

# APPENDIX: SYNOPSIS

## PRELUDE

Some remarks on the split between the past itself and the responses we have and make to it. Posing the question: what is the character of an archaeology which makes such a separation?

## PART I ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHOD

What is archaeology? What do archaeologists do?

One answer: archaeological *method* and science. An hegemony of ideas concerning what archaeologists should be doing is sketched. It is encapsulated in notions of science and the acquisition of positive knowledge, in an emphasis on *reason, the facts, and models*.

Problems are noted with this answer of archaeological method: the place of values in what archaeologists do, and of the problem experience in its widest sense; problems with the idea of objectivity and how it is to be described.

Addressing these problems has led to: pluralism (no one objective past); metaphysical questionings (what is the character of the archaeological past and how do archaeologists deal with it?); new social accounts of the archaeological past; and new values behind what archaeologists may be doing.

The intellectual context of these questions raised about archaeological method is discussed: the loss of confidence in the compact or correspondence between word and world; the philosophical problem of language and representation.

Some ways forward are pointed, alternative and complementary ways of doing archaeology. A tradition of 'negative' thinking. Thinking through the split between cognitive reason and emotional response via the Hegelian idea of 'sublation'. Materialism and an embodied archaeology: archaeology as concrete sensuous human practice. Understanding the past through dialogue, with reference to hermeneutics.

From archaeology to the archaeological.

Two images of complementary styles of reasoning are offered: tree-thinking (unified, hierarchical, and reproducing the identity of the past), as opposed to invasive and disruptive weeds fostering connection and evocation.

## PART 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERESTS

Some images suggested when thinking of archaeology. The attractions of archaeology Some root metaphors.

Discovery; adventure; puzzles, contact with the other; nostalgia; fantasy; an urge to conserve and save; pursuit of knowledge and truth; theatre.

Sketches of some archaeological characters

Detective; collector; tourist; mystic; judge; assured and confident (male) academic

It is argued that such images and analogies are important in understanding what archaeology is, and essential in realizing archaeology's pertinence and relevance to the present. Archaeology is more than an academic discipline and a pursuit of knowledge of the past. Interpretation is outlined as active apprehension. Archaeology produces knowledge *for* (living in the present) and not just knowledge *that* something happened in the past.

## PART 3 THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE PAST

Part 3 is about the (archaeological) encounter with the material past. It is divided into two sections. The first considers the character of the things that archaeologists deal with The second considers aspects of archaeological experience of this material.

### What is the archaeological past?

Characteristics of the things archaeologists excavate and interpret The qualities of valued and collected objects. The questions are posed: What is an authentic or genuine artifact? What is the relation of artifacts and objects to cultural identity? Heritage is considered.

The idea of non-identity is introduced. This captures objects as always more than their description, filled with poetic resonance and reverberation: dynamic objects of both past and present. Solid and single identity and authenticity are undermined.

Cultural identity is considered as construction and cultivation (rather than ownership and being). Objects used inventively and strategically in constructing identities

A tension is noted between challenging the identity and authenticity of artifacts from the past, and the meanings constructed within cultural identities.

### **Experience and the past**

The relation of knowing and being.

Archaeology's projects and interests (Habermas), explaining and analysing the past, communication and dialogue with others; self-reflection.

Archaeology's projects and experience in (post)modernity. A potential in archaeology for countering the dislocation and spectacle of consumerism

Archaeology and the personal or subjective. Archaeology and being a person. More reflections on archaeological characters. The threat of subjective desires and interests is considered.

The poetic or inventive dimension of archaeological experience. Archaeological experience is characterized as a dialogue with the past; it therefore involves also an ethical dimension.

## **PART 4 WORKING ARCHAEOLOGY**

### **The craft of archaeology**

It is proposed that archaeology be thought as craft.

The mode of production of archaeological knowledge is related to the cultural experiences of modernism and postmodernism. Craft is presented as a cultural strategy appropriate to archaeology. It is to relate the technical, ethical and aesthetic in a unified practice of embodied knowledge. Archaeology as craft is argued as involving dialogue with the material past, and with client community, incorporating pleasure and learning, having interests in authority and the responsibility of the archaeologist-craftworker. Creative and poetic, as well as ethical, it is described as a sensuous receptivity to the past.

Key concepts are considered and explained: purpose, visibility, expression, responsibility, authority; archaeological interpretation as design.

### **An archaeological poetics**

Strategies for representing the dynamic object past. Aspects of archaeology as craft. Some ideas are offered.

## APPENDIX

Working through the tensions between

- subjective and objective
- particular and general
- fragments and construction
- experiment and responsibility
- pluralism and authority.