



Rock Art, Modes of Existence, and Cosmopolitics: A View from the Southern Andes

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Andrés Troncoso Meléndez

Abstract

The ontological turn has opened multiples avenues of inquiry in archaeology and rock art research. Goals of this theoretical approach include unfolding and describing other worlds, understanding the differences between modern worldviews and past ontologies, and defining the ontologies materialized in rock images. This paper discusses the relationship(s) between rock art and ontology with reference to the idea of cosmopolitics and the political role of other-than-humans in social life. We suggest that rock art is grounded on historical modes of existence or, in other words, that rock images unfold particular fields of relations, affections, and political agencies through time and space. To illustrate this point, we focus on two Northern Chilean rock art examples: the El Medano hunter-gatherer-fisher rock paintings on the Pacific coast of the Atacama Desert; and carved Inca outcrops of the Atacama Desert. These examples allow us to discuss how rock art images produce historical cosmopolitics that disclose specific relationships between humans, other-than-humans, and politics. A discussion about the relationships between rock art and cosmopolitics is not only relevant to understand past ontologies, but it can also be a useful tool to think about the future, our current relationships with other-than-humans and ‘nature,’ and the need to create new models of development based on a new way of understanding the relationships between humans, landscape, and other-than-humans.

Keywords

Mode of Existence · Cosmopractices · Cosmopolitics · Atacama Desert · El Médano · Inka Models

A. Troncoso Meléndez (✉)
Ñuñoa-Santiago, Chile
e-mail: magisterarqueologia@facso.cl

4.1 Introduction

In a recent review, Moro Abadía and González Morales (2020) suggest that ontological approaches play an important contemporary role in rock research. In fact, ontology is generating new questions and lines of work. Ontology forces us to rethink about what we call ‘rock art’, to evaluate its different forms and affects displayed by this practice over time, and to better understand how this practice is involved with different lifeways (e.g., Jones 2017; Fowles and Alberti 2017; Kearney et al. 2019; Fahlander 2019; Fiore 2020). Moreover, ontological approaches are important to understand how image-making has articulated and produced different worlds over the course of history; ontologized worlds that are experienced and deployed by communities through their dwelling practices (Laguens and Gastaldi 2008; Goldhahn 2019; Robb 2017; Porr 2019).

Approaching and recovering these different worlds has been a foundational aspect of ontology in archaeology (Alberti and Marshall 2009; Alberti et al. 2011). In this field, ontological approaches have mainly focused on describing other worlds and defining what kind of ontology is materialized in the archaeological record (e.g., Bray 2015; Lozada and Tantaleán 2019; Watts 2013). These developments have coincided in time with a re-evaluation of the relationships between persons, bodies, and materials, insisting on the relational and co-constitutive nature of persons, practices, and materials (Ingold 2013; Jones and Cochrane 2018). These new approaches have called into question the modern duality that separates people and things, subjects and objects.

Although these perspectives have generated new avenues of research in rock art, ontological approaches have been useful to re-think the social, political, and historical dynamics of ancient communities. Modernity (Foucault 1998) is grounded on a number of dualities and dichotomies, such as those that place in opposition object to process, nature to culture, and non-humans to humans (Latour 1993; Descola 2014). This political ontology excludes nature and other-

than-humans from the socio-political field, relegating (even denying) their agency and rendering both as passive and non-participatory observers of human socio-historical processes (Latour 2018). Ontological approaches have systematically called into question the opposition between culture and nature (Descola 2014; Viveiros de Castro 2010; Latour 1993).

In many non-western worlds, the socio-political field is inhabited by non-human beings that unfold their agency and affective capacities in different relational communities (Van Kessel and Cruz 1992; Willerslev 2007; Castro 2016; Bird David 2017; De La Cadena 2015). To approach these worlds, we must understand how other-than-humans take part in different historical processes and relational networks that develop throughout time. This approach seeks to (a) historicize these different worlds and their articulations with past ontologies, and (b) understand the many ways in which other-than-humans engage within historical networks and how their agentive and affective capacities occur (see Pauketat 2013). The term ‘cosmopolitics’ is a useful conceptual tool to explore this displacement. Following Isabelle Stengers (2005), the word ‘cosmos’ refers to multiple and divergent worlds constituted throughout history and the term ‘politics’ highlights how humans and other-than-humans are related within these worlds and how their affective and agentive properties are distributed. In other words, a ‘cosmopolitical’ approach explores the political dimensions of these worlds, shedding light on their social history from a non-anthropocentric perspective and examining the political actions of other-than-humans from a historical and social perspective.

The rock art of South America offers a privileged space for understanding these cosmopolitics or political ontologies. This region has an ample repertoire of Holocene rock art, characterized by a great variety of techniques and themes related to different socio-political contexts, including hunter-gatherers, farming societies, and modern states (Troncoso et al. 2018). Moreover, a vast body of ethnographic and anthropological literature shows the political role played by other-than-humans in different socio-historical contexts in pre-Hispanic, colonial, and contemporary societies (Martínez 1976; Van Kessel and Cruz 1992; Bray 2015; Castro 2016; Lozada and Tantaleán 2019; De La Cadena 2015). It is not by chance that some of the leading voices of the ontological turn based their proposals on ethnographic studies carried out in South America (Descola 1996; Viveiros de Castro 2010).

This paper discusses the relationship(s) between rock art and ontology, with reference to the notion of cosmopolitics and the political role of other-than-humans in social life. A cosmopolitical approach assumes that rock art is embedded in historical modes of existence, modes in which its materiality reflected and inspired particular forms of relations, affects, and political agency over time. To illustrate this point, we focus on two rock art regions in northern Chile: El

Médano rock paintings made by hunter-gatherer-fishers in the coastal zone of the Atacama Desert, and carved outcrops of the Atacama Desert from the Inka period (see Fig. 4.1). These examples allow us to discuss the production of rock art connected different materials, places, practices, and other-than-humans in each case, producing historical cosmopolitics that deployed specific relations between humans, other-than-humans, and politics. Finally, we explore how the relationships between rock art, modes of existence, and cosmopolitics is not only useful for understanding past ontologies, but it is also relevant for thinking about our current relationships with other-than-humans and ‘nature’ and constituting new modes of existence.

4.2 From Rock Art to Modes of Existence and Cosmopolitics

Throughout history, human beings have inhabited ontologically constituted worlds, comprising particular configurations of social collectives, and differing in their distribution of the properties of beings, materials, and phenomena (Alberti and Marshall 2009; Pauketat 2013; Descola 2014; Watts 2013). These worlds have unfolded particular configurations of political fields in which the nature of power, as well as the agentive and affective capacities of beings, have emerged differentially. Stengers uses the term ‘cosmopolitics’ to highlight these different engagements among humans and other-than-humans throughout history and to explore these plurality of worlds (Stengers 2005).

The ‘modern’ world is one of these worlds, characterized by a cosmopolitics in which a particular distribution of beings, collectives, and agencies is based on a fundamental principle: the split between culture and nature (Laguens and Gastaldi 2008; Blaser 2013; Descola 2014; Latour 2018). However, this principle is not common to the multiple and different worlds that human beings have inhabited. These ontologized worlds are intrinsically articulated with historical dynamics and are the product of a complex web of relations between humans, other-than-humans, materials, and places over time (Ingold 2013, 2015). These webs or networks are not a symbolic construction; they are the result of specific sets of relations differentially enacted through practices, movements, places, discourses, visualities, etc. These relations distribute agentive and affective capacities which are not exclusive to humans, but emerge through the interactions between the multiple agents (Ingold 2013; De Landa 2006; Hamilakis 2017).

Although the ontological turn has focused on the differences between our world and ‘other’ worlds, we must explore the political nature of these alternative worlds from a cosmopolitical perspective. While Foucault (1998) highlighted how power pervades human bodies, we must recognize from an

Fig. 4.1 Map of the study area indicating some archaeological sites. El Médano style: (1) QP-22, (2) El Médano, (3) Izcuña. Inka carved outcrops: (4) Chiu-Chiu; (5) Cupo, (6) Toconce, (7) Bajada El Toro



ontological perspective that power also pervades multiple beings and matters in a historical and cosmopolitical field of relations (see Bennet 2010). In this vein, the political is an emerging property of a field of relations where power, as well as the affective and agentic capacities of beings and matters, exceeds humans. As with ontology, cosmopolitics is not just a symbolic abstract term, it is enacted in practices and experiences. De Munter (2016) uses the term ‘cosmopraxis’ to show how human practices occur in particular cosmos, implying different kinds of engagements between humans and other-than-humans. From our perspective, each human practice is part of a historical cosmopraxis enacting a particular cosmopolitics through a field of links and power relationships among/and between beings.

The practice of image making and the experiences associated to the materiality of rock art can be examined as a means of creating worlds and unfolding their relational webs and networks (Jones and Cochrane 2018; Goldhahn 2019; Troncoso 2019; Fiore 2020). Like any material element, rock art is the result of a socio-spatial practice; the act of making/experiencing it enacts diverse relations between bodies, persons, materials, beings and places (Armstrong et al. 2018; Troncoso et al. 2020). As Jones and Cochrane (2018) suggest

(see also Ingold 2013; Jones 2020; Fiore 2020) the act of making rock art can be understood as an encounter between the agencies of materials, persons and places. It also occurs through visibility and the finished object, which produce an ecology of images, a visual world (Morgan 2018), that articulates a field of relations between materials, visualities, beings, practices, and/or places (Pauketat 2013).

The generative capacities of the practice/experientiality/materiality of rock art can be approached as a ‘cosmopraxis’. In short, this means that we can explore how rock images have created worlds thought history and, at the same time, we can evaluate the relationships between these worlds and the properties of the various social collectives (such as states) that have inhabited the planet (Jones 2017). Additionally, this will facilitate an understanding of the different ways in which images, materials, and manufacturing practices unfold their affects in these worlds, with the aim of de-essentializing rock art and approaching its historicity (Jones 2020, Armstrong et al. 2018, Porr 2019; see also Morgan 2018). Image making (as well as image experiencing) occurs within the flow of time and in a particular field of relations; thus, its generative and affective capacities are always historically articulated, enacting different engage-

ments, beings, and meshworks (Ingold 2013, 2015; Pauketat 2013; Armstrong et al. 2018; Fiore 2020; Troncoso et al. 2020).

Latour (2013) defines ‘modes of existence’ as the particular forms and ways (routes) that these collectives (beings, materials and places) articulate and are performed. This is a multiscale concept that seeks to recognize the different forms, actors, and networks deployed by an institutional, phenomenal, or social environment in its particular movement. For this reason, Latour (2013) recognizes particular modes of existence for techniques, legal knowledge, social collectives, etc. Likewise, Simondon (2008) has recognized that every object has a technical mode of existence (hereafter TME) which exceeds the object and comprises a bundle of material, practical, discursive, spatial, and historical articulations unfolded in its production and use (see also Fiore 1996). For this reason, Simondon (2008, 42) suggests that the making of a technical object is part of its being. In other words, the TME refers not only to the knowledge, acts, and technical steps involved in the making of something, but also to the set of relationships (practical, material, spatial, experiential, corporal) and affects that emerge in the act of making, deploying the ontological and historical nature of the object as a cosmopraxis (see Descola 2014).

The concept of ‘mode of existence’ has a socio-historical dimension (hereafter SHME) because particular modes of existence are acquired and perpetuated by particular socio-historical networks. The characteristics and properties of the actors, social collectives, and their agentive capacities vary between worlds, along with the principles by which these modes of existence are enacted. Thus, a multiscale and multidimensional relationship is established between TME and SHME: the relations and affects that develop into acts of making produce a field of relations specific to a SHME which, in turn become and promote practices, experiences, and articulations that unfold through dwelling and making.

Rock art, therefore, occurs on multiple scales and involves at least two different modes of existence. First, a particular socio-historical mode of existence (SHME) unfolds a network that connects landscapes, relational communities, socio-political milieu, etc. Second, a technical mode of existence (TME) arises from an act of making and experiencing images, producing a historical network of visualities, places, practices, bodies, materials, and experiences (e.g., Fiore 2020; Gheco 2020).

Understanding these modes of existence implies deciphering their particular forms of unfolding and retraction (Latour 2013). A TME requires a comprehension of the multiple intersection created through the act of making and its operative chains (Troncoso et al. 2020), as well as the articulations and experiences between bodies, materials, and places. A SHME, in contrast, implies understanding how this practice/materiality generates worlds, collectives, and ways

of social being. The nature of the social and social collectives is not pre-determined and fixed over time. On the contrary, these phenomena are contingent on their temporal context and result from particular modes of existence; they must not be assumed but, rather, they need to be explained and historicized (Latour 2013; Descola 2014; De Landa 2006; Harris 2014). Thus, we must historicize the technical mode of existence of rock art, understanding the different agentive and affective capacities that it deploys and discussing how it is articulated within a socio-historical mode of existence. This multiscale, multidimensional analytical procedure allows us to approach these other worlds and their modes of existence, and to historicize the practice-materiality of rock art.

However, we must understand that “a cosmos detached from politics is irrelevant” (Yaneva 2015, 5). If each TME deploys a field of particular relations between certain beings, materials, and places through making (cosmopraxis), and each SHME differentiates which beings make up the social collective and how they are distributed within their field of socio-historical relations, we need to keep in mind that a certain political ontology or cosmopolitics emerges through them (Stengers 2005; Blaser 2013; Latour 2018). Cosmopolitics serves to distribute power and the agentive and affective capacities of the different beings and materials; they thus give rise to a political field with its own actors and rules of the game. In contrast to the ‘modern’ world, multiple modes of existence recognize social collectives and communities formed symmetrically by humans and other-than-humans, multiplying the political actors and obliging us to understand the political ontologies deployed by these SHME (Blaser 2013).

In this context, the practice-materiality of rock art cannot be separated from an historical cosmopraxis and cosmopolitics which allows us to understand how it is inserted in the socio-historical, how it generates a world and unfolds particular agentive and affective capacities. Understanding the SHME and TME of this practice/materiality allows us to understand ancient cosmopolitics and the role of the other-than-human in socio-political life. With these ideas in mind, we explore two case studies of Holocene rock art in northern Chile to try to understand how this practice/materiality is articulated within different cosmopolitics, which in turn refer to differentiated socio-historical formations.

4.2.1 Case 1: El Médano Rock Paintings

El Médano style refers to a set of rock paintings characterized by a maritime imagery including whales, sharks, swordfish, sea-lions, cuttlefish, and turtles, scenes of navigation, hunting of big whales, fishing for large prey, and less frequently, non-figurative motifs like criss-crossed lines which have been interpreted as fishing nets (please see Fig. 4.2)



Fig. 4.2 Marine scenes of El Médano rock painting



Fig. 4.3 QP22: A view of the site and a rock painting with a marine scene (digitally enhanced using D-Stretch)

(e.g., Niemeyer 1977, 2010; Mostny and Niemeyer 1984; Núñez and Contreras 2008; Berenguer 2009; Ballester 2018). This rock art was produced by hunter-gatherer-fisher groups on the coast of the Atacama Desert during the Late Intermediate period (ca. 1000–1400 AD) (Mostny and Niemeyer 1984; Niemeyer 2010; Ballester 2016). The strong maritime orientation of this rock art is consistent with a community wherein much of their lives were spent at sea, navigating and making use of extensive north-south maritime mobility circuits (e.g., Núñez 1984; Castelleti 2017; Gallardo et al. 2017; Ballester and Gallardo 2011). Their residential settlements and funerary sites are located on the continental platform adjacent to the coastline, maintaining a constant visual and experiential relationship with the ocean. Logistic camps associated with excursions to obtain different kinds of raw materials have been found in the hyper-desert space of the pampa inland (e.g., Borie et al. 2018; Castelleti 2007; Gallardo et al. 2012; Gallardo 2018; Pimentel et al. 2017).

Based on their concern with maritime life, hunting scenes, and their location in profusely painted ravines that are diffi-

cult to access, El Médano paintings have mainly been interpreted as votive art associated with rites of passage (e.g., Izuña and El Médano site; Mostny and Niemeyer 1984, Niemeyer 2010, Berenguer 2009, Castelleti 2017). However, paintings with a similar style have recently been identified in logistical camps located in the hyper-desert pampa (e.g., QP-22, Monroy et al. 2016) (please see Fig. 4.3).

One striking aspect of the distribution of El Médano style is that, unlike most of the residential and funerary spaces of this culture, the location of these rock paintings is not necessarily associated with the coastline. This implies that practices of rock art-making and observation are mostly framed by experiences and practices associated with the use of inland spaces (ravines or pampa). Both the activity of marking rocks and the art's content are removed from the spaces used for residential purposes and everyday mobility.

The spatial and visual dynamic of El Médano rock art unfolds a particular cosmopolitic. Several authors have shown how the formation of social collectives in mobile hunter-gatherer communities has a multispecies character

(Willerslev 2007; Bird David 2017; Viveiros de Castro 2010; Kearney et al. 2019, 2020). The animals with which humans coexist, and that they frequently hunt, form part of their social group. Their relationship is based on principles of cohabitation, implying practices, experiences, and forms of communication deployed in everyday existence and that structure social life. While the modern (Western) idea of community is based on the principle of belonging (people are part of a community), in many hunter-gatherer groups this idea is based on the notion of a pluripresence of beings (Bird David 2017; see also Willerslev 2007, Viveiros de Castro 2010, Descola 2014). According to Bird David (2017), for instance, pluripresence, or the act of meeting in and co-inhabiting a space, generates recurrent relations and interactions between different types of beings, resulting in “plural belonging... an issue of being with rather than being like other members” (Bird David 2017, 158). This in turn generates “multispecies communities of relatives whose plural mode is supported by a diverse and together rather than a same and separate logic” (Bird David 2017, 176).

In this context, the centrality of the practices of inhabiting and navigating the sea in the social life of the coastal communities of the Atacama Desert led them to deploy constant interaction between human beings, the ocean, and its maritime fauna (either by chance encounters or hunting practices), producing dynamics of human-animal-sea pluripresence and interaction that form part of one great relational community that goes beyond the human. Co-habitation and interactivity are also expressed in the presence of maritime remains in the middens of the residential spaces, their depositing as funerary offerings, and the existence of an extensive and complex kit of instruments produced for interaction with maritime beings (e.g., Gallardo et al. 2017; Castelleti 2007; Ballester et al. 2014; Palma et al. 2012).

The recurrence of oceanic scenes and maritime fauna highlight their central position in the production of social life and collectives. Their practices of mobility on rafts, and the location of their residential camps and cemeteries close to the coastline, allowed this relational community to remain in constant interaction (practical, visual, and/or experiential), consistent with the material contexts described in the previous paragraph. The cosmopractice of making and observing rock paintings in spaces not associated with the shoreline (such as ravines or inland spaces) establishes visual relations and commonalities with being-at-sea and maritime beings, reaffirming the relational nature of the community and of its multiple participants, and acting as a generator of these articulations and pluripresences between humans, sea, and maritime fauna in inland areas.

Sea mammals thus become a part of the socio-historical and political web of these relational communities. Human and sea mammals interactivity forms this community, not only through the practices described above, but also through

rock-painting practices. Every act of making rock-art involved a technical procedure (which implied a particular articulation between bodies, materials, and places), and it was also a socio-political practice that produced and reaffirmed the relational nature of the community and the necessary dependence and interaction between humans and sea mammals for the formation of their world. Rock art was a powerful display of communities’ ontological commitments in spaces remote from the coast, i.e. landscapes separated and different from their everyday spaces. El Médano style, therefore, produces and articulates a particular ordering of the social collectives proper to its cosmopolitics, in which there is no separation between culture and nature.

4.2.2 Case 2: Inka Models

The communities of the interior of the Atacama Desert had a long tradition of producing rock art, going back to the start of the Late Pleistocene (Berenguer 2004; Gallardo 2018). Although we observe different sets of rock art over time, they are all characterized by the presence of camelids, and the use of painting and/or carving techniques. In the latter part of the pre-Hispanic period carved outcrops emerge as a new type of rock art (Gallardo et al. 1999). This is associated with the incorporation of the territory into the Inka State or Tawantinsuyu, with its capital in Cusco (Peru). Carved outcrops represent a new practice of marking rocks introduced by the Tawantinsuyu, as is shown by the presence of these manifestations in other territories of the State (Christie 2015; Meddens 2006; Van de Guchte 1990).

These petroglyphs consist mainly of rectangular, linear, and circular forms interpreted as representations of farming landscapes: linear carvings represent irrigation canals, rectangular and circular forms different types of agrarian fields (Christie 2015). A characteristic of these rock art forms is that they are made so that a libation of water can be poured onto their surface; the water runs along the channels and is deposited in the carved fields (Christie 2015; Castro and Varela 1994; Meddens 2006).

Although these themes are not recurrent in the Atacama Desert, they are found in different areas (Chiu-Chiu, Cupo, Tambo Bajada del Toro, Toconce), associated with sites occupied by the Inkas and agrohydraulic systems from the Late Intermediate (1000–1450 AD) and Inka (1450–1540 AD) periods (Castro and Varela 1994; Gallardo et al. 1999; Troncoso 2019; Troncoso et al. 2019).

Although these models have been interpreted as representations of agrarian fields, they exceed this definition and can be associated rather with the Andean idea of ‘doubles’ (Christie 2015, Van de Guchte 1996; see also Troncoso 2019). In the Andes, doubles are beings/animate materials that have the same attributes and characteristics as the ‘orig-

inal'; thus, these models *are* the agricultural landscape surrounding the carved rocks, and watering them is the same as watering the agricultural landscape that surrounds them (please see Fig. 4.4). This practice and interaction between humans and models which, ethnographically, occurs at the start of the agricultural cycle, deploys a whole relational field of association and affects which goes beyond the human.

Agricultural practices in the Andes imply interacting with a set of other-than-human beings and forces of nature—especially mountains (ancestors) and the earth (Pachamama)—who provide water, fertility, and well-being for the correct performance of these labours (Van Kessel and Cruz 1992; Van den Berg 1990). These interactions occur in a context in which these beings and 'material things' have a particular personhood and form part of a relational social collective (Allen 2002). Thus, relations between humans and other-than-humans are mediated by a series of reciprocal rights and responsibilities.

In this context, watering the rocks is not only watering the local landscape, but it is feeding the earth (Pachamama) and the mountains (ancestors), entering into a reciprocal relationship in order to receive the fruits sown in the fields, and bringing a whole relational community into movement and articulation (Van den Berg 1990). As such, the models act in a double system. On the one hand, the circulation of water through the modelled channels and fields allows water to circulate through the agrarian landscape of the region; on the other, by feeding the rock, the person is also feeding the earth and the mountains, respecting the reciprocal relations established between humans and non-humans in the Andes. The visual relationship with the agrarian landscape becomes central to achieving the replication associated with the idea of doubles.

This cosmopractice and the rock materiality set in motion not only a whole cosmopolitics of beings based on these

relations, but also in terms of the local history of the communities. Before the arrival of the Tawantinsuyu to the region, the great mountains of the Andes were seen as the guardian ancestors of each community, with whom humans interacted in the cycle of rights and duties involved in their everyday and agricultural practices (Castro and Aldunate 2003; Castro and Varela 1994). This was reflected in the orientation of houses and chullpas (towers) towards the mountains, and in recurrent offerings of copper on the peaks of various mountains, as well as in villages, to feed these other-than-human beings (Berenguer et al. 1984). With the arrival of the Inkas and the creation of these models, this relationship is modified. Now it is the Inka who are established as the mediators between the human members of the community and the set of other-than-human beings involved in farming: water, earth, and guardian mountains. In this way the Inka State reordered regional cosmopolitics and the position of the different beings, promoting the State as the intermediary between humans and other-than-human beings, and thus allowing successful farming practices (see also Berenguer and Salazar 2017).

This can be seen in two examples. In the models at Cupo, a protuberance of the rock resembles the local (and visible) guardian mountain that fed the pre-Hispanic irrigation system (please see Fig. 4.5). The performativity of this model implied that it was a human person who brought the water to the mountain, allowing it to circulate to the fields; the ancestors and mountains were relegated to second place in the field of relations (Troncoso 2019). In the case of the models at Chiu-Chiu and Bajada del Toro, it has not been possible to identify a relief feature that replicates a guardian mountain, but these models are deliberately placed in visual fields where the guardian mountains cannot be seen. This reaffirms the action of humans as givers of water to feed the earth and the fields, while excluding the mountain-ancestors visually (Troncoso et al. 2019).



Fig. 4.4 Visual relations of Chiu-Chiu carved outcrops to their agrarian landscape



Fig. 4.5 Inka carved outcrop of Cupo and double of Paniri Volcano

This practice therefore serves to reorganize the hierarchy and distribution of beings, powers, and agentive and affective capacities in the farming cycle, but at the same time it breaks with local traditions to produce a new order and cosmopolitics in the region.

4.3 Discussion

In a recent review on the archaeology of art, John Robb (2017) highlighted the need to understand what art *does* rather than focusing on what it *means*. Understanding what art does requires us to understand not only how it unfolds its agentive and affective capacities, but also what assemblages and articulations generate the making and experiencing of art. The notions of technical and socio-historical modes of existence allow us to refer to these complementary levels of analysis to achieve this objective, to reconstruct the historical dimension and to understand the cosmopolitics deployed through this practice/materiality.

One approach to understanding these modes of existence and their affective capacities as they are expressed in rock images is through the analysis of the practices of image making. For Jones (2020; see also Ingold 2013), every act of making deploys a set of affects based on the relations between bodies and materials. While this is correct, the fact remains that these affects are historically determined, not only by the kind of materials used, but also by the TME and SHME in which these practices occur. In the case of El Médano paintings, their production was a recurrent practice over time, as is shown by the large number of known paintings. Beyond the particular affects unfolded between places, bodies, rocks, and pigments, the central nature of this activity was based on inland spaces promoting an engagement with multiples practices and beings, creating a maritime pluri-presence in spaces distant from the coastline. Practices of

making, therefore, deployed a mode of existence that went beyond the human bodies, rocks, and materials required to make rock paintings. This same affect subsequently generated these paintings experientially, linking these arid inland spaces with practices and beings belonging to the ocean. This situation also implied a temporality proper to these rock art experiences, which anchored them to the mobility and interaction circuits connecting the sea with the continental platform.

The Inka models show a different field of relations. The act of making in this case was a practice that implied a differential relation between bodies and materials based on the different ways of treating the rock (carving vs. painting). This carving was also based on a particular capacity of the creators: generating a double and reproducing an agricultural landscape, allowing the transfer of materials and potentialities between the surrounding agricultural landscape and the carved rock. However, this act of making was not recurrent over time, given the scarcity of these rock manifestations in the area; these practices of making may have been deployed on dates associated with the farming calendar, marking a different temporality to El Médano rock art.

The agentive and affective capacities of the two sets of rock art differed remarkably. For El Médano paintings, these capacities were oriented towards producing articulation with the sea, its practices, and beings; the Inka models on the other hand articulated multiple beings of the farming environment, starting by making water run through the models' channels in a place that is visually articulated with large, irrigated field systems. In the former case, these articulations with the sea are deployed visually in motifs made by applying materials to the rock, while in the models they are created by replicating a landscape and reproducing the territory in a rock, making a double. Due to their different intensities of production, these agentive and affective capacities are also

presented according to the temporalities and rhythms of each SHME and TME.

However, the cosmopractices of making/experiencing in both rock art cases implied articulation with a set of other-than-humans which formed part of these collectives, unfolding a particular and historical cosmopolitics. Each of these cosmopolitics was articulated with a SHME in which different beings were integrated—which acquired different types of agentive and affective capacities. The rocks themselves, through their interaction with the act of making, its temporalities, and these other-than-human beings, acquired particular positions and capacities. In the case of El Médano, nothing indicates that the painted rocks acted as doubles of the landscape, especially considering that the relation of visibility between ‘double’ and ‘original’ is central to the agentive capacity of the Inka models. These agentive capacities of the rocks also arise from the necessary interactions with other materials and images: the meshwork of pigments, maritime images, rocks, and inland spaces was crucial for El Médano, while in the case of the models, the rocks, carvings, mountains, water, and surrounding farmed territory were crucial. Both articulations, therefore, show the necessary and profound articulations between TME and SHME.

At the same time, this cosmopolitics not only gave different positions and capacities to these non-human beings, but also formed different social collectives. In both cases these went beyond the merely human. In the case of El Médano, these collectives articulated with the sea and with a series of other-than-humans that inhabited the area; in the case of the models this collective comprised mountains and Pachamama, beings that ethnography and ethnohistory have shown to be central in Andean social life and cosmopolitics.

The cosmopractice of making and experiencing rock art, therefore, was enacted and deployed within modes of existence and an historically situated cosmopolitics. Each act of making and experiencing set in motion a whole field of relations which went beyond the images, the materials, and the bodies involved; in both cases, the surrounding space was a main line weaving a whole relational field, emerging a set of agentive and affective capacities (Ingold 2015). Although today we define both of these case studies as rock art and visual representations, El Médano paintings and the Inka models are completely different materialities/practices/experientialities from one another, and enacted divergent fields of historical relations, creating and moving particular ontologized worlds.

The concepts of TME and SHME are critical to understanding the generative capacities of rock art and historicizing their practice/experientiality/materiality. They allow us to do more than provide a description of the past and these other worlds: we can understand the nature of the social collectives of the past, and how the different actors—human and non-human—performed and promoted actions within the

formation of socio-political life. While both our case studies contain other-than-humans that are central to the formation of social existence, their articulation in this meshwork is differentiated. The central feature in the case of El Médano seems to be the constitution of pluripresence to compose a community of beings, without implying great differences in terms of socio-political power. In the case of the Inka models the situation is reversed: the making of the rock art seeks to position a socio-political entity and a being that we can call human—Sapa Inka—as the principal actor of fertility and agricultural productivity, controlling a series of other-than-human that previously occupied this central position. In the act of creating these models, a whole cosmopolitical strategy was unfolded to reorder the distribution of power and generative capacities of a set of other-than-humans.

The same art-making practices are articulated with these TME and SHME. If rock art generates worlds through its affective capacities, the act of making produces these worlds. As Simondon (2008) indicates, in its technical mode of existence this process of making produces a broader articulation which exceeds the encounter and interaction between bodies, rocks, and materials. The capacities and properties of the materials are not only physical, but also historical and ontological. Its historicity is not based only on the types of materials used, or the techniques applied, but also on the properties acquired in this case by the rock, which—as we have seen—enacted fields of relations that differ widely between the painted rocks of El Médano and the rocks carved to create the Inka models.

Finally, behind all these TME, SHME, and cosmopolitics, we find a distribution of social collectives, beings, and agentive capacities that goes beyond Modernity and its dichotomy between nature and culture. This situation implies the need to historicize the set of relations on which worlds are based, and to understand the different positions, capacities, and properties of humans, non-humans, materials, and places, knowing that these positions and capacities are neither static nor universal. Historicity, therefore, features as a central axis for understanding what today we call rock art, and recovering its historicity implies going beyond the object to understand its relations, knots, and deployment from its TME and SHME.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

In the previous pages, we explored an interpretation of prehispanic rock art in the Southern Andes from a perspective that combine cosmopolitics and mode of existence. While the understanding of the Inka study-case is based on archaeological, and ethnohistorical sources, the example of coastal hunter-gatherer rock art relies on archaeological data and a more theoretically informed perspective. As one referee

pointed out, El Médano study-case could be seen as a theoretical construct lacking empirical evidence rather than an archaeological interpretation that combine data and theory. Although I do not share this viewpoint, it raises a pertinent discussion about the production of knowledge in archaeology and the boundaries and possibilities of the ontological perspectives to offer a different understanding of historical processes and social life. I think this point aligns well with our study-case. On one hand, the archaeological data suggests an extremely coastal-oriented way of life of hunter-gatherer which entails a specific set of practices and experiences between human and a particular group of non-humans beings. Some aspects of this relationship were enacted in the rock paintings.

On the other hand, the archaeological interpretation cannot take place without a horizon of intelligibility that recognizes the historical fabric of the modes of existence (Criado 2001, 2012). Ontological perspectives provide us with other horizons of intelligibility to question the archaeological record, assessing whether certain attributes of these horizons are in tune with the data, opening new ways for the interpretation. Our perspective aims to explore rock art and socio-historical processes in the Southern Andes is in accordance with this idea, using some ontological and ethnographical insights from hunter-gatherer regarding the engagements of human and non-humans as relevant for understanding rock art. This strategy is no different from the utilization of ethnographic and ethnoarchaeological knowledge about patterns of movement or technological strategies among current hunter-gatherers to comprehend the behaviour of these groups in ancient times. In our case, the specificity of our perspective lies in the use of certain ontological aspects related to hunter-gatherers and the recognition of the historical being-in-the-world of the groups who made El Médano rock art. Ontology and modes of existence are not mental templates, but they emerge from the historical experiences, relations, and affections that human groups unfold through the process of inhabiting the world, and rock art is one of the participants of this historical fabric.

Beyond the aforementioned, both study-cases allow us to open our minds to the existence of these other worlds and its collectives, but also to historicize them and substantiate them through understanding how they create histories, collectives, and social processes. The concept of cosmopolitics allows us to move forward, recognizing not just the role of other-than-humans in social life, but highlighting the historical character of the political beings and how other-than-humans have produced history and encouraged cosmopractices and experiences by humans.

Rock art enables us to understand and historicize these other worlds. Its recurrence in space and its persistence over long periods of time in different parts of the world give us the potential to unravel its TME and the articulations with its

SHME. Its practical, spatial, visual, and material nature enables us to begin to understand and historicize these different worlds and social collectives that have inhabited the territory.

Rock art does not have the potential to reveal the ‘worlding’ practices of people in the past, but deciphering its TME and SHME can help us to call into question our own world and imagine others. The two examples explored in this chapter demonstrate how social collectives and the fields of relations, practice, and experience were based in worlds where the basic premise of the Western world, i.e. the separation between culture and nature, did not exist. Therefore, the presence of non-human beings was central to the formation and reproduction of social life. Exploring the worlds created by rock art opens a window to imagine, think, and produce other relations between humans and other-than-humans present in our own time and space. In a recent collection of essays on the role of rock art in today’s world, Taçon and Brady (2016, 11; see also Taçon 2019) challenge us to think about the contemporary relevance of rock art, which in their work is no doubt concerned with the well-being of Indigenous communities. We believe that this principle could be extended globally. The climatic and social crises currently facing the planet require new solutions based on creating new worlds founded on forms and principles that will not only guide our social practices but will also define other types of social collectives and ways of articulating with the other-than-human that we call nature. This situation is particularly critical in South America, where the tensions resulting from colonialism, inequality, climate change, and extractive economies are demanding new models of development and a new deal between humans, places, and other-than-humans. In the name of progress (ontologically based on Modernity’s opposition between culture and nature), millions of people have been removed from their territories and denied the basic resources for reproduction; additionally, the engagements, experiences, and practices that local communities deploy in their relations with the other-than-human are despised and underrated.

Rock art can do more than reveal these other worlds. Its affective capacities can bring them into the present and shake the foundations of our world. Fiore (1995–96, 256) has highlighted the creative potential of rock art to question our bases and move us to rethink our world, as she affirms: art as a social entity produces something new. In the same vein, Grosz (2020, 79) proposes that art “take[s] on the task of representing the future, of preceding and summoning up sensations to come, a people to come, worlds or universes to come... Art is intensely political not in the sense that it is a collective or community activity... but in the sense that it elaborates the possibilities of new.” Its presence in space, its visuality and materiality in an inhabited territory, allow rock art to show us the cosmopolitics of the past and to construct

a new cosmopolitics. In other words, rock art was part of previous worlds, and we can use it and think of it as a resource to generate imminent future worlds, promoting the practices of encountering this materiality as transformative practices which make visible forms and relations that in our world do not appear feasible (Escobar 2018). Through these encounters we can produce new relational practices based on other cosmopolitics informed by this co-constitution of humans, places, and other-than-humans, making use of their TME and SHME for “ontologically futuring practices” (Escobar 2018, 133).

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- Andrés Troncoso Meléndez** is a full professor at the Universidad de Chile. His research addresses the relationships among rock art production, the social construction of landscape, and the history of ancient communities. Currently, he is studying the emergence of rock art among hunter-gatherers of the Late Holocene in north-central Chile, combining the use of ontological approaches and the understanding of ancient cosmopolitics. He is the editor of *Archaeologies of Rock Art: South American Perspectives* (2018, with Felipe Armstrong and George Nash; Routledge, London) and *Rethinking the Inka: Community, Landscape, and Empire in the Southern Andes* (2022, with Frances Hayashida and Diego Salazar; University of Texas Press) and the author of *Arte Rupestre, Historia y Comunidades en el centro norte de Chile* (2022, Social Ediciones, Santiago).

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