the result of dialectical processes, in the Mesoamerican context.

Sartre’s Existential Marxism.

Sartre’s existentialism can be aligned, to a certain extent, with that of Heidegger in his approach to the formation of the self in response to functional objects. Sartre asserts that existence does, indeed, precede essence (1943, 29), and that there is no core human nature, as biological determinists might suggest. In this way, people form themselves in and through their actions and in the interaction between mind and matter. He distinguishes two types of Being, one that incorporates the state of humanity and another that does not: Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself (Sartre 2004, 114). Whereas a Being-in-itself cannot be

other than it is, and is fundamentally defined by that essence, a Being-for-itself is alterable and thus capable of inducing an unending array of possibilities. Humans evidently fall into the latter category, and are thus weighed down by an intrinsic freedom; in fact, there is no difference between the Being of man and being free (Kaufmann 1956, 25). This concept is expanded to include collectives of people, action influenced by Being-for-others, in which human behaviour is dictated on the basis of possible judgement by, or for the benefit of, other people. People are, in Sartre's philosophy, completely responsible for their own life, actions, death, birth and the world (Flynn 1984, 5). Sartre advocates subjectivity on this basis, hoping to free the "whole Us from its object state" by transforming it into a We-subject (Kaufman 1956, 422). This is the oppressive freedom that haunts the characters of Sartre's plays.

Consciousness, as discussed by Sartre, therefore, is devoid of Cartesian substance (Flynn 1984, 4) and forms intentionality purely on the basis of interaction with the objects (material world) surrounding it. A dualism is therefore created between the conscious and the non-conscious, the subject and the object, spontaneity and inertia, Being and nothingness, and it is in this process that the Other is created. The imagination and images created by humans are seen not as the product of mental substance but as the intended reflection of a mind that intends a specific situation: it intends the other to be "nothingness". In order to be able to imagine, the consciousness must be able to "posit the world in its synthetic totality" (Sartre 2003, 239-40). This philosophy is relevant because it is elaborated upon and then applied to a humanitarian endeavour to understand history (in the Critique). So far, it shows that although Sartre dichotomises subject and object, objects inescapably influence the actions and Being of the subject (a person). The people who produce their material environment, and live in its milieu, manipulate it into action through their consciousness and imagination.

Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason.

This leads to a discussion of the Critique of Dialectical Reason, where fuller attention is paid to the social implications of such a philosophy. Sartre emphasises the role of scarcity in human interaction, both interpersonally and with the worked environment. He claims that the natural resources needed by humans to survive are scarce and that this creates a competitive environment for humanity. This, notably, is in contrast to Marx's theory, which is that it is modes of production that cause social alienation. Sartre does not dispute the existence of the type of alienation described by Marx, but states that humans

can be free of it. The alienation he proposes, rather darkly, is suggested to be a basic human condition (McBride 1991, 130). The classic example of alienation through scarcity (and mediated by worked matter, as I shall discuss further below) is that of the Parisian bus stop (Sartre 2004, 256-268). Although a collective of people are combined by a common goal (not only that of boarding the bus but also, perhaps, the desire for an improvement in the transport system or lower bus fares), they are forced – by material conditions and social regulations – to wait in a queue even though this action may not ensure their seat. The scarcity of seats creates isolation and then alienation through competition. Sartre names this psychological alienation "seriality": the bus stop occupants form a series, which is only a group in a particular sense.

It is within this context that Sartre integrates his existential philosophies and delineates his theory of praxis and the practico-inert field. Praxis is the action of individuals on their environment. The individual is an organism, as praxis is an agent. Praxis actively creates what Sartre terms the practico-inert field (McBride 1991, 128). It is this field that creates fundamental sociality; "it is at the practico-inert level that sociality is produced in man by things as a bond of materiality which transcends and alters simple human relations" (Sartre 2004, 304). A mediating factor in the creation of social reality is therefore the inert, the worked matter. The practico-inert field is comprised of an unceasing dialectic between conscious and unconscious, and the results (counter-finalities) are potentially unforeseeable and negative. An example of this, given by Sartre, is the deforestation of China (Sartre 2004, 161-164). Individual interests were served over a long period of time by clearing the trees for agricultural land use. The long-term environmental damage caused by the deforestation, however, renders these efforts counter-productive. In this way, the individual praxis is lost and gives way to "the maleficent actions of worked matter" (Sartre 2004, 310). The acts that take place have no ascribed author, as the inert matter that is worked on does not have the freedom to be other than it is, despite its power over the individuals that work with it.

The practico-inert field can be linked thematically with Marx's criticism of capitalist economies (and commodity fetishism), where the free market dictates our socio-economic environment; the producer becomes a product of their product; "Scarcity thrusts material mediation to the fore where it becomes decisive and distortive" (Flynn 1984, 100). Sartre thus explains how history is dictated by this compulsorily reciprocal agency; "we only illuminate more clearly the synthetic bond of reciprocity…which is a singularised universal and the very basis of all human relations" (McBride 1991, 121). Despite the fundamental distinctions between people and their synthetic creations, they are forced to objectify

themselves in matter to ward off scarcity. The practico-inert domain can thus be categorised as a liberating and an alienating phenomenon (McBride 1991, 136). The dialectic constitutes a negation of the negation; there is a continuous movement of interiorised exteriority and exteriorised interiority. The active worked matter produces an anti-dialectic in response to this, in which the exteriority that the agents re-interiorise is constantly transforming (Sartre 2004, 70-88).

It is, therefore, interesting to view humans on the basis of their own materiality and their struggle to transcend the inhumanity of their matter; "the inorganic physis in its pure form for Sartre – is worked on by the praxis of human organisms, that is what makes history. However, organisms are also material. It is above all through this new emphasis of his on a very traditional notion that Sartre finally makes peace with materialism" (McBride 1991, 120). To what extent are individuals able to emancipate themselves from their surrounding material culture, in order to actively influence the course of history? How powerful is the agency of materiality (as a reflection of ourselves)? How far can it be judged that individuals are a product of their own product? Although Sartre's philosophies are in no way religious, it might be interesting to compare his philosophies with Mesoamerican religious thought and post-processual archaeological theory. In his treatment of the development of history, Sartre humanises the world, not only time and space, but the "impersonal laws of economics" (Flynn 1984, 102). It will be shown, in Chapters 2 and 3, how these processes can be compared to the Mesoamerican worldview.

Limitations of Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason.

Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason has been criticised by many social theorists on various counts. The most outstanding of these is that it is not useful in its application to concrete historical situations. Sartre's discourse involving the totalisation of society without a totaliser (through the agency of dialectical development) (Sartre 2004, 53) presents the political situation in the Soviet Union, at the time of the emergence of a complex state bureaucracy, as an example. This example seems to fall short in terms of its applicability, however: Stalin himself has been seen to embody a human totaliser (Elliot 1987, 202). We can, therefore, question to what extent Sartre's Critique has credibility when used as a tool in the understanding of specific social and political circumstances in history. However, the philosophies outlined in the work should not be discredited, as they form the basis for an understanding of existentialism and historical materialism. The complex interplay of

parallel narratives that have the potential to lead to a multiplicity of inconceivable results implied by the Critique is clearly reminiscent of much post-modern thought and may be particularly relevant in the sketch and construction of archaeological theory for that reason.

A relevant limitation of the Critique, as a theoretical tool in the context presented in this thesis, might be that Sartre's explanation of philosophy and social theory is very specific to its historical situation. Sartre was ultimately seeking to explain the injustices witnessed across Europe during and after the World Wars, and so the creation of his theory would, naturally, have been biased to this effect. The actors within his framework are subsequently seen as acting within this mindset and cultural conception; "what takes place in the sociohistorical world, in other words, takes place dialectically; equally dialectical, at least if they are to have any real value, must be both the actors' contemporaneous and the historians' retrospective comprehensions of what is taking and has taken place, and the philosophical comprehension of his entire scene that is attempted in works such as Sartre's own" (McBride 1991, 115).

The Applicability of the Critique to the Mesoamerican Context.

It follows, therefore, to attempt a discussion of how Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason, and Sartre's earlier more philosophical works, may be applicable to the case of pre-conquest Maya public art and to the role of material culture in Southern Mexico throughout the whole-scale transformations imposed during and after the Spanish conquest. The separate aesthetic convention and context, which must be accounted for in the appreciation of "non-Western" art (Renfrew 2003, 9), presents another dimension to the enquiry. The sketch that has been presented, in an attempt to deconstruct some of the more relevant European art-historical biases, will be employed to this end. Discussed in the previous sub-chapter are the theories pertaining to the possibility of versatile corporeal conventions in non-European societies. Sartre's living agency and cyclical reciprocity between people and their material environment align, to a degree, with less rigid definitions of personhood; he revives the "language of animism" (Levi-Strauss 1977).

Concretely, to address a political or historical issue in Mesoamerican archaeology, this research hopes to show that, however valid are the assertions concerning the propagandistic role of the dynastic Maya elite (Miller and Martin 2004, Looper 2003, McAnany 1995, Fitzsimmons 2009, to name very few examples), there is room for developing an understanding of Maya culture by focusing on the interplay between Maya philosophies and stylistic devices. The evidence presented by archaeologists in support of

these assertions (epigraphic, iconographic and even architectural) certainly remains undeniable. However, the interest and choice in this discussion is very possibly a product of the development of European art history and philosophy. Although now questioned by archaeologists, traditional material culture theorists have posited that religion in society begins with the premise of stratified social structures, in which powerful individuals seek to promote and legitimate their status through art, and other communicative media (such as Eliade 1968 and Alles 1988). Religious engagement may have been an important aspect of the creation and display of Maya art and architecture, as previous studies have shown (for example, Andrews 1995, Looper 2003 and Newsome 2001). Following this hypothesis, we might deduce that artists or commissioners promoted this engagement as an orchestrated programme or, perhaps more plausibly, this aspect might be seen as a subtle reflection of an ideology shared by the Maya (as laid out, for example, by Alles 1988, where he compares the Kandariya Mahadeva and the Parthenon; the Kandariya's complex system of architectural tiers and sections reflects highly stratified Indian society, while the open colonnades and equal number of columns of the Parthenon symbolise Classical Greek democracy). The negotiation of conscious and sub-conscious messaging is relevant to the question surrounding Marxist political theories: concretely, were the Maya products of their own products? In what way could Sartre's theory of scarcity and alienation be applied in this context, where, for example, material mediators engage religiously with their viewers? Sartre asserts that people objectify themselves in materiality to ward off scarcity; within a society where "subjectification" might more appropriately define the engagement with materiality, it is interesting to assess how people engage with scarcity, alienation and, ultimately, material culture. The validity of Sartre's post-war analysis in Europe is disputable, as has already been discussed, and so an attempt to apply the theory to historical development before of after the conquest is apt to be fruitless.

On the premise that historical development cannot be concretely related to the theories of materiality, material dialectics and existentialism, it remains to investigate how, on the basis of large-scale upheavals in history (such as the conquest), it might be most appropriate to relate the reconstructed rationality sketched by the thesis. As previously mentioned, the role/agency of art will not be couched in terms of political, or even religious, structures. The pre-Hispanic pieces will be discussed in terms of their potential for intellectual and emotional/corporeal experience. Post-conquest Catholic art will be discussed in relation to its context, the surrounding natural environment, among the material remains of the aforementioned pieces, and the cultural conceptions of the people

that interact with both elements of the material landscape. This thesis seeks to explore how the people of Santa Elena manipulate their environment with their imagination and otherwise, and in this way animate it and give it agency.

The subject of historical consciousness, particularly in a case such as this, where the communities and their material culture that are discussed by archaeologists still exist, becomes of particular importance. The archaeological enquiry is based on the premise that it is capable of making "a distinctive contribution towards an understanding and critique of the present" (Shanks and Tilley 1987, 172-173). Ethnography among contemporary communities (for archaeological purposes), and what has been referred to as "ethno-archaeology" (Buchli and Lucas 2001, 4), are engaged in the attempt to study modern phenomena towards a deeper understanding of the past. This might seem to relegate the role of academia, at least in this field, to an alienated form of social thought, which exists solely to be tapped by other politically and practically minded members of society. It follows to reevaluate the position and role of archaeological enquiry in the Maya area. Perhaps the area of archaeological research that is most concerned with ideas surrounding the "role" of archaeology is that of "Archaeological Heritage Management", or put in terms that are perhaps less elitist, "Public Archaeology" (Schadla-Hall 1999). It has been asserted that "…anchoring identity to material culture and places makes the mapping of our own individual or collective identities more manageable and comprehensible" (Waterton and Smith 2009, 49). The discourse assumes the instability of memory, collective or individual (Huyssen 1995, 249), and so advocates international efforts to preserve material and "intangible" culture. The UNESCO world heritage sites are evidence of this. The recent focus on intangible heritage supports more recent assertions that it is not precisely the archaeological sites themselves, but what is done at them or with them that should be considered significant (Waterton and Smith 2009, 44). It is thus this intangible side of culture that is key; "…viewers must emotionally engage with heritage, and meaningfully interact with it, for that site to 'speak to' the individual" (Waterton and Smith 2009, 49). This interaction is in turn linked to the promotion of cultural identity, and diversity is increasingly promoted as opposed to the "westernisation" of the postcolonial world (where the majority of archaeological investigations are centred). Arguably, this understanding of the role of material, immaterial culture and the past is inapplicable to certain cultures and, whether or not this is the case, heritage, like identity, should more accurately be a "verb" rather than a noun (Waterton and Smith 2009, 45).

The link between the archaeological preoccupation with preserving identity through material remains can be interestingly compared with the nature of historical development

as laid out by Sartre in the Critique. As has been explained in the above text, Sartre assesses the role of worked matter and society's dialectical relationship to it. In the example above, given by Sartre, concerning the Parisian bus stop, it is shown how people are alienated, principally from each other, through the response to scarcity that is dictated by their material environment. Again, to recapitulate briefly, people in modernity are forced to objectify themselves in materiality, and thus objects define their identity. The line promoted by the archaeological community holds some correlation with this philosophy. As has been set out, archaeologists claim that it is through active engagement with the material representations of history that identity can be positively maintained and reconstructed (where necessary). Evidently, there is a large disjuncture in the two cases; in Sartre's example it is the worked matter that holds a structuring and restrictive role that alienates (and frees) society. In the case of archaeological heritage, it is "functionally" obsolete material culture that plays a positive role in historical development. Nevertheless, there is an interesting comparison to be made; it is through modern ideas of functional architecture and material environments that Sartre's theory is built. Since it is the intention of this thesis to question the conception of materiality, specifically in relation to public art, in ancient Mesoamerica, it may also be relevant to pose a similar question in terms of the architecture of religious and artistic experience.

Without yet making very concrete and involved assumptions in this regard, we might posit that it is the introspective or emotional relationship between people and the worked matter that surrounds them that defines the role of archaeological heritage. This process could further be related to the process of engaging with art objects. The impact of clouds that negate a view of heaven in Renaissance art (Damisch 1972), as has been commented on earlier in the text, provides an intellectual comparison with the limitations of artistic practice (linear perspective). This may have a comparable effect to the experience of archaeological heritage: in searching for one's identity in the material remains of cultural history, presented incompletely by archaeologists or by incomplete museum collections, the individual is confronted with gaps in the reality, and so existential uncertainty.

It might be further argued that this reflection is, in turn, part of the archaeological enquiry, itself. Postcolonial theory (examples include Bhahba 1994, Butler 1993, and so on) suggests that we should question the construction of the other that defines academic work; "The realm of the disenfranchised, the subaltern, while usually outside the realm of discourse, is precariously near and as such it is not an unknown object of discourse but rather a non-object forming the boundaries of the social and the enfranchised" (Buchli and Lucas 2001, 12). Bhahba advocates the search and creation of cultural work and identity

in the spaces between existent bodies, rather than the articulation of national identities (1994, 219). It is these gaps between the interpreter and interpreted that are referred to by Buchli and Lucas in the explanation of their understanding of contemporary archaeology. In the attempt to distance their work from "ethno-archaeology", which uses modern material for its own end (that is, for a discussion of the past), an archaeology of the contemporary past seeks to subvert the tendency to create a distanced social object; "With the archaeology of us, any gap is constantly being contested and collapsed because we are implicated in what we do to an extent much more immediate than with any other kind of archaeology" (Buchli and Lucas 2001, 9). Notable excavations in contemporary archaeology such as the Tate Thames Dig in 1999 exemplify the perversity of the attempt to objectify the present. Excavation methods (for example, categorisation of materials and so on) can be seen, on some levels, as a way to make (temporally) distant objects familiar and controllable. When analysing contemporary artefacts these "artificial" or scientific terms have the opposite effect of alienating otherwise familiar objects (Buchli and Lucas 2001, 9). The archaeologist is thus left in a similar existential state as a spectator of Renaissance art. In locating an academic position that is tangible, and thereby negating the value of seeking biased answers to the present in history and archaeology, the archaeologist is confronted with the existential effect of a failure to control and create knowledge.

Both art and archaeology, therefore, within a "Western" conception provide an engagement with or understanding of personhood, through intellectual engagement. In order to destroy the potentially harmful implications of structuralist thought, particularly in postcolonial contexts, it is hoped that the field of archaeology can promote fluidity in the creation and discussion of cultural identity. Careless perspectives on temporally or culturally distant abstract or concrete objects are at risk of creating the "otherness" that can lead to essentialism. This risk may be increased, in part, by functional worked matter, imposed by capitalism, which alienates society, making people incapable of forming identity outside of that material environment. It is for this reason that it is perhaps through access to alternative conceptions of materiality and reflections on the self that the ties between cultural essentialism and alienation can be loosened.

There has been substantial archaeological literature that has dealt with the role of contemporary art in the discourse of reconstructing the role of archaeology (most notably, perhaps, Renfrew's "Figuring it out" 2003). The experiential side of an archaeological excavation can, indeed, be interestingly correlated with that of a conceptual art exhibition. It could very well be argued that the discipline of archaeology might have a beneficial

impact on the visions of the contemporary conceptual art world. However, for the purposes of this research, the focus will remain on the broadening perspectives that conceptual art can have on the vision of ancient art. It has already been noted that a restrictive vision of the role of art, materiality and personhood has been constructed by the European art historical tradition, and the various affiliated disciplines. Since it is the role of contemporary conceptual artists to subvert this construction and explore the ways in which material culture can be experienced, presented, participated in and intellectualised, it seems to be a viable philosophical tool for the broadening of theories relating to the archaeology of art. It is also the intention of this thesis to use data specific to Maya culture to reconstruct pre-conquest artistic rationality. This is a point to which the text will return, however. The following artists/works have been chosen for their applicability to some of the central concepts concerned in the discussion of Mesoamerican culture; these artists are: Christian Marclay, Karthik Pandian, Olafur Eliasson and Ricardo Martínez. This last artist has been chosen for another reason: he is Mexican and from the generation of post-revolutionary artists that include Diego Rivera. His work is not contemporary, although modern, and deals with indigenous identity in Mexico. There are some stylistic elements in his work, which also merit discussion. This discourse will be brief, and its intention is purely to use examples of more contemporary art that can apply to alternative artistic rationalities.

Case Studies: Olafur Eliasson.

The Danish/Icelandic conceptual artist, probably best known for his *Weather Project*, which was exhibited in the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, focuses a large part of his work on ideas relating to space, time and the natural environment (as the title of the work suggests). It is perhaps needless to say that past research in the Maya area, and on other precolonial Mesoamerican civilisations, has focused, to a large extent, on these subjects, as does the present research. An exhibition named "Your emotional future" in the PinchukArtCentre in Kiev touched on many issues in these fields, and some of these were specifically stimulating, in terms of the present research. A series of dark rooms, in which a source of water in continual flow was lit by spotlight, challenged the perception of the exhibition participants. In the darkness, the movement of the light, as the form of water continually changed, provoked the sensation of a flickering, visually violent, experience. One such room displayed several low fountains that created continually changing shapes of loosely fixed proportions. This piece is called "Model for a timeless garden". Eliasson has stated that his work hopes to deconstruct the stability of space and object in modern

"Western" society (2004, 18-25). The idea that spatial position is non-negotiable, with the effect that people suffer from a loss of responsibility in the social sphere, can to some extent be associated with Sartre's Critique. Eliasson advocates a theory of models, in which "we need to acknowledge that all spaces are steeped in political and individual intentions, power relations, and desires that function as models of engagement with the world" (2007, 18-25). Within this reconceptualisation of space and object, wherein their role is in constant flux, the interaction of society with its material environment is injected with agency. Eliasson's work shows how natural and cultural environments are in constant fluidity through their interaction with people over time. This is useful in the deconstruction of academic and philosophical structures that inhibit the understanding of cultures with different intellectual traditions. Ultimately, the development of conceptual flexibility might contribute to the archaeological heritage discourse.
(Figure 4 shows *The Weather Project*, at the Turbine Hall, London)

Christian Marclay.

Marclay works predominantly in the field of sound collage, but also in film, noise and photography. His work touches on a number of subjects that are not all specifically relevant to this field, however. There, broadly speaking, his work opens up the experiential aspects of art in that there is a focus on aural as well as visual media. It is one of his latest works, *The Clock*, which is concerned with the experience of time, which will be the subject of this discussion. *The Clock* is a twenty-four hour video installation that is constructed of fragments taken from cinema, in which times, or clocks, are the theme, or simply a fragment where the time is shown. The segments change as time moves on and the twenty-four hours are synchronised to the local time where the installation is being shown. The viewer is constantly aware of the passage of every, or most, minutes. Some of the fragments are action-packed and tense, others seem slow and hard to engage with due to the inexplicability of the narrative. Some of the film segments are very recognisable, while others are more obscure. The result of such an experience is both intellectual and emotional; chronological coherence is impossible in spite of the imposition of awareness to the passage of time. Marclay touches upon cinematic devices as well as the broader philosophical questions relating to time. The "Western" conception of time is linear, and the calculation of its passage defines the parameters of history and science. Even within this mould, time is the subject of philosophical investigation and debate. The experience of time, in pre-Colombian Mesoamerica, aside from being personally constructed, was

structured within another over-arching philosophy, cyclicality. Art works such as the one exhibited by Marclay, demonstrate how emotive the sensation of the passage of time can be and thus how intrinsic its philosophy is to culturally specific constructions of personhood.
(Figure 5 shows the audience and screen at *The Clock,* Hayward Gallery, London)

Karthik Pandian.

Pandian's recent series of large-scale installations is a two-year project based on the Cahokia Mounds near St Louis Illinois, and is a reflection of the correlations between ancient and contemporary architecture. The project has included various stages but I will only discuss one stage, which was exhibited in the Whitney Museum in New York: *Unearth*. In a darkened room stood five monolithic pillars made of stratified layers of debris, such as ceramic and shell. Certain sides of the pillars were covered with mirrorpane glass, and films of cyclical construction, destruction and preservation were projected into it. It has been commented that Pandian uses the mirrorpane to make reference to the reflective materials used in the urban environment in Chicago (which are close to the Cahokia Mounds) (Stephenson 2010). It is evident that this work is concerned with the questions surrounding archaeology, specifically perhaps, how contemporary and ancient societies create architectural philosophies (Stephenson 2010), philosophies that are constructed through the reception of the material surroundings and re-conceived through a dialectic of reception and production over time. It is the film installation that I find particularly thought-provoking in relation to research in ancient Mesoamerican material. The cyclical temporality of the film is super-imposed onto a static material culture group that displays the passive build-up of the material evidence of time. Furthermore, the movement of the video suggests movements, ritual or otherwise, that have an impact upon architecture and the material environment, and produce dialectic in historical development. Interestingly, Pandian's family is Hindu from Southern India (Tamil Nadu) but Pandian himself grew up in the United States. He has commented that his work is influenced, in part, by his interstitial cultural position and his engagement with Hindu sacred architecture. This is an example of both an emotional and an intellectual response to the material environment.
(Figure 6 shows *Unearthed* at the Whitney, Karthik Pandian).

Finally, the artist Ricardo Martínez. A contemporary of Rivera and Siqueiros, Martínez, although relatively unknown, produced monumental paintings that touch on some similar issues to those promulgated by the post-revolution Mexican muralists, namely indigenous Mexican culture and heritage. This artist's works, and their philosophical and political background, are worthy of a deeper analysis than the brief one to be given here. There is an undeniable attachment to figures that are reminiscent of pre-conquest Mexico: *Chac-Mool*, for example, *Iztaccihuatl* and women in, non-community-specific, indigenous dress. His figures are abstract in form, lending emphasis to their already-striking tone and colour. The monumentality of his figures, their roundness and abstraction, are stylistically similar to much pre-Colombian Mexican sculpture, thereby lending the forms further texture and strength. There is one aspect to his figural formation that stands out, and that is the force of the figural line in some of the paintings, compared with the almost blurred line in other works. In cases in which the line is strong, in spite of a strong background colour, the figure stands out, pushing the emphasis into this field. Where the contrary is the case, it is the background and atmosphere that draws the viewer's eye.

Martínez's work is (self-admittedly) a response to Mexican historical identity and the continuity of precolonial culture. Unlike Rivera's murals (for example, in *Civilización Huasteca*), Martínez does not attempt to recreate specific pre-Colombian activities of urban environments; nor does he make allusion to any specific community or region. Instead, as mentioned above, the subject of rural/community existence is insinuated somewhat abstractly. This is in some sense a more honest representation of the distance inherent in the emotional or intellectual response to ancient cultures and between some urban Mexicans and the culture of contemporary communities. There is an emphasis placed, however, on the strength of sentiment and thought regarding pre-Colombian Mesoamerica in Mexico. Martínez also comments on communities that show stronger continuities in terms of lifestyle and dress. Broadly, this could be interpreted as a response to the role of tangible and intangible heritage in Mexico. Pre-Colombian thought and material are strongly present and, yet, owing to temporal gaps, the widespread destruction of the conquest, and perhaps culturally specific attitudes to culture (for example, oral narratives and ritual termination of stelae), there has been a significant break in the connection to historical and cultural specifics.

In his paintings that explicitly do not delineate strongly between person and space, the agency surrounding the individual is, arguably, accentuated. Figure 7 shows a woman followed by dogs, stretching into the sky. Her hair, black like the rest of her figure, fades gently into the strong shaded blue of the background. As the white light hits the dogs running in front of her, their eyes and undersides blend into the brightly lit floor. This is interesting on the basis of specific narratives and personal communications in Santa Elena, Yucatán. Here, intangible, although directed, agency is attributed to forces external to people and animals. It seems deductive to suppose that this art work, among a society that theorises on the strength and role of external forces, would be received through this same lens.

Discussion.

Through a consciousness of European philosophies of art, personhood and the construction of existential sensibilities that develop and fix cultural conceptions, it may be possible to broaden our approach to alternative (in this case Maya) artistic rationalities. Sartre's Critique touches on aspects of material and corporeal dialectic and identity construction that are useful in understanding historical and social thought. Furthermore, the study intellectualises social processes that have been attributed, in cultural environments that are less understood, to alternative religious values. The profound effect of the natural and worked environment on the way people explore and construct their identity over time underlies "Western" philosophies. Contemporary explanations by residents of Maya communities on the nature of this material-personhood dialectic will clearly differ. These culturally appropriate theories should be applied to art and historical development in the Maya area. Conceptual and modern artists, in breaking from traditional approaches to artistic representation, can provide a creative lens with which to re-approach experiential artistic programmes (such as those found in the Maya area). The study of a foreign or ancient art may be at risk of essentialising societies and applying Eurocentric interpretations to their history but contemporary conceptual art, in its attempt to subvert art historical and philosophical structure, can, where applicable, provide ideas for a reconstruction of Maya artistic rationality.

1.4 Ritual and Religion in the Mediation of Historical Dialectics.

The previous sub-chapter discusses the role of Being and action within natural and worked space, in order to build identity and as a motivator for historical development. The focus will now turn to the role of religious action and narrative, as a personal mediator of those forces. Anthropological and sociological interpretations of art are necessarily related to religious and historical theory. It is the intention of the following discussion to unpack some of the elements of this debate that correlate with some of the main themes evident in the ethnographic record for contemporary Mesoamerican communities. Various of these themes are prominent in my analysis of the research accumulated in Santa Elena, Yucatán, and they raise pertinent questions. Perhaps the most deductive approach to an attempt to reconstruct Mesoamerican artistic rationality using ethnographic fieldwork would be to look at contemporary art production, or at least the production and use of material culture in contemporary communities (for example, Thompson 1958, Henrickson and McDonald 2009, and Castañeda 2005). However, a focus on some of the broader philosophical themes involved in religious and historical narratives and religious practice has the potential to be equally helpful. An understanding thereof can help to deconstruct the specific cultural framework and help to extract some of the nuances that also apply in the case of material engagement and personhood. This is not a practice that is common in ethno-archaeology and it is the hope of this thesis to point to the value of this kind of broader conceptual fieldwork.

Durkheim's Religious Praxis.

There are various sociological and anthropological studies devoted to the analysis of the role of religion in society (and vice versa), (Weber 1958, Mauss 1898/1902, Durkheim 1912, to name a few.) Recent ethnographic studies in the Mesoamerican area continue to focus on the link between religion and ritual and social and political mechanisms; Barbara Tedlock's Time and the Highland Maya (1992) is one such notable example. Owing to the partial philosophical affinity between Durkheim's thoughts in the Elementary Forms and that of Sartre in the Critique, the discussion here will stem from some of Durkheim's proposals. In Book Three (of the Division of Labour), Durkheim proposes that it is not the shared beliefs in religion themselves that are the foundation for a cohesive social environment: "a sense of unity and well-being based on shared belief, while it is comforting to group members, ultimately threatens the security and solidarity of

an advanced division of labour, because it leads inevitably to exclusive groupings within the larger collective" (Rawls 2005, 3). Instead, he argues that it is through social praxis (common practice) that the moral structure of a community is built and maintained. Ultimately, this discourse relates to the construction of knowledge, and therefore perceptions of reality, through action. Hume and Kant replaced the ultimate validity of realism with ideas that suggest that human perception adds something to reality that does not originally exist, and therefore knowledge cannot have an empirical relationship with reality. Durkheim extends this rationality, adding that human thought is created by the shared emotional experience of ritual practices. Knowledge, therefore, can be described as plurally negotiated, that is, it "begins with relations between persons, not with the individual" (Rawls 2005, 11).

The role of religious praxis in the creation of social sentiment and construction of knowledge, as described by Durkheim, has been critiqued. Where Durkheim emphasises the role of social life in the forces promulgated by religion, Horton, for example, argues the reverse; “Horton sees social life as the source of the models small-scale communities frequently employ in order to conceptualise the nature of the less-readily grasped forces they experience” (Layton 1991, 37). In illustration and support, he takes the example of Kuhn’s scientific paradigm; light and sound move in waves, the atom is described as being like the planetary system. It is impossible to visualise an atom, or a light wave, and so other, knowable, phenomena are used to construct otherwise ungraspable knowledge. In this way social relationships are the model for the forces of nature; “religion can be looked upon as an extension of the field of people’s social relationships beyond the confines of purely human society” (Horton 1960, 211). Horton uses the example of Christ, in the Bible, when he condemns scribes and Pharisees for employing ritual to corroborate their status; this attitude (in European philosophy) is described as the essence of irreligion (1960, 204).

The weight placed by Durkheim on action, agency and movement can be linked to Sartre’s description of praxis in response to social alienation, and also to experience focused (phenomenological) theories currently propounded in the field of archaeology and anthropology (Tilley 2012, Matsumoto 2012). It is this aspect of ritual theory that is of interest in this study. Mayanists, Inomata and Coben, for example, state that “ritual tolerates a degree of internal resistance and indifference among the participants, while requiring their external consent” (2006, 24). Through ethnographic research in a community embedded within a Mesoamerican (Yucatec Maya – Santa Elena) worldview, this investigation tries to understand to which actors agency is attributed. How can we

interpret the interplay between community ritual action and the agency of external forces? How does praxis work on or negotiate those forces? Ultimately, this will lead to a deeper understanding of the configuration of personhood and materiality in Santa Elena. It is this understanding that can broaden a culturally specific artistic rationality. This study can help to create a different lens with which to interpret art and its reception in the Maya area.

The Value of Deconstructing Religious Narrative.

Durkheim presents his focus on praxis on the basis that narratives are irrelevant to the sociological understanding of religion, since they obscure the underlying functions of religion that are created and negotiated through praxis, sounds and movements; "It is by uttering the same cry, pronouncing the same word, or performing the same gesture in regard to some object that they become and feel themselves to be in unison" (p39, Dialectics). Therefore, Durkheim's treatment of religion consciously avoids a study of narratives and the emotions associated with spirituality (Rawls 2005, 14: Durkheim 1912, Parsons 1968 and Levi-Strauss 1962). He suggests that "archaic" peoples focus their religious practices around the intrinsic moral significance and force that these morals engender (Rawls 2005, 43). His theory bases religion within the framework of a human necessity to construct this moral force, which is only more easily analysed in the "archaic" context, because the narratives are less elaborate. This elusive moral force may be a Eurocentric term that fails to be applicable to other cultural systems; it is, for this reason, untenable to suppose that we can realistically validate a theory that proposes that religion does not serve different purposes in each society. Furthermore, although the value of action with regard to a constructive engagement with materiality and identity has been explicated, it is not the intention of this research to invalidate religious and historical narratives as a tool in understanding Mesoamerican cultures. Just as ritual practice, in the Durkheimian sense, is morally constructive, the reinforcement of culturally specific conceptions such as temporality and space through oral communication, narratives, is equally influential. It is the intention of this investigation to focus its analysis on the aspects of society and thought that are considered relevant to the people with whom the research was conducted (the people who live in Santa Elena); oral communication of religious and historical thought, as well as ritual praxis, is one of the outstanding social characteristics in this community. It is in this way that the creativity of existential sensibility is generated and fed by a network of people.

Religious Dualism.

The previous discussion pertaining to the deconstruction of Cartesian dualities and re-exploring personhood has already touched upon the necessity for anthropological (and archaeological) theory to distance itself from a Eurocentric philosophical paradigm. One of the relevant personhood-related dualities is that of the distinction between the corporeal experience of Being and the problematic reality of living in society, and, therefore, the social Being; "Man is double" (Durkheim 1912, 23). While the tendency has been to associate this former aspect of personhood with nature and biological reality, and the latter with a constructed and confused moral world which draws humanity further from its origins, Durkheim has suggested that this feeling of duality is not a biological reality, but the product of religious thought; "...The real characteristic of religious phenomena is that they always suppose a bipartite division of the whole universe, known and knowable, into two classes which embrace all that exists, but which radically exclude each other" (Durkheim 1912, 56 1915, 56, 1995, 38). Rituals that metamorphose things and people into different states in this way mediate the liminality that exists between these two phenomena, the sacred and the profane (Rawls 2005, 119). Durkheim argues that the sacred is purely an artefact of social practice and that religion and nature are not more mysterious than gravity and electricity; "...it is science and not religion which has taught men that things are complex and difficult to understand" (1912, 37, 1915, 42, 1995, 25). It therefore follows that the profane is associated with the individual and the sacred with the social. Within the theoretical framework proposed in the personhood debate, an attempt is made here to reconstruct the disjuncture between the concepts individual and social, within the context of plural (and arguably more fluid) conceptions of personhood.

Briefly touched upon has been the study of “Rethinking materiality” by DeMarrais et al (2005). Here, it is proposed that “The self is processual, not static, with movement in and action on the world creating a changing set of relations between body and world” (DeMarrais et al 2004, 36). Evidently one of the aims of this theory is to integrate the role of material culture into the dialectic that constructs the “processual” self. DeMarrais et al close the duality between emotion and intellect and between the self and society; “Emotions are (often) experienced individually but are always created through relations. The multiplicity of our links to others and within ourselves are hard to put into words, but are often knowable through the body and its performances. The body, of course, does not exist in a vacuum, but through links to the material world” (DeMarrais et al 2004, 36). This

is a concept that is linked to Sartre's acceptance of a body's materiality, and so its relationship to materialism.

Arguably, a rational and spiritual response to Being, self and the world is generated through the creative response to the complex dialectic between artefacts, people and their landscape. This creative response, whether in the form of narrative or "aesthetically laden objects" (DeMarrais et al 2004, 39) may provide the self-reflexive response described in the context of Brunellesci's clouds; "the ineffable and the not-quite-graspable hint at connections between the phenomenal and cosmological worlds vital to understand but never possible really to know" (DeMarrais et al 2004, 39). In sum, Durkheim and DeMarrais et al make an interesting point when marking the social as the source of the sacred; both art, as discussed, and religion, are capable of eliciting reason and magic through the promotion of creative devices that draw individuals into a confrontation with that which a community understands, and that which it does not. In this way, a social praxis, which is constituted by various individuals through time, creates codes of behaviour and thought (a point which can also be associated with Bourdieu's habitus and hexis 1977). These codes are tangible in that they are repeated by familiar people within a community and are also necessarily full of individual variation and creative expression. It is within this interplay that the sacred and the profane, magic, reason and existential sensibility are created. The precise values of the knowable and the unknowable, logically, differ cross-culturally.

Dreams, Metaphors and Agency.

It is, therefore, relevant to turn some attention to these two examples of human creativity: narrative (written or oral) and object art, and their role in religious thought. To take an example from his interpretation of the role of narrative, Durkheim has criticised the argument that metaphor in language is the cause of (animistic) religious ideas (that are based on the existence of spirits that inhabit the natural environment), where "language…superimposes upon the material world, such as it is revealed to our senses, a new world, composed wholly of spiritual Beings which it has created out of nothing and which have been considered as the causes determining physical phenomena…" (1912, 109). Here, there might be said to exist confusion, or at least a lack of precision, between human agency and natural forces. The fact that "animistic" religions attribute agency to the landscape and objects does not, however, necessarily imply that this agency is human. It seems problematic to investigate the logical root of any religious worldview. It is

of greater interest, in this research, to locate agency and attempt to conceptualise the alternative flow of social forces and their repercussions.

Studies of Mesoamerican religion have also focused on the agency attributed to objects of (in most cases religious) art (for example, Lopez Austin 1996, Martínez González 2007). The ethno-historic (and ethnographic) record is very much concerned with the “idolatry” of indigenous communities in Mesoamerica and their unchristian relationship to their gods (through objects) (Durán c. 1581, Sahagún 1579, Landa 1566, Lizana 1633). It seems clear that this debate was fuelled by the philosophical and religious preoccupations manifest in Europe at the time of the conquest of America, and the years that followed it, those being, the reformation and counter-reformation (the discussions regarding image versus idea in Catholic thought and the rise of Protestantism).

This research will develop a sketch for the way that a contemporary Maya community in Southern Mexico (Santa Elena, Yucatán) understands these networks of agency and communicates this understanding through creative mechanisms. Metaphor and abstraction are some of the devices used in the art and narratives of Mesoamerican culture, as they are in many cultures (see Tilley 2008). They are unlikely to be the root causes of spirituality and religion, but may create a sense of fluidity of materiality and personhood, as values are shifted from one “object” to another. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making an implicit comparison. We think of metaphors as linking ideas together; perhaps they can also help to link materials, ideas and modes of Being within an individual and within the community. The sense of a metaphor, as a non-literal comparison, can also be linked to Damisch’s clouds. There are various layers of understanding, where a metaphor can explore commonalities, and its meaning is always influenced by the receiver’s creativity and experience.

Durkheim also refuted, in his treatment of "archaic" religions, the argument that the construction of the concept of the soul is rooted in a confusion of waking and dreaming states; he states that "...if the soul is supposed to come from dreams, and this explanation is supposed to hold for all historical cultures, then in order for it to be universal it should be the only possible explanation of dreams" (Rawls 2005, 127). Considering the weight that is placed on the role and meaning that dreams have in many contemporary Mesoamerican communities, we should take their analysis into account when talking about the construction of Being. European thought restricts the analysis of dreams to psychotherapy and otherwise to esoteric practices. Arguably, an analysis of dreams involves an existential exercise in which an individual assesses his/her conceptual position through an

obscure/unknown lens. Larger cultural (and individual) worldviews are re-assembled from the images that most resonate, that is, those that are remembered, from the subconscious. As such, creative and imaginative cultural and personal styles are reinforced. A similar process to Sartre's dialectical reason emerges. Just as Sartre describes society as constructed through material environment, a dialectical process is happening in the creation of identity through dream analysis. These values are re-configured in a way that is out of the control of the individual but interpreted, discussed and rendered conceptually forceful in an active way.

Time, History and the Space of Experience.

Time/space is the subject of a large portion of the archaeological and anthropological literature dedicated to Mesoamerican communities, particularly among the Maya (a few examples, Tedlock 1982, Martin 2012, Voss 2006). Evidently, the portrayal of time and space in art, and its reception, is tempered by the way temporality and dimension are handled within a specific worldview. This worldview, which will be shown to be distinct in Mesoamerica, constitutes part of the cultural divergence that is at the core of a reconstruction of artistic rationality. Furthermore, conceptions of time dictate the nature of any historical engagement and, therefore, are particularly relevant to narratives that relate to past events and so to cultural identity (Lowenthal 1988 and, among the Maya, de Angel García 2013). The validity of dualist constructions in European philosophy can be rejected in this context. Further to the discussion of dualism on the subject of religious sentiment, is another of its uses; that is, the division of the personal and the social in existential thought. This is delineated in the treatment of temporal aporetics by Ricoeur (1984), where an attempt is made to totalise history. The experiential or phenomenological aspects of the "...time of the soul" (Osborne 1995, 47) is placed within the context of the more concrete or calculable, that is, cosmological time (Osborne 1995, 47). It has been argued that meaning is "created through the intersection of big, cosmological time versus small, personal time" (Ricoeur 1988, 243 and Gosden 1994, 136). There is a further level in the experience of temporality, that of the reconstruction of time in the form of either historical or fictional narrative (Aristotle's Physics and Kant's Critique of Pure Reason). Ricoeur divides the experience of time on this third level (the time of the philosophers and time of history/fiction). Furthermore, it has been persuasively argued that this theory ultimately supports the *de facto* association of time with history; "despite its ultimate self-understanding as a deepening of the mystery of time, Ricoeur's analysis in fact gives

philosophical sustenance to the claim for the unity of time and thereby, not merely to the possibility but to the necessity of historical totalization" (Osborne 1995, 45). The aporia of time can thus be said to be resolved as historical time is totalised by a tripartite mimesis; on the initial level the historical narrative is given structure through the context of human action. On the second, historical time is configured through a complex of narratives, which are rooted in chronology (that is, cosmic time). In the third configuration, the reader influences lived time through his or her engagement with the narrative (Ricoeur 1984). It is thus only the present that is characterised by the basic autonomy of a de-totalising "space of experience" (Osborne 1995, 53).

The totalisation of history raises another philosophical issue, that of the role of death in the experience of Being; "we need to explore the relations within the structure of historical time between these two apparently different "times" which compose it. This requires both a broadening and a deepening of our understanding of the main feature of Heidegger's analysis: the anticipation of death" (Osborne 1995, 62). Heidegger asserts that it is because of cosmological time that humans die, and so the existential experience of temporality is grounded in it (1962, 281-285). Furthermore, existential temporality and cosmological time are socially mediated because humans reproduce in communities (1962, 281-285). The bodily space of experience is, by definition, acultural and ahistorical; “What a philosophical consideration of phenomenology clearly cannot tell us about is anything with regard to particular bodies, particular places and particular landscapes, particular histories and meanings, particular cultures and social relationships” (Tilley 2012, 31). The way that experience is affected by culturally specific conceptions of cosmological time and how those are negotiated in a community can relate to how history and personhood are built.

Part of the analysis of community life in Santa Elena will draw on aspects related to temporality; the interplay between certain objects and places, action over time and the personhood of an individual. The attempt to sketch an alternative conception of the way cosmological, historical/fictional and experiential time exists is central to personhood, in that it places the body within an existential and creative context. In this way, it is central to the ongoing process of the Deleuzian self and identity building. Sartre’s historical development in the Critique of Dialectical Reason could plausibly be compared to Ricoeur’s theory of historical totalisation, although the focus in the former case is on material dialectics and the latter on historical consciousness (Osborne 1995, 54). Some of the narratives that constitute the ethnographic research of this investigation, in Chapter 2, place emphasis on materials within a temporal framework and, moreover, a spatial one.

Time and space are, as such, signifiant agents. This particular cultural reasoning will be applied to the interpretations of pre-Colombian Maya art in Chapter 3.

Religious Pluralism.

There are major problems inherent in making an analysis of community religious thought in contemporary societies due to widespread religious pluralism. This problematic might equally be applied to past societies, as there is little reason to suppose, in most cases, not to undermine the importance of the impact of globalisation in modernity, that ideologies were any more stable and less subject to intercultural influence. Anthropological research conducted in the United States of America by Ammerman shows that religious practitioners seldom confined their beliefs or actions to one divine system, nor do they always conform to the doctrines prescribed by people in positions of high social power (2010, 156). She also argues that the distinction between the sacred and the profane, or the spiritual and the real does not imply the radical boundary that Durkheim, for example, proposes; "...boundaries between ordinary and extraordinary are too porous for most people" (Ammerman 2010, 157). Perhaps, whether or not these concepts are porous comes down to the kind of existential reflection described of Damisch's clouds or the use of metaphors. The known and the unknown (as with the ordinary and the extraordinary) are linked by constant references to one another.

In light of the various styles of religious pluralism, although it is interesting to engage in religious practice intellectually, this research neither intends to define the general characteristics of religious thought in rural Maya communities, nor specifically, those in Santa Elena. Discussions related to religious pluralism, particularly from the archaeological perspective, have centred on theories of intercultural contact and assimilation of ideas and customs (Redfield 1950, Nash 1960, Emery 1970, Green 1993, Stoll 1990, Kray 2004). This reaches a deeper level in the theorisation of postcolonial religious identities, in which "...questions of religious pluralism are framed in the language of "challenges", the hidden assumptions are often found in a narrative of loss – loss of privilege, loss of authority, perhaps loss of vitality and influence" (Ammerman 2010, 155). Various questions arise if we accept this premise; for example, a shift in any society from homogeneity to choice would imply large-scale existential consequences (Berger, Davie and Fokas 2008, 12-14). The focus on coherence and singularity of worldview in indigenous religions is, as previously stated, misleading. In spite of this, it is undoubtable that the influence of so different a civilisation, at the time of the Spanish conquest, should

engender much more dynamic shifts in religious creativity; "the colonial era makes new imaginations of community possible, and it is especially in the religious domain that these new imaginations take shape" (Van der Veer 1996, 7). With this in mind, we can consider how community is created and re-recreated in Santa Elena. The influx of modern religious options alongside the palpable continuity of certain pre-conquest Maya philosophies necessarily contributes to a vibrant process of community identity building. Evidently there are elements of religious thought that are part of a precolonial worldview, and the syncretism between these elements and those born out of Catholicism and other Christian impositions since the Conquest are, to some extent, central to the investigation.

Discussion.

The position that will be taken in the approach to the information gleaned through semi-structured interviews in Santa Elena has been explicated through reference to and analysis of some major sociological/anthropological texts on ritual and religion. Within the context of religious pluralism, such as in Santa Elena, historical, religious and creative narratives and material culture are at the backbone of community meta-theory. The ritual practices and agency invested in the active negotiation of these theories is similarly being treated as a subject for discussion. Aspects pertaining to the body, materiality and the self/reflexivity are of primary significance.

In the first place, the research will be used to sketch an alternative artistic rationality for pre-Colombian public art. Creative output and personal communication in Santa Elena will be assessed within its historical and material context. In line with contemporary archaeological research objectives (Buchli and Lucas 2001), the ethnographic research in this investigation will not purely be used to shed light on the Maya communities of the past. This context that is in the reception of pre-conquest and post-conquest art and architecture, as well as the materials themselves, will help to construct an alternative artistic rationality within a Maya worldview. It is as much the aim of this investigation to contribute to an understanding of pre-Colombian Maya art, as it is to re-appropriate the discussion to the context of contemporary thought and action in the Maya area. The people of Santa Elena are the central theorists, as their thought structures will be applied to the artistic programmes in Chapter 3. In this way, this research will be relevant to the people of Santa Elena.