

Time and Archaeology

In about 2400 BC people began to live in a small community of stone houses at Skara Brae in the Orkneys. They kept cows and sheep, ate shellfish, made furniture out of stone, and made basically the same sort of pots for perhaps 500 years. It would seem that little changed over that stretch of time. How are we to understand those centuries of life when compared with time in contemporary capitalism and consumerist change? The issue is one of the meaning of material culture and the character of social structures which we have considered in earlier chapters. It is also an issue of the meaning of time itself.

Most of the human past is the province of archaeology: vast stretches of time. Yet there is virtually no discussion of time in archaeology. It is assumed as an unproblematic dimension. We aim to direct attention to this lacuna, to challenge conventional assumptions about time. Is time a dimension? What is the meaning of chronology? How is time related to social change? Is time the dimension of the historical disciplines? Is there a specifically archaeological time - long term as opposed to short term? How are past and present related in terms of time? We intend to argue that these questions are vital to a critical reflection on contemporary archaeology.

THE TIME OF CHRONOLOGY

Chronology: spatial time

Any inquiry into the past which does not reckon with the dimension of time is obviously nonsense; the past is the past by virtue of the place it occupies in the time-scale.

(Piggott, 1959, p. 63)

The archaeological text legislates on chronology. Relative and absolute; stratification and radiocarbon: time in archaeology is presented as sequence and date. Time is identified as a dimension. Each object or feature has a temporal attribute, objective and quantifiable. This is its date, a universal index or scale according to which everything may be related and compared. Time as dimension is thus conceived spatially as location and distance. As a diachronic dimension (abstract in that it is a neutral attribute separate from that to which it refers), time provides a framework or context within which the traces of the past may be situated and ordered.

Time in the space of excavation

Chronology is applied to the traces of the past to bring order and sense. It is a technology for the reduction of difference and the production of meaning.

It is the excavation which establishes difference. The excavation produces variety and variability in space - the three dimensional volume of the site containing artefacts, features and layers. The archaeological imperatives are to reduce this difference to similarity, order, and to establish meaning. Reduction of difference involves the identification of spatial pattern and temporal sequence. The concept of stratigraphy translates variation in space into variation in time, establishes relationships in time. Technologies for identifying spatial pattern include taxonomies (locating artefact, feature and site in a hierarchy of ordering taxa) and spatial analysis.

Chronology and change

It is not now often accepted that any pattern produced is meaningful in itself. There is the problem of the origin, meaning and development of the ordered, classified archaeological universe. The traditional answer to this problem is a narrative of 'cultures', involving concepts of innovation, diffusion of ideas, population shift and, more generally, notions of evolutionary progress - from savagery to civilization.

The new archaeology of the 1960s and since conceives of the explanation of an identified pattern and sequence in terms of culture process, the workings of culture systems, social systems and cultural evolution. The problem of *social* change has been foregrounded. Agents of change have been variously proposed: prime movers such as population pressure and adaptation to

environment; the technomics of economic rationality; the mechanisms of mathematical logic (see the discussions in chapters 2 and 6).

Time is assumed to be a theoretically unproblematic dimension like space. With time and space separable from that to which they refer, change becomes a problem. Change becomes variability associated with time as abstract sequence. Change becomes a catalogue of difference with an abstracted essence, the universal motor of history, generating variability. Time conceived as chronometric space is conceptually separate from social production and reproduction. It is present only as a context, with change as a problem.

Time is separate from space; both are separate dimensions. This separation is associated with a distinction between synchrony and diachrony, social statics and dynamics, with dynamics or change Apparently belonging to time. Such a separation is related to functionalist conceptions of the social, organic units open to synchronic analysis; it is related to static conceptions of social entities ordered in evolutionary sequence: band, tribe, chiefdom, early-state module . . .

BAILEY IN THE *APORIAI* OF TEMPORAL LANDSCAPE

The most sophisticated and illuminating discussion of time in archaeology has been produced by Bailey (1981,1983) and it merits some considerable attention. Arguing for a duality within time, between time as objective process and time as socially and so subjectively represented, he identifies a series of distinctions (not necessarily coincident or parallel):

occurrence	representation
objective	subjective
duration	event
long term	short term
durable	ephemeral
collective	individual
present explained	past explained
in terms of the <i>past</i>	in terms of the <i>present</i>
nature	history

Time as process is a function of objective occurrences. This may be distinguished from time as existing in its representation as a

product of concepts which are to be related to their social context. The single event, visible in the short term, is distinguished by Bailey from long-term process possessing a duration, *ex hypothesi*, longer than the event. Long-term process is presented by Bailey as going beyond the individual and consequently having a collective aggregate character (not necessarily 'social').

These features of two aspects of time (Bailey assumes that chronology is objective time, its representation is secondary and subjective) are associated with a distinction between academic disciplines. Environmentalist disciplines and the natural sciences aim to explain the present in terms of the past. The present is a dependent category within neutral and objective temporal scales and involves long-term biological and ecological pressures which eclipse the individual. Their frameworks employ cross-cultural and generalizing regularities. For Bailey the social sciences and history extrapolate from necessarily short-term behaviour in the present to explain the past. They assume time to be internal to the social, as part of the social, and regard the social as an independent variable.

To be distinct and non-derivative a discipline must formulate its own concepts and theories, conceptual schemes derived from its own data base. Arguing that archaeological data refer to aggregate behaviours, he proposes that archaeology's temporal index is not the single momentary event but long-term process. Archaeology's temporal scale is *not* that of the other social sciences whose concern is with the short term. To be a distinct and autonomous discipline archaeology must view the past in terms of processes probably not visible in the present. Bailey claims that criticisms of concepts such as adaptation apply only to the scale of the social sciences. In archaeology's scale of long-term continuity the concept of adaptation is meaningful. Archaeology, then, is to be grouped with the natural sciences having an environmentalist perspective.

Scale and the discipline of archaeology

For Bailey archaeology should be concerned with a different order than that of the social sciences, for its scale is different. He suggests that archaeological data refer to aggregates of behaviour, averages which go beyond the individual event, short-term social process, which are the focus of the conceptual schemes of the social scientist. Social process is defined as short term by Bailey, or rather he has it applying 'to a scale different to that of aggregate behaviour. This definition is simply asserted; he only states that the social sciences must show that social process can be long term. But

the ancient city-state displays a continuity of social process that can be historically documented for over a thousand years (de Ste. Croix, 1981; Anderson, 1974). What constitutes long term as opposed to short term? Bailey makes the point that environmental phenomena can be as sudden as social phenomena: flood, drought, earthquake. Clearly the answer cannot be a simple quantitative reference to chronology: short term referring to year by year; long term referring to century by century.

Bailey relates temporal scale to process: different scales refer to different processes. The processes pertain to a hierarchy of natural entities from subatomic particles to organism to society to environment to cosmos. Scales apply to this hierarchy of entities and moreover are incommensurate. The social sciences have their scale and processes; archaeology shall have its own independent scale and processes. The disciplines are incomparable. They exist side by side (although within the same abstract temporal context - chronology). The individual subject of the social sciences has no relation to long term structure.

But this surely implies a contradiction between his assumption of time being chronology and time being specific to process, a contradiction between empty abstracted time and a saturated time inseparable from the process of an entity, a substantial time. How can scales be, in Bailey's own terms, incommensurate within a chronometric time? Furthermore, the process of archaeology he outlines is the logic of economic and ecological relations, adaptive logic within empty chronometric time; the logic and the time are separate. Is there not, in fact, a confusion of logical sequence and temporality? What is the temporality of scale? What is the temporality of all these separate processes? Bailey needs to explain how scale and process or logic has anything to do with temporality. We might say with John Berger that 'reality should never be confused with scale, it is only scale that has degrees' (1984, p. S3).

A great deal is made of the claim that archaeology must be an independent discipline with its own conceptual framework and body of theory. Bailey's arguments about scale are meant to support archaeology being defined as a specific discipline and are meant to resolve or rather neutralize the increasingly emergent splits within it. These rifts have been especially obvious to him at Cambridge, origin of both palaeoeconomy (Bailey's subdiscipline) and the symbolic-structuralist-post-structuralist approach associated with Ian Hodder and others. To Bailey both are acceptable; they simply ask different questions, apply to different processes, different scales. It is pointless arguing one against the

other but environmentalist palaeoeconomy is more archaeological. Post-structuralist archaeologies are for Bailey essentially derived from the present. They are nonetheless interesting.

But isn't this simply a way of justifying essentially arbitrary divisions between academic disciplines with the individual separate from an independent realm of long-term 'structural' logic, with incommensurate scales existing within the same spatial time? We argue that all social disciplines, including archaeology, are historical; long and short term, all deal with social practice. Bailey is proposing a disabling theoretical fragmentation for the sake of justifying archaeology as a separate discipline.

A subject of history •

The distinctiveness of Bailey's archaeology lies in its aggregate data. Again the objective is given primacy. But what constitutes aggregate behaviour? He makes the point that the whole is more than the sum of the parts. But what are the parts and what is the sum? To what, in his natural hierarchy of entities, does archaeology refer? What is the subject of 'archaeological' process? It is presumably not 'society' but a natural, as opposed to a social, entity. Is it 'Man' ('Woman') and 'Nature'? Whatever Bailey's answer (he does not provide one in the two papers concerned with time), he must report to a metaphysics, an idealism. Bailey's proposed archaeology is idealist in that it assumes an essential principle or subject of archaeological history. History is assumed as a coherent order, the workings not of social process (incoherent in the long term) - but of what? A *ratio naturae* with its adaptive logic? The logic of hyperscale?

Bailey opposes history to nature, taking the natural as the ontological first principle - *prima ratio* - the eternal against which 'Man' is measured. History is defined as a separate and incommensurate order. In this sense his archaeology is no history at all.

Bailey's archaeology is a universal history applying to 'humanity' from the moment such an entity can be defined. His scales and separate subjects assume an independent regularity, single themes for different scales. The archaeologist is to become initiate in the as yet mysterious laws of this reason, searching for the key to diversity, the pattern, the regularity. Time is divided into subject and law, metaphysical entities *natura* and *ratio*. In Bailey's non-historical history human experience and suffering are dismissed as belonging to another scale, subjective, contingent; absorbed, rationalized into adaptive logic; subjected to the Law:

natural reason, *ratio*, a goddess wreaking vengeance on those who mark not the will of *natura*.

Past and present

Archaeology is to find its essential reality, its subject and its scale. The archaeologist is observer of this reality; Bailey's idealism is contemplative. Archaeology is locked into its time, the present, observing a distant or rather incommensurate archaeological past. But this temporal distance is postulated a priori. It is a function of associating tense with date: conceiving the 'past' as of a different date and so distant from the 'present'. Where is the present in Bailey's spatial time? It becomes a durationless and invisible instant in the overwhelming flow.

Bailey's scheme of independent scales is logically connected with the paradoxes of the division of time as dimension. The possibility of the infinite subdivision of a chronometric time ends in the durationless instant. This becomes the essence of temporality, just as abstract space ends and begins in the dimensionless point.

The material event is the province of the archaeological past, a past which cannot, in Bailey's idealism, be thought as a present. He presents no conceptual apparatus for dealing with the past as a present - it is over and lost because of the nature of archaeological data, and for Bailey the data are determinate. To treat the past as a present, he says must result in archaeology being a derivative discipline. The data are far better now for producing generalizations about social process. But this is to privilege generalization and again assumes a homogeneous past, a unified and rational past.

Nor is there an adequate consideration of the past in the present, the presence of the past, the time of the archaeologist, the historiographic issue of the production of the past. He considers that different archaeologies merely ask different questions of the same data. The relation between present archaeologist and past artefact is assumed to be unproblematic - simple reflection in thought? The titles of both of his papers on time in archaeology ('Concepts, time-scales and explanations in economic prehistory' and 'Concepts of time in Quaternary prehistory') refer to *concepts* of time, but what is the relation of concept to 'reality'? This is not considered.

Bailey's dual conception of time amounts to a radical separation of past and present and a valuation of the former; the past is where, we are to find ontological and disciplinary security. The present

and subjective time, that is time as experienced and lived, time as implicated in social relations, is marginalized. Human consciousness is treated as an event like any other. Objective occurrence is distinguished from representation in symbolic structures. He thus adheres to a split between material event and mental appropriation. Bailey does mention that time is related to social structure, but this relation is again lost in the archaeological past. He also accepts that ideas of time may have had an influence on behaviour in the past and refers to time scheduling and budgeting in subsistence practices: a logistical time of calculation.

CHRONOLOGY AND ITS ORIGINS

But what is the meaning of such temporality - the time of measurement and calculation? Is such a conception of time itself atemporal? We argue that temporality itself is historical, that any definition of history is itself historical, and deny any chronology which claims universality.

Spatial neutral time, the time of archaeological taxonomics, Bailey's fragmented temporality, are capitalism's chronometry.

History since the French Revolution has changed its role. Once it was the guardian of the past: now it has become the midwife of the future. It no longer speaks of the changeless but, rather, of the laws of change which spare nothing . . . Social life which once offered an example of relative permanence is now the guarantor of impermanence.

(Berger, 1984, p. 12)

Change is transformation, metamorphosis of the object. It belongs to the object. But chronology is an index, a law applying to all events, a single all-powerful force. Change under the law of chronology becomes an aspect of time itself. Time as chronology, abstract and inhuman, the law or principle which applies to everything, becomes in Bailey's archaeology death triumphant over all, adaptation, *fatum naturae*. No longer a condition of social existence and life, time becomes sentence and punishment. The archaeologist becomes the executor of the law and people become the objects of history.

Contemporary chronology flows. The past is lost in the distance in the unceasing flow, exotic, mysterious and a problem. The past is no longer organically related to the present. The present represents ephemerality; the present is itself lost in the flow. This

corresponds to the impermanence of consumerism, but also refers to the possibility of social change in the non-Western world, the promise of social revolution. Contemporary historical existence, historicity, is both violence and possibility: violence to life, actual and symbolic, and the possibility of revolution and change (Berger, 1984).

Capitalism's chronometry is the calculus for organizing and programming labour. It is a commodified time allowing the calculation and comparison of incommensurate labours. It is an ideology of production. Chronometric time is money. Chronometry is the time of the factory clock. The private and the public are separated as work-time and leisure-time. Lived time is marginalized; times other than chronometry destroyed, condemned as subjective, irrational, superstition.

This is not to long for an age before capitalism's colonization of time. Contemporary historicity is the emergence of a sense of possibility, a possibility enabling a prospect of social justice, that the present may be changed, that it is not under the guardianship of a mythical past. Not nostalgia, but what is needed is a mediation of Bailey's oppositions.

This is to undo the identification of reason with reality, the identification of chronology with the reality of time. In this way nature and history come to mediate each other: what appears as natural is historical production, and the identification of history with what happened - objective occurrence - is dissolved in terms of the concrete existence of the past. So the past is not assimilated into the time of the archaeologist but realized as discontinuous with the present, realized as being more than its representation by the archaeologist.

TIME AND PRAXIS

We can agree with Bailey that time is to be grasped in relation to particular processes. Time is thus substantial, not a dimension, not a context. Context is to be subverted. Context is not exterior; there is no stable 'event' and its 'context'. Temporal interval does not consist of emptiness. Time exists in the relation between presence and absence, both physical and temporal. Intervals are a part of presences, defining, marking edges, structuring difference. There is a chronic reciprocity between past, present and future. So the archaeological past exists as a future project in the present, in the social practice of archaeology. No time then exists in itself as

abstract date or whatever. Time is not an abstract existent, contentless form. As we have argued, this would require a metaphysics of time. Substantial time is to replace the momentary present with the event of *presencing*. Presencing is a historic present, 'mutual reaching out and opening up of future, past and present' (Heidegger, 1972, p. 14), holding them together in their difference, a relational nexus. Time is the event of praxis. So instead of length of time we should refer to the density of relations of practice.

Time is a condition of social practice. As we have stressed earlier (chapter 3), in social practice social actors draw on structures which enable action and in the action reproduce those structures. So every social act implicates different temporalities: the occasion or event of the action; the life history of the social actor; and the institutional time of structure. This is the *social* logic of 'scale'.

In arguing against a 'Hegelian' total and abstract time, Althusser proposes multiple temporalities within a social formation - times specific to the separate instances: economic, political, legal and ideological (Althusser and Balibar, 1970, chapter 4). There is thus no single unifying time, no single 'now'. The only unity to different temporalities is their location within a structured social formation. While not agreeing with Althusser's characterization of 'social formation' we agree that time is unavoidably implicated in social logic. So chronology does not explain, nor does it provide a context. It is part of that which is to be understood.

Time may not involve chronology, as we shall illustrate in a moment. Synchronic does not necessarily mean at the same date; at the same date does not mean that two events were necessarily synchronous. Dates act as taxa, uniting 'events' according to an abstract calculus. We argue instead that any synchrony and diachrony must arise out of the social structures of which they are a part. Bailey was lost in the abstract landscape of a quantitative and spatial time. We can conceive a substantial time as an eventful landscape of continuity and discontinuity: structured difference.

A history of times

Our point is that different temporal orientations shape history itself.

'The moment is a moment' (Bourdieu reporting an Algerian peasant)

(1963, p. 59)

Time for the Algerian peasant is not measured but marked. There are not spatial points of division, segments of regular

succession, but self-enclosed, discontinuous units. Points of reference are supplied by experience of the agricultural cycle: a ritual calendar. The peasant temporality of tradition is not coincident with chronology.

Marked time	Measured time
Submission to the passage of time	Managed time
Self-enclosed recurrent moments	Repetitive segments of regular succession
The <i>forthcoming</i> : exalted by tradition	<i>Future</i> void, open
Imitation of past; conformity with ancestral model	Design of a projected future
Concrete horizon of the present; single context of meaning	\ Mutually exclusive possibility
Reading signs to which tradition provides the key	'Rational' calculation
Deferred consumption (hoarding)	Abstract absent accumulation
Gift	Credit
Social imperative	'Rational' choice

SUBSTANTIAL TIME

ABSTRACT TIME

The measured time of abstract chronology, to be managed, calculated, saved and expended, is distinct from the peasants' immersion in a substantial time, a mythology in action, a submission to the passage of time, with no one dreaming of 'saving time', 'spending time'. The future in an abstract quantitative chronometry is a void of mutually exclusive possibilities, a time to come to be forecast; the forthcoming of substantial temporality is a single context of meaning, the concrete horizon of the present exalted by tradition, to be an imitation of the past, conforming to the ancestral model. To presume to calculate the future is hubris. So rational calculation of the future, opening up possibility, opposes a prophetic readings of signs for which tradition furnishes

the key, a reduction of possibility. Provision for the forthcoming involves hoarding, concrete deferred consumption, opposed to abstract absent accumulation. The gift, with debt a social and moral issue, is distinct from credit. Social imperative opposes rational 'economic' choice.

Reason (1979) locates what he calls the textual time of the peasant and capitalism's abstract time in the organization of production and relates this distinction to different forms of classification. Socialized production by the peasant family is orientated towards use-values of anticipated products that are qualitatively distinct and strictly not commensurable. Accounting practices and orientation to abstractly commensurable exchange-values are inapplicable. Peasant work-time is substantial, rooted in concrete labour: 'work time is a physiognomy of subsistence' (Reason, 1979, p. 229). Conversely, capitalist labour presupposes an abstract temporal frame: time is money. Reason opposes abstract repetitive temporality to a textual time, a temporality that constitutes and is 'constituted in, the narrative account as the prime formula for reflecting [upon] the curses and causes of events, and provides the essential means of explicating the sense of the accomplished facts of life . . . With textual time, we deal not with a dimension but with a way of grasping one's living' (ibid.; pp. 230-1). He relates textual time to a world composed by exemplification - 'the production of signs which "possess;" that to which they refer' (p. 237) - categorization as opposed to a system of classification.

Classification implies a separation of sign and sense, an arbitrary signifier with a stable structure of rules and articulatory criteria of identity which transcend the particular occasion. Reason here refers to Saussure's observation that in linguistics 'as in political economy we are confronted with the notion of *value*: both sciences are concerned with a *system for equating things of different orders* - labour and wages in one and signified and signifier in the other' (Reason, 1979, p. 241, citing Saussure, 1974, p. 79; Saussure's italics). In both, time is an indexical quality. These orders of temporality are clearly implicated in social practice. It should also be noted that they are not mutually exclusive: we can understand the time of the peasant, just as the peasant can understand chronology. The important point is the *structural relation of time to social practice*, the social and historical production of time.

Levi Strauss has written that

The characteristic feature of the savage mind is its timelessness; its object is to grasp the world as both a synchronic and a diachronic

totality and the knowledge which it draws therefrom is like that afforded of a room by mirrors fixed on opposite walls, which reflect each other (as well as objects in the intervening space) although without being strictly parallel. A multitude of images forms simultaneously, none exactly like any other, so that no single one furnishes more than a partial knowledge of the decoration and furniture but the group is characterised by invariant properties expressing a truth. The savage mind deepens its knowledge with the help of *imagines mundi*. It builds mental structures which facilitate an understanding of the world in as much as they resemble it. In this sense savage thought can be defined as analogical thought.

(Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 263)

He has distinguished systems of totemic classification from history. In totemic system 'history' is eliminated or integrated; in the Western present the historical process is internalized, becoming a force of change. As we have already described, Western chronology transcends discontinuity and, difference, closing gaps, relating events and objects to one another. The totemic system remains faithful to the timeless model of the past, the authority of tradition, the legitimacy of absolute antiquity. The mythical past appears as separate from the present. The ancestors, creators, were different to ordinary people, their imitators; the mythical past is joined to the present because nothing has been going on since the appearance of the ancestors except events whose recurrence periodically overcomes their particularity. The historical process is not denied but admitted as form without content. There are before and after, but each reflects the other.

The traditional is the predictable, bringing past into present, shortening chronology into present memory and model of the mythical past. This predictability is not the mechanical predictability of the identification of prediction and explanation which depends on a temporality of date and sequence. It is a predictability which arises from incorporating or eclipsing historicity, breaking chains of events which have not occurred before, a predictability which is a social accomplishment.

The rhythm and nature of social change is related to social temporality. Tradition's temporality is short, a thin overlay on the authority of a timeless and mythical past. Chronology is thus compressed. We might say that tradition's temporality is of a different 'scale' to that of contemporary Western historicity.

We can make reference here to Gurvitch's (1964) typology of time. He specifies the parameters and forms of social time and relates these to types of social frames and societies. His eight forms

of social time depend on different relations between past, present and future, greater and lesser duration, continuity and discontinuity, contingency and necessity, qualitative and quantitative. *Enduring time* (the time of slowed down long duration) involves the past

projected in the present and in the future. This is the most continuous of the social times despite its retention of some proportion of the qualitative and the contingent penetrated with multiple meanings. For example, the ecological level moves in this time, particularly its demographic aspect. The past is relatively remote, yet it is dominant and projected into the present and the future: the latter thereby risks annihilation. It loses much of its concrete and qualitative coloration, and for this reason can be expressed in ordinary quantitative measures more easily than all other times. The quantitative measures, however, always remain inadequate. Kinship and locality groupings, especially the rural, are the particular groupings which tend to move in this time.

(Gurvitch, 1964, p. 31)

Other types of time include cyclical time where past, present and future are mutually projected into one another with an accentuation of continuity and a weakening of contingency with the qualitative element emphasized (*ibid.*, p. 32); and explosive time where the present as well as the past are dissolved in the creation of an immediately transcended future: discontinuity, contingency and the qualitative are stressed (p. 33). Other parameters are real lived time as opposed to the perception and awareness of time, and the control and mastery of time.

Gurvitch's social frames and societies, correlated with these different times, include social levels (ecological base, practice, symbol and value systems, collective consciousness), interpersonal and intergroup relations, structured and unstructured social groups (such as kinship groups, organizations), social classes, archaic, historical and contemporary societies. While we oppose the strong typological basis of such work it is nevertheless a useful heuristic. What needs emphasis is the social production of times - their relation to determinate structures of power and interest. So we need to consider the ideological implications of the temporality of tradition (described above) and the relationship between writing and time.

Writing transforms the temporality of tradition, extending time, producing the absent present in the graphical trace. Writing first appears as the list, as a means of storage. No longer the storage of

ritual information in the memory of the initiate in tradition, writing allows the creation and control of information, of records and archives (cf. Goody, 1978). As such it is the basis of the development of surveillance and forms of social control. Inscription is duration; writing transforms temporality, but temporality itself is not neutral. As an aspect of social practice, temporality is related to social control, written into relations of power.

From historicism to the historicity of discourse

Zeno says what is in motion moves neither in the place it is nor in the one in which it is not.

Diogenes Laertius IX, 72

Aristotle summarises Zeno's third paradox: The arrow in flight is at rest.

Physics Z9 239b30

Zeno seems to have argued as follows:

- 1 The arrow at rest in the present moment is contained in space just its own size.
- 2 The arrow in flight in the present moment is contained in space just its own size.
- 3 In the present moment the arrow in flight is at rest.
- 4 The arrow in flight is always in its present, a sequence of present moments.
- 5 The arrow in flight is always at rest.

This is the paradox of statics and dynamics, synchrony and diachrony, of time as date, moment, sequence, and duration as length.

But there is at least one resolution: the arrow flies and is at rest when it is drawn. The paradox is resolved in the act of inscription (Barthes, 1982a, pp. 232-3).

The *telos* of objective chronologies is historicism where the artefact is explained in terms of its location within its time, within events and relations contemporary with it. Past is separated from observing present, each located on a chronometric continuum. The *telos* is eternal image. But what of the event of observation, of excavation, of analysis, of writing? Objective chronologies eclipse this *historia rerum gestarum* with the *res gestae*; discourse is eclipsed by artefact and attribute, digging by the site.

Mediating past and present

Time is established as social practice. Archaeology is established as social practice; it is a relation between past and present, the story told and its telling. The artefact then is not in itself; it emerges in the social practice of archaeology. So archaeology's object is not an eternal image. Archaeology is act of excavation, act of writing. Archaeology is a specific act of engagement with the past. So we need to move from contemplative, distanced representation, an image that goes beyond time, to the material act of production, act of excavation and inscription, acts which have their own time. The past is 'the subject of a construction whose locus is not empty time, but the particular epoch, the particular life, the particular work' (Benjamin, 1979, p. 352); each is to be broken from historical continuity in the act of engaging with the past. So understanding the past is not to look back along a continuum which has led to the present. It is not to escape the present to see the past in itself. Understanding the past is to break with the past.

This is not to put the past at risk. The past can only be determinate by virtue of the present. To be in itself the past requires the exteriority of the present interpreter, the archaeologist. Past and present must be held in tension, in relation. To conceive of the archaeologist as executor of the laws of time, of change, of natural reason is to disguise the assimilation of the time of the past to a universal homogeneity. To preserve the time of the past we must accept paradoxically the past's coexistence with the present, its relation in the present. What separates past from present is not knowledge, it is not date: it is the temporality of the past, the experience of time as it was in the past. This means that people of the past cannot be controlled as is implied in their assimilation to abstract chronology. We can only trace them in the time they live and we perceive. The past, the time is theirs. But the meaning of the past is the present's.

The tension between the past and the present involves a redescription of past events in the light of subsequent events unknown to the actors themselves; it involves the creation of temporal wholes, historical plots. It is not possible to know of the past as witnesses of the past. This is the fallacy of empathy: that the subject, the social actor of the past is the locus of history. To understand the past as archaeologist is to know the past as temporal wholes. It is vital to emphasize that these do not involve the foregone conclusions of universal history, but there are successions or developments in the past and it is the task of the

archaeologist to elucidate and understand them. As Adorno has remarked, 'no universal history leads from savagery to civilisation, but there is one which leads from the slingshot to the hydrogen bomb' (Adorno, 1973, p. 320). It is the archaeologist in the present who develops the plot, the narrative.

The event of archaeology; the archaeological event

There is no *one thing*, no *some thing*, nor *such a thing whatsoever*. But it is from motion or being carried along, from change and from admixture with each other that everything comes to be which we declare to 'be', speaking incorrectly, for nothing ever is, but always becomes.

(Plato, *Theaitetos* 152d)

To say 'what is emerges' is to say that nothing exists in itself but emerges or comes to be in a field of relations with others, emerges as different to something else. It is also to say that what is emerges from its transformation. For archaeology this transformation occurs especially in the text.

The past is excavated away. It must be recorded. The artefact is described, drawn, symbolized; the event is similarly represented. The past emerges in the archaeological text. Metaphor and allegory are thus central to archaeology. Archaeological metaphor: an assertion of identity in difference; the past is represented but the difference, the tension between the past and its archaeological representation remains. The archaeological past cannot be simply represented or precisely imitated. There is no unmetamorphosed reality of the past now.

The past decays, is dismantled, and is constructed, The past is not 'discovered' or simply presented to perceptive consciousness. Artefact is not simply added to artefact, event to event, to accumulate an archaeological past. The past is dis-closed; its elements are grasped together in the archaeological judgement which constructs meaningful wholes, meaningful pasts. So the artefact is not simply the past but is inherently reflective, mediated and mediatory, uniting past and present. It is critical, that is existing in the time of *krisis* or judgement, the archaeological act which brings together past and present. Archaeology then is a mediated relation between what happened and its representation, between being historical and doing history. So our historicity is in part doing archaeology: this is simply to say that the past is temporally inseparable from the event of archaeology.

Now the archaeological event does not exist: the event has no existential reality. There is no stable 'event', singular objective occurrence, 'this happened then'. So what is an event? The idea of event was the focus of the ideographic/nomothetic distinction as applied to archaeology especially by Trigger (1978). Is archaeology a historical or a natural discipline? Is its subject the unique and particular historical event, or a logic of the (social) event in general? This distinction was often assumed to coincide with the difference between traditional and new archaeology, between humanist historical narrative and hard science providing explanation through generalization. But a universe of radically dissimilar particular events is meaningless, a literal chaos or non-sense; while a scientific archaeology subsumes the particularity of the past beneath an abstract concept of occurrence - an event is conceived as simply that which occurs. This is to oppose abstract concepts of the particular and the universal and begs the whole question of the meaning of history.

An event is an abstraction but an abstraction from a configuration of which it is a component; an event only makes sense in terms of a meaningful whole, a historical plot. So an event cannot exist in itself; it cannot be separated from its context, its relations with other events and meanings which contribute to the understanding of plot. The event is more than singular occurrence. And scale is not a reality but a construction.

So the practice of archaeology is a construction of pasts. It establishes event as event, artefact as artefact. The event emerges from archaeology; the event, time, duration is inscription.

We can draw some implications. We said above that metaphor and allegory are central to archaeology; archaeology is unavoidably *historio-graphesis*. It is a system of regimes for production of the 'past'. What is needed is a theory of archaeological inquiry: an archaeological topology (a rhetoric); an archaeological tropology (a stylistics); an archaeological poetics asking how the past is to be written, how the past can be represented without identifying it with its inscription in the present. To say the past is written, that it emerges in inscriptions, is not to give primacy to text. It is to direct attention to the tension between the traces of the past, now over, completed, and their representation in discourse. It is to direct attention to the mediation of the historical and fiction, the fictive, that which is created. How can the past be expressed as completed without making it a point in an abstract temporal continuum? It is necessary again to challenge a unified past of formal coherence, to point attention instead to the meaning of archaeological plot and

ask the meaning of third-person report, of synthesizing narrative, the disguises of figure and allegory. It is to ask why archaeologies are written *now*, how and why they make sense, if they do.

The question of time in archaeology is not a neutral and academic question of method. Archaeology is not simply filling out an empty time with the debris of history. Time is not simply a neutral dimension in an academic discipline. Archaeology's appropriation of the past is a moral and political act. Choosing a past, that is constituting a past, is choosing a future; the ideology of contemporary archaeology's temporality is that it is imposing a Western valuation of measured abstract time on a multitude of pasts which cannot answer for themselves - even the dead aren't safe. The event of archaeology is disguised in a separation of past and present with present disappearing and past becoming spectacle, entertainment, illustration. We hope to have initiated a challenge to this regime of archaeological temporality, and in the following chapter consider the implication of time in social change, one of the most important areas of archaeological theory.