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Places of art, traces of fire. A contextual approach to anthropomorphic figurines in the Pavlovian

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8 Anthropomorphic figurines, animals and the hunt

8.1 Introduction

A thematic classification of cave or rock-art usually distinguishes between man, animal, sign, line and indeterminate themes (cf. Lorblanchet 1997). In the case of the Pavlovian, a morphological classification distinguishes between anthropomorphs, zoomorphs and indeterminate forms. The issue at stake is the relationship between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines. The issue came to the fore in the co-occurrence of the Venus of Dolní Věstonice with several animal figurines as described in the introduction. The focus in this chapter will be on the ‘ceramics’.

8.2 Nature and society

8.2.1 TWO CATEGORIES – TWO MODELS

A common practice in the study of palaeolithic art is to discuss anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations separately. Illustrative are two volumes published by Delporte: *L'image de la femme* (1993a) and *L'image des animaux* (1990). Characteristically, Klíma (1979) published a paper on the animal representations of Dolní Věstonice I in a collection of papers discussing the contribution of zoology and ethology to the interpretation of hunters' art. A paper concerning the anthropomorphic figurines from Pavlov I was published in an edited volume dedicated to religion and cult in prehistoric societies (Klíma 1989). In his study of the Aurignacian art of Southern Germany, Hahn (1986) concludes from the numerical dominance of strong and powerful animals (bear and lion) that they symbolize a value system in which strength and power were important. ‘The same interpretation cannot be applied to the human representations’, Hahn (1986, 214) continues, because: ‘The human being has another, possibly higher meaning because of the non-naturalistic manner of representation deviating from the animals’.

Animals are good to eat, good to think with as ‘natural symbols’, but also good to fear because they are dangerous. The realistic or naturalistic style of animal representations underlines the ecological interpretation (figure 8.1). In contrast, the anthropomorphic representations are interpreted as reflecting social relations or an ideal model of society. It is supported by a non-naturalistic style. Zoomorphic figurines are interpreted in terms of ecology, relations with nature and

food economy, whereas a socio-symbolic interpretation is more apt with respect to the anthropomorphic figurines. Soffer (1997) builds on this scheme in her interpretation of the Central and Eastern European data. In these regions, depictions of animals virtually disappear after about 18,000 yrs BP. Soffer (1997, 255) reads this ‘trajectory in animal vs. female depiction to mean the decrease in the importance of influencing “nature” and the increase in the semantic importance of manipulable “culture”, more specifically of the social, of people-to-people relationships.’

8.2.2 THE HUNTED AND THE REPRESENTED ANIMAL

A transformation of this scheme underlies the interpretation of a phenomenon that has surprised archaeologists since the late nineteenth century. The fact is that there is often a discrepancy between the hunted animals and the represented animals.

Klíma (1979) also noted such a discrepancy in Dolní Věstonice I. Whereas the main sources of subsistence were mammoth, horse and reindeer, the depicted animals are dominated by bear and lion. Klíma gives three kinds of explanations for the assemblage of depicted animals. Herbivores such as mammoth, horse and reindeer are depicted because they are the main sources of subsistence. Their depiction enhances success in hunting. The size of some mammoth figurines indicates, according to Klíma, that their significance surpasses their alimentary value. Carnivores such as lion, bear and wolf are represented because they are mighty, awesome hunters to whom even man himself can fall prey (cf. Hahn 1986, Clottes 1995). Moreover, spoils of food attract these dangerous animals to the places where humans camp. The significance of other, small animals such as fox and owl is allegorical: by virtue of their natural behaviour, these animals can stand for valued qualities such as cunning, wisdom and reflection. Klíma does not interpret the Pavlovian zoomorphic figurines as ‘sympathetic hunting magic’, i.e. killing animals with other means than spear or bow. Yet the socio-religious purport of these figurines is firmly grounded in the natural behaviour of and ecological relations with the respective animals.

The discrepancy between the hunted animals and the represented animals supports the argument that palaeolithic art

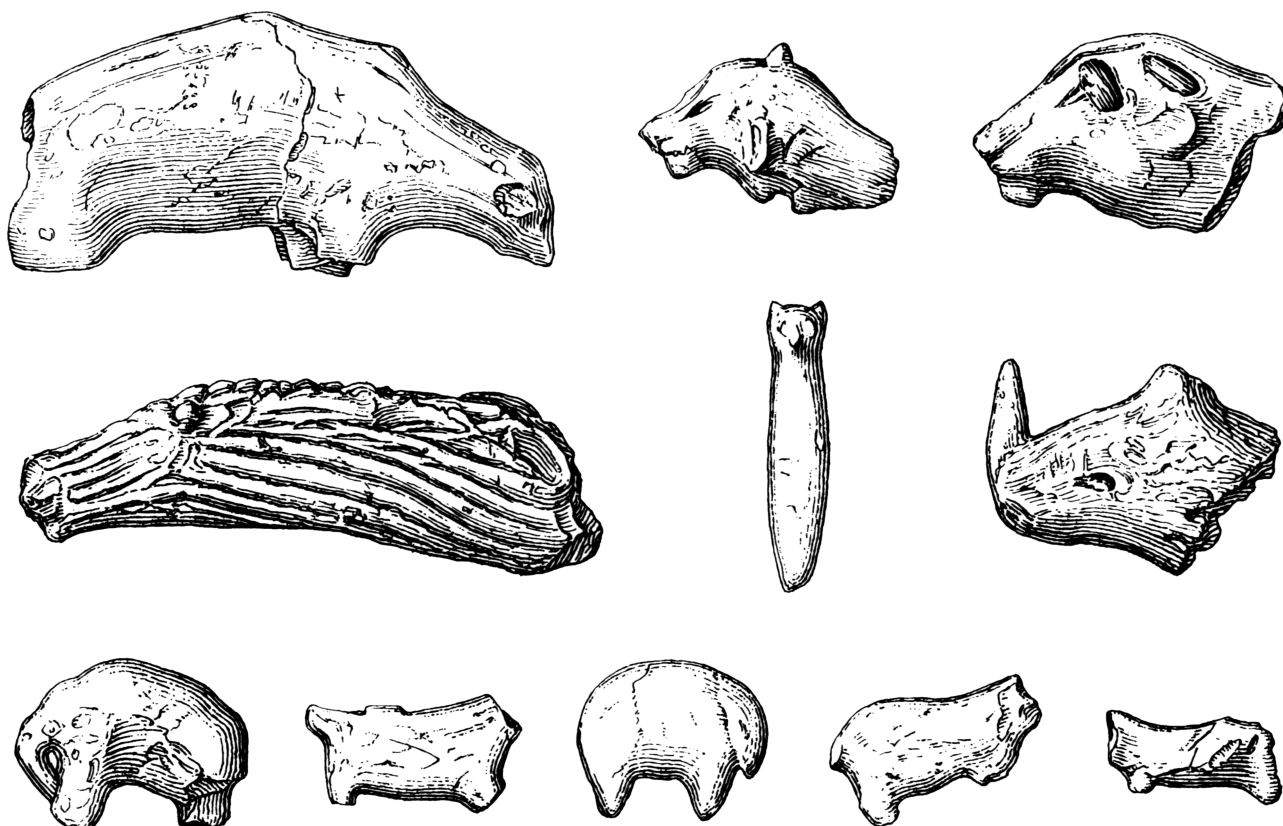


Fig. 8.1 Selected zoomorphic figurines from Dolní Věstonice I.

has a socio-religious purport, that 'it responds to religious preoccupations, it is the expression of, or in support of, myths' (Clottes 1989, 22). Clottes compares the represented animals to a bestiary, 'a conventional assemblage of fauna based on definite socio-religious traditions', analogous to Christian iconography (Clottes 1989, 22). It seems that the hunted and the represented animal live in splendid isolation. Whereas the faunal remains are interpreted in terms of ecology and food economy, the represented animals reflect a symbol system and a world-view (whether it is ultimately based on ecological relations, as Klíma holds, or not).

8.2.3 JUSTIFICATION

Two interrelated arguments are invoked to justify the different interpretations of anthropomorphs and zoomorphs. It is based on the subject or theme, i.e. the distinction between man and animal, and the style, i.e. the distinction between realism or naturalism and schematism, abstraction or non-naturalistic representation. Hahn (1986) summarized it when he wrote that the anthropomorphic figurines must have a different purport because the human being is represented in a manner different from the animals.

In the previous chapter, some problems were already noted with respect to the style and subject of the anthropomorphic figurines. In summary, it is not evident that the anthropomorphic figurines actually represent human beings and it is not evident that the anthropomorphic figurines are stylistically different from zoomorphic figurines. This already undermines the logic of the argument, but there is more with respect to the stylistic difference.

The issue is whether the implied realism or non-realism does entail a difference in meaning. Implicitly, it is suggested that the rationale of non-realism is reference to a 'higher' meaning or purport. A cautionary tale in this respect is told by the masks of the Yup'ik of Western Alaska (Fienup-Riordan 1996). A formal classification of their masks distinguishes realistic from 'surrealistic' masks. This classification is associated with a distinction between spiritual, shaman's masks and secular masks. It is tempting to correlate realism with secular activities and surrealism with the spirit-helpers of the shaman. However, Fienup-Riordan (1996, 60) notes that 'the simplest, most "realistic" mask may be iconic of a complicated experience or spirit journey', whereas a surrealistic mask may be used in secular performances.

The conclusion must be that neither subject nor style is sufficient justification to relate anthropomorphic and zoomorphic to different realms, usually the socio-symbolic sphere and the economic or ecological realm respectively. This conclusion is corroborated by information on the spatial distribution, material and technology. There is no spatial separation of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines. They co-occur in concentrations of 'ceramics' in both Dolní Věstonice I and Pavlov I. The 'Venus' of Dolní Věstonice for example is accompanied by several zoomorphic 'ceramic' fragments. The large concentration of 'ceramics' in the north-western part of Pavlov I contains both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines. Nor is there a distinction in the materials. Both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines occur in 'ceramics' and ivory¹. Technologically, the two categories are not different either.

In my opinion, there is no reason to interpret the formal difference between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines as a difference of a higher order than the difference between for example the representation of a lion and the image of a horse.

8.3 Relating anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations

Structuralist approaches to Central European art are rare (cf. Svoboda, Ložek, Vlček 1996, 133). What makes them interesting in this context is the emphasis on relations between themes rather than the themes themselves. Therefore structural approaches to palaeolithic art may provide a starting-point for thinking about the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations in the same terms. I shall discuss two interpretations with a structuralist signature, one by Delporte (1993a) and the other by Hodder (1990). These interpretations are subsequently confronted with the Pavlovian data as a test of their validity with regard to the Pavlovian.

8.3.1 EVOLUTION OF PALAEOLITHIC RELIGIONS

Several researchers have differentiated and detailed the unitary structural model of male and female values and the themes of fertility and death, as presented by Leroi-Gourhan (e.g. 1965, cf. chapter 1). With special regard to the anthropomorphic representations, Delporte (1993a) has developed models for the Aurignacian, the Gravettian and the Magdalenian constituting an evolution of palaeolithic religions. According to him, the anthropomorphs are dominated by female figurines and the imagery is a transformation in another medium of rituals in which women play the prominent role.

The Aurignacian model is based on four anthropomorphs from Southern Germany (Hahn 1986) and Austria (Neugebauer-Maresch 1988) and the 'vulvas' from the Périgord (France). Despite the scarcity of data, the questionable sexual character

of the so-called 'vulvas', and the ambiguous sex of the Central European statuettes, Delporte nonetheless states that 'the role of the woman already manifests itself in the Aurignacian model in an indisputable manner' (1993a, 258).

The Gravettian model is based on more, primarily French data and the female sex of most anthropomorphs is, according to Delporte, unquestioned. It is interpreted as a transformation of the Aurignacian one:

it is very possible that the feminine concept was a major element in the palaeolithic metaphysics: the Aurignacians have translated this concept into the vulvas, the Gravettians have translated it into figurines bringing out the feminine attributes in full relief (1993a, 257)

Delporte summarizes some aspects of the Gravettian figurines: they are found at the periphery of activity zones, there are hardly any associations of women and animals, and the figurines are simple symbols of womanhood and possibly fertility. He interprets these aspects as evidence of a still rather simple world-view of the Gravettians.

Magdalenian figurines, on the other hand, are spread all over the habitation zone. There are more shapes and modalities of the female figure, situated in more elaborate ritual contexts.

The association with animals indicates a human-nature dualism. It is evidence of a complex world-view. It constitutes a true cosmogony, a true 'hunters' religion' (Delporte 1993a, 265).

Contrasting the Magdalenian and Gravettian models, Delporte stresses the lack of a relation between animals and women in the Gravettian. Whereas the Gravettian art is dominated by female representation, the Magdalenian art is a play of human-animal duality:

When we try to propose an explanation of the Gravettian model of feminine figuration, our hypothesis is oriented towards a "mythology" of womanhood, perhaps of feminine fertility, bringing together the indications proposed by the intrinsic characteristics and the few external relations we dispose of. But with respect to fertility, the hypothesis must be nuanced and precised. It must be remarked that, in the Gravettian model, nothing pleads in favour of the theory of duality of which the role in the Magdalenian art was confirmed by Leroi-Gourhan. But, renouncing the general theory of Reinach and Bégouën as well as the phantastic "montage" of Zamiatnine, it also seems necessary to distance oneself, at least with respect to the Gravettian, from any correlation between feminine fertility and animal fertility. No serious argument pleads in favour of such a correlation. The Gravettian model is explained and motivated in an original, much less complex fashion than the Magdalenian model. (Delporte 1993a, 261)

The evolution of religions, as implied by Delporte's models, can be read as a trajectory from simple to complex. Implicitly it entails a gradual emancipation of mankind from the bounds of nature. Gradually, human culture is defined in opposition to nature.

8.3.2 CONFRONTATION 1

In this section I shall confront Delporte's model for the Gravettian with the Pavlovian data. It will become clear that the model for the Gravettian, based primarily on data from France, does not fit the Pavlovian at all.

We have already seen that there is a diversity within the anthropomorphic figurines in the Pavlovian, that many cannot be sexed and that male figurines are present as well as female ones. The anthropomorphic figurines are also closely associated with zoomorphic figurines in terms of spatial distribution, raw material and technology. Moreover, all anthropomorphic figurines come from settlement contexts and habitation zones. This summary of aspects stands in stark contrast with the evidence for the presumed, 'simple' Gravettian world-view mentioned above. It is more in line with the argumentation for the 'complex' Magdalenian religion.

The data from Central Europe also point to a quite different trajectory of changes in the Upper Palaeolithic. The Aurignacian figurines are, in my opinion, sexually *not* marked.

A feminine motif is far from clear. The anthropomorphic figurines in Southern Germany are clearly associated with zoomorphic figurines (Hahn 1986). The Pavlovian displays a close association between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines as well. The female sex dominates among the anthropomorphic figurines, but it is accompanied by male and sexually unmarked figurines. In the Willendorf-Kostienkian, the sexual characteristics of the anthropomorphic figurines are brought out in fuller relief. With the exception of the Brno II-figurine, all the figurines are female. These figurines are not associated with any animal figurine at all.

Does this mean that we have to restrict Delporte's models to France for example and modify them for Central Europe?

One could argue then that the Pavlovian and Aurignacian world-view are as complex as the French Magdalenian one, whereas the Willendorf-Kostienkian world-view is just a simple mythology of womanhood and feminine fertility.

An evolution from complex to simple and back again in the Central European Magdalenian? But is there something like a 'simple' world-view or a 'simple' religion at all?²

8.3.3 THE DOMESTICATION OF THE WILD: WOMEN, FIRE AND DANGEROUS THINGS³

In *The domestication of Europe*, Hodder explores the origins of the Neolithic in terms of long-term symbolic structures.

Central is the process of domestication. In the process of domesticating wild animals and plants, people also domesticate themselves in houses, settlements and social structures: 'In domesticating the wild according to general social rules, each individual is also domesticating his or her own potential individuality — that potential unsocial 'wildness', which threatens to be 'the death' of society' (Hodder 1990, 30). This process of domestication has its origins in the Palaeolithic, according to Hodder. The palaeolithic figurines are suggestive in their formal similarities to Neolithic figurines. Hodder speculates on two questions concerning the so-called 'Venus' figurines (Hodder 1990, 287):

1. why were women carved and moulded into a cultural form?
2. were women, or the cultural category "female", perceived as wild or dangerous?

He notes that some figurines are associated with hearths.

He also notes that 'the female is sometimes represented as naked with the mid-body sexual and reproductive parts emphasized' and suggests that the 'danger' of the female body was 'constructed in relation to menstruation taboos' (Hodder 1990, 287).

Hodder interprets the elaboration of the female form as part of a more general process of controlling the wild and the dangerous. This general process also involves the control and manipulation of fire, the elaboration of the animal form and the elaboration of hunting tools in culturing and controlling wild nature. He suggests that 'the construction of the cultural in relation to the wild derives from a single process — the creation of social and cultural prestige through the separation and control of the wild' (Hodder 1990, 289).

The relation between 'Venus' figurines and animal figurines is that both are involved in the process of categorizing, separating and controlling the danger of wildness. In the case of the 'Venus' figurines, it is the danger of the female body, tentatively related to menstruation taboos. In the case of the animal figurines, it is the danger of wild animals. Hodder reads this process back into the very beginnings of humanity:

At the beginning of the European Palaeolithic, a duality is created between the cultural (the flaked form) and the natural (the implications of the heavy cutting edge), between the ordered world of social representation and the physical violent world of the non-social. (Hodder 1990, 283)

Stone tools, according to Hodder (1990, 288), are objectifications of the culture-nature distinction allowing the 'creation of a symbolic order in which 'wild' could be *constructed* in relation to 'cultural'. From then on, basic emotions, fears, and desires were increasingly played upon in order to generate a social order.' The prestige of the cultural, Hodder

states, depends on the presence of the opposite — the danger of the wild.

8.3.4 CONFRONTATION 2

The least interesting critiques of Hodder's interpretations concern the accuracy of his statements about the data. He does not take into account that there is a considerable diversity of anthropomorphs, including figurines other than of the female sex. More interesting is what has happened to the Palaeolithic when it is considered in the light of domestication.

I think Hodder's interpretation can be described as a kind of 'Neolithization' of the Palaeolithic. Hunting is conceived of as a kind of domestication. Hunting is seen as basically controlling and overcoming wild and dangerous animals. Hence palaeolithic settlement is basically entangling and domesticating people into social structures, but at a smaller scale than the Neolithic settlements. Becoming human is separating human culture in opposition to a wild and dangerous nature. Hodder presupposes the oppositions of wild/domestic and nature/culture as the ground of the entire European prehistory.

Discussing Hodder's contextual archaeology in relation to the broader tradition of philosophical hermeneutics, Johnsen and Olsen (1992, 431) have addressed this metahistory of the 'desire to control and domesticate a dangerous wilderness' determining the course of European prehistory. They state:

However, the critical question to be posed is: From where do Hodder's thoughts about wild and domesticated derive? Hodder never discusses from which cultural and historical period he has learned to think in terms like "joy of life", "comfort of the home", or "the danger of the wild" (see Hodder 1990, 28-29). However, we have a suspicion that he might have learned this from the effective history of his own English society as it developed since the seventeenth century, and from late Western history at large. From this perspective Hodder's fears and emotions toward the wild are both "natural" and "historical". (Johnsen and Olsen 1992, 431)

In other words, Hodder has projected the danger of the wilderness onto the Palaeolithic — and the Neolithic for that matter — and imposed the paired concepts of wild-domestic and nature-culture on these prehistoric eras. The relation between the two sides (wild vs. domestic and nature vs. culture) is conceived of as one of control, power and domination.

8.3.5 GENERAL COMMENTS ON STRUCTURALIST APPROACHES TO PALAEO-LITHIC ART

Despite the fact that both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines are related to a common, basic structure, there

are many problems with these structuralist approaches to palaeolithic art (e.g. Lorblanchet 1997, 189-199).

This basic structure is often something abstract, a general quality of all humanity. As Hodder comments on his own interpretations (1990, 30), '[t]he culture/nature duality is the very stuff of all human society. The imposition of cultural categories is everywhere the mechanism by which the social world is ordered'. As such it does not tell much about *palaeolithic* art.

This immediately foregrounds a second objection. The dualist structure, the binary opposition and complementarity, is usually based on a culture-nature, man-animal and male-female dichotomy. The structuralist interpretations of palaeolithic art are in fact based on the same schemes as the separate discussion of the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines mentioned above. It is not at all clear whether such dichotomies are important as a principle for palaeolithic art and it is questionable, to say the least, that the culture-nature duality is the very stuff of all human societies (cf. Descola and Pálsson 1996).

A third objection concerns the data. Structuralism often leads to a reduction to the best recognizable themes, neglecting many problematic things, lines, traces etc. and many aspects such as technique, colour, position. In other words, appearance is reduced to the identification of themes.

In addition, there is a tendency, strengthened by the reliance on statistical methods, to emphasize the most frequent themes and neglect the rare themes as 'noise'.

8.4 Alternative options

What common logic can underly both the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines? There is, in my opinion, no reason to justify either an association with separate realms nor a relation as opposites and complements in a binary structure. Instead, everything points towards a common ground for the representation of mammoth and lion, fox and owl, 'fictional' and extraordinary beings. I distinguish three options with respect to this problem (cf. Douglas 1966 who mentions these three options in her discussion of the food taboos in the bible book *Leviticus*).

1. The representations have primarily a social function. Whatever is represented, it is the social effect that counts.
2. All the representations are allegories.
3. The representations have a common 'source' in the principles that constitute a cosmology.

8.4.1 SOCIAL FUNCTION

The basic argument here is that art is the result of ritual activity and that ritual activities have a function in solving social tensions in groups. Conkey (1980), for example, associates the proliferation of art with the social tensions involved in the gatherings of several groups and extracts a

set of criteria to recognize aggregation sites in the archaeological record. Jochim (1987) interpreted the concentration of art in south-western France as the result of the smoothing of intragroup social conflicts under increased population pressure. What is actually represented and how, is as such not really important: it is the social disciplinary effect that counts. Art is, in other words, a means of conflict management, a social technology. Though there is no need to deny a social function of the figurines in the Pavlovian, it is not satisfactory to stop here. Instead of dealing with the issue at stake, this option evades it by pointing to a social effect by whatever means.

8.4.2 ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

The second option is that the different representations are allegories. They stand for socially valued qualities by virtue of some behavioural characteristic. The representations are like natural symbols or like a bestiary. Klíma (1979) has interpreted the representation of the fox and the owl along these lines. Similarly, the dominance of impressive, mighty and dangerous animals such as bear, lion and mammoth is, according to Hahn (1986), signalling the importance of power and strength in the value system of the Aurignacian hunter-gatherers in South Germany. Clottes (1989), following Leroi-Gourhan, refers to the collection of representations as a bestiary based on socio-religious conventions. This option of allegorical interpretation evades the issue at stake in a different way. The problem is that for every representation a new explanation must be figured out and the number of possible explanations seems to be unlimited.

8.4.3 COSMOLOGY

The third option is to look for a common ground in the principles that constitute a cosmology, i.e. principles of power and danger. As has been noted above, several authors have stressed the importance of dangerous, wild and mighty animals in the representations (Klíma 1979, Hahn 1986, Clottes 1995). This is not what is meant by *principles* of power and danger, that also underly the representation of hares and owls for example. It must also be stressed that we do not have the essence of a cosmology in sight when we just document the universe of spirits and other beings (Douglas 1966). Cosmology is not a pantheon of gods, spirits, ancestors and other transcendental beings — as in an interpretation of art as an illustration of cosmology. Instead it concerns principles that govern the cosmos, it concerns the conditions of the identification of things. This option is derived from Douglas' analysis of food taboos in the bible book *Leviticus* (Douglas 1966). A seemingly arbitrary set of animals is prohibited as food because they are impure. They include for example the camel, the hare,

the pig, the rock badger, the sea eagle, the crow, the stork and the bat. Douglas starts her argument with the notion of holiness, because the reason not to eat these impure animals is the obligation to act in accordance with holiness. She argues that holiness requires that different classes of things are not mixed up. Holiness is a matter of separating what should be kept apart. Impurity is basically matter out of place, i.e. impure things combine characteristics of different classes. Douglas argues that the animals mentioned in *Leviticus* are impure because they combine characteristics that should be kept apart. For example, the camel is impure, because it ruminates, but it does not have cloven hoofs, whereas the pig is impure, because it does have cloven hoofs, but does not ruminate. These animals are impure and powerful and dangerous because they do not behave according to their class.

I do not want to argue that the represented animals in the Pavlovian are impure. It does not seem likely that the represented animals are anomalous in the sense of combining characteristics that belong to separate classes. Still, I do think that Douglas' analysis is important for the issue at stake when focussing on cosmology. With respect to hunters and gatherers, the hunt is probably the *locus* for thinking about the principles of cosmology. It is perhaps in the hunt that a common ground underlying the Pavlovian anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations can be found.

8.5 The hunt

Hunting is of course a technique of providing food. It is a kind of food production. It is a strategy to catch animals involving the practical skill of catching and killing and knowledge about animal anatomy, behaviour and ecology. But hunting is also something other than a technical procedure. Sharp (1988, 186) describes hunting by the Chipewyan, living in eastern Canada, in a completely different fashion:

A game animal cannot be killed without its consent and it is through the domain of inkoze⁴ that this consensual process takes place. Killing prey is, then, an interaction between two parties standing in a particular relationship to each other. Execution of this interaction depends upon the individual Chipewyan being in a state such that the animal will allow itself to die for the hunter. The immediate and measured interaction between man and prey animal within the field of inkoze is as real when the prey escapes as when it consents to die. Chipewyan often explain, in English, the willingness of animals to die by saying of a specific hunter that, 'they like him'. Another mode of explanation is through the concept of 'pity', sometimes expressed as saying the animal 'felt sorry' for the hunter. (Sharp 1988, 186)

In other words, hunting is as much about maintaining proper relations with animals as it is about skills, knowledge and technology (Ingold 1994, Nelson 1983 amongst many others). According to Sharp (1988) and Smith (1998), having the necessary skill and knowledge are themselves dependent on the maintenance of proper relations with nonhuman persons among which animals are most prominent. Moreover, maintaining proper relations is not just the obligation of the hunter, but it prevails for everybody, men as much as women, the young as much as the old.

8.5.1 ANIMALS AND SHARING

The relation with (particular) animals can be characterized as a sharing relation: the hunted animal shares with humans in the same way that humans share among each other (Ingold 1994). The kill is conceived as an exchange between the hunter and the animal being. While the animal being is sharing its body and power/knowledge with humans, they, on their part, share their food and utensils with the animal being (Brightman 1993). Bird-David (1990, 1992) has coined the terms ‘the giving environment’ and ‘the cosmic economy of sharing’ to describe a similar situation for the Nayaka, hunter-gatherers of southern India. She has described their sharing relation with the environment by the root metaphor “the forest as parent”. It is contrasted with the economic systems of cultivators that center on reciprocal debt relations with others, including nature and ancestors. Woodburn (1998) also makes this important distinction between sharing and reciprocity. He mentions several features focussing on the sharing of food. First, sharing is not the product of the practical need to dispose of large quantities of meat. Second, the hunter has very limited control over who gets the meat. Third, receiving meat does not bind the recipient to reciprocate and, on balance, donors tend to remain donors. Fourth, the sharing of meat does not give a greater claim on future yields. In short, he argues that sharing is not a debt-relation. The obligation to share does not bind the recipient in the obligation to reciprocate the gift (cf. Mauss 1990). But sharing is not a form of generosity either, it is not free, unconditional giving: people demand their share and the donor actually has little choice whether to share or not (cf. Myers 1989⁵).

Sharing, moreover, is not only an economic relation, it is also a way of identifying. Bird-David (1999) gives an example that might be illuminating. She describes the distinction between special *devaru* stones and ordinary stones as made by the Nayaka of Southern India. The difference is not residing in some visible, measurable property of a stone, but *particular* stones are *devaru* because they manifested themselves to the Nayaka person in a particular situation. A particular stone, but also a particular animal, is *devaru* as it belongs to its environment, when it involves the Nayaka

and because it shares with them in that particular circumstance. The identity of something is not a fixed core with characteristics, but it manifests itself as it is in belonging to its environment and involving others in a particular situation. Bird-David (1999, 73) argues that ‘they do not dichotomize other beings vis-à-vis themselves, but regard them, while differentiated, as nested within each other’.

I found another convenient point of contact for thinking about the relation between animals and humans in the self-designation of the Chipewyan as *Dene*. Of course the Chipewyan distinguish between humans and many different animal species, but at the highest taxonomic level the word *Dene* implies animals as well as humans (Smith 1998, 419). It means that there is a sense in which animals and humans are related as kin. However, animals are not kin in an *a priori* and categorical sense: an animal is kin, as, when and because that animal shares in a particular situation (Smith 1998, cf. Hallowell 1960).

As a consequence, the image of a guardian *spirit* or an animal *master*, who sends the actual animals to be killed seems to be misleading (*contra* Ingold 1987). Smith (1998) refers to Helm who asserts that:

Whether an animal comes to a human being in its own form or in human guise, it is the actual animal-being that is there and is speaking; no incorporeal essence or metaphysical entity, generic or individualized, is involved. (Helm in Smith 1998, 425)

The hunt as a sharing relation has further implications. It challenges the view of hunter-gatherers as the ‘original ecologists’ (Fienup-Riordan 1990, Brightman 1993). Brightman (1993) argues convincingly that hunting is not accompanied by a notion of the animals as a scarce resource. Instead the killing is necessary for the regeneration of animals. His chapter on the issue is tellingly entitled ‘the more they destroy, the greater plenty will succeed’ (Brightman 1993, 244). According to Brightman, managing animal numbers by selective killing is quite inconceivable, because ‘[the] nominal death of an animal was only one moment in a cycle: animals live in the bush, are killed by hunters, persist as souls after their bodies are eaten, and return again to the world through birth or spontaneous regeneration’ (Brightman 1993, 288). The kill facilitates the passage of the animal being through a cyclic journey from his home in the bush to the hunter’s camp and back (cf. Fienup-Riordan 1994). The sharing relation must not be mistaken for an original harmony with the environment. It is not a life without danger. But the danger here is not primarily a dangerous environment inhabited by wild animals or the danger of impurity and contamination (cf. Douglas 1966). The danger here is the inability to identify by sharing, by belonging to an environment, by

involvement in a particular situation. It is dangerous that human beings are not able to share and that the animals are not sharing with humans. Hence, the sharing relationship pervades life through and through, from hunting and gathering activities *sensu stricto* to cooking, eating, disposing of remains, procreation, child-raising, marriage, death, cleaning the camp and the tent, moving to another place, song, dance, music, carving. In other words, sharing is the principle governing the world of hunters and gatherers.

8.6 Final considerations

The background behind the study of the relation between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines was that this relation might be informative about relations between humans and animals. At first, this information content was based on the association of anthropomorphs with humans and zoomorphs with animals. However these associations are not justified. Moreover, the distinction between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines is primarily a formal classification: both groups of figurines do not differ in terms of spatial distribution, material and technology. The relations between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines do not form a model for or a source of information about a nature-culture-relation. They are not mirroring the Pavlovian human-animal-relationship.

In my opinion, the explorations into recent hunting and gathering open another perspective. The sharing relation with animals emphasizes particular animals and non-human beings in specific circumstances. Animals are significant, not primarily as members of a class such as horses or herbivores, but as a particular horse, involving humans, under specific circumstances.

Several conclusions can be derived with respect to the Pavlovian. They do not primarily concern the themes that dominate or the styles that prevail. First, the technological analysis of the 'ceramics' is implicated. The analysis pointed out that the 'ceramics' were not important as lasting products. They were probably just left in the fire, never to be retrieved and put on display. It seems that their importance resides in the particular circumstances of their making, the situation at that particular time and place. Second, it suggests that the objects must not be analysed with respect to relations between themes, but in their particularity. The clusters of

objects can be considered as accumulations of singular objects (as is also suggested by the geological context, cf. chapter 3), not as members interrelated into an overarching structure. In this respect it is important to recall that the anthropomorphs were not produced in series and that there are no indications for some kind of prototype. Instead the formal variation in the group of anthropomorphs must be emphasized. Finally, one misunderstanding must be avoided. Though the co-existence of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines does not imply a dualism of nature and culture (*contra* Delporte), the fact that anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines are not distinct in terms of space, material and technique does not mean that humans and animals are not differentiated at all. It only means that the relation between both groups of figurines is not a source of information about the differentiation of humans and animals.

notes

1 It must be stressed that I do make a difference between two kinds of anthropomorphic figurines on the basis of the presence/absence of human facial features (chapter 4) and that these two kinds, in my opinion, also differ in technique (chapter 5).

2 I had to think of this passage in Bruce Chatwin's *Songlines* (1987, 64): "He had been reading Durkheim's *Elementary forms of religious life*, which another friend had sent him from England. 'Madness', he gasped. 'Elementary forms indeed! How *can* religion have an elementary form? Was this fellow a Marxist or something?'"

3 The subtitle is derived from the title of a book by Lakoff (1987) mentioned by Hodder (1990, 8).

4 *Inkoze* is usually translated as 'to know something a little' (Smith 1998). It implies having some power/knowledge. There is no differentiation between empirical skill and knowledge and 'transcendent, supraempirically derived medicine-power'. Everybody and all beings have some *inkoze*. It usually comes in dreams. The major source of it for human beings are animals. *Inkoze* is implied in the most basic and important questions concerning why things go well and why they go wrong.

5 Myers is learned by his Aboriginal friend that in order to evade the demands for sharing his cigarettes he must hide them and act as if he doesn't have any.