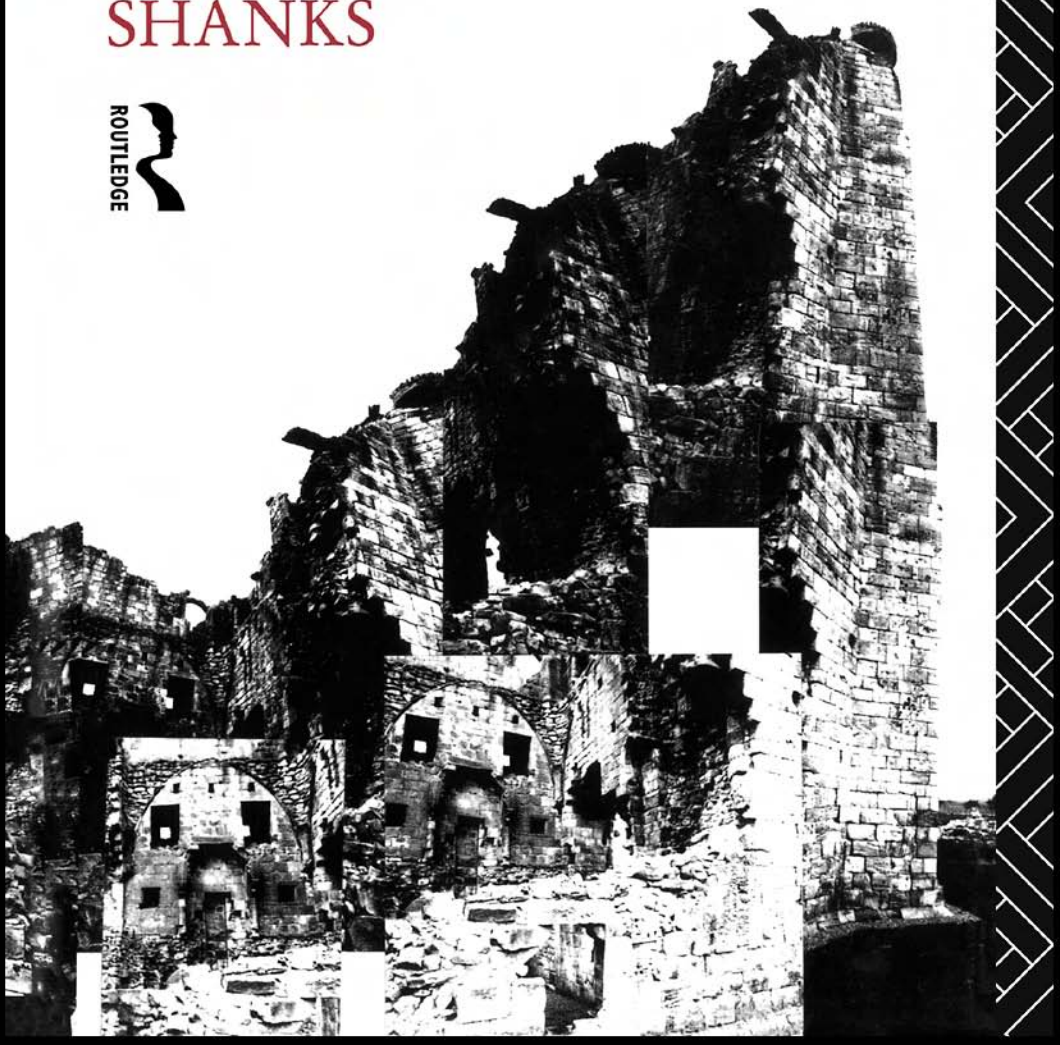
EXPERIENCING THE PAST

On the character of archaeology

MICHAEL SHANKS

ROUTLEDGE



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THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE PAST

WHAT IS THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PAST?

Full fathom five thy father lies.
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
(Shakespeare, *The Tempest* I, 2)

In archaeology the past, it seems, is encountered in its material remains. Scatterings of tools and debris recorded in field-walking survey, sites discovered and excavated, material recovered. Ruins, remains, reconstructions may be visited, collections viewed in museums. In this part of the book I shall investigate further the character of archaeological finds, aspects of the physical encounter with the past.

COLLECTING: MEMORIES AND THINGS VALUED[23]

The antiquary collects the past, fixing on objects themselves, qualities and features, attractions and distinguishing marks. The figure of the antiquary is not a popular one in archaeology. Their concern is with objects stripped of their context, or at least those contexts which the archaeologist values—the object's place in the ground, its identity in situ. But there is also an unease about the antiquary's concern itself, that here is a passion a little too intimate with the past, a fetishism.

Fetishism: here is a desire to hold, look, touch; captivation by the consecrated object. The antiquary's vase is past frozen, a fixed moment. The wholeness of the past is lost in the melancholic holding of the vase; the past, longed for, is missing. The vase fills the gap. Touching, viewing what once was there, part of what is desired. But the fixation on the vase, the antiquary's contact, is the condition of the past being absent. The vase commemorates the past which is missing, but denies this. The fetish object combines gratification and distress: being sometimes the presence, and sometimes the absence of that which is desired. The archaeological suspicion is that antiquarian desire effaces the past. The object merely mirrors the antiquary's impoverished world in which knowledge (of the lack, and of gaining knowledge by overcoming the separation) is replaced by blind desire. There is a morbidity about the antiquary too: images of skulls, dusty gloom, yellow parchment of decay. The antiquary is dead to all sensuality save the body of the past. The past is dead and gone; but here is a beautiful and fascinating vase. Perhaps

though we should remember the sensuality present through its absence in the antiquary's desire to hold the past.

Putting the object in its context regains some knowledge, but what exactly is the object's context? And is it only to do with knowing the past?

Archaeological objects are collected for various reasons. As curiosities, as art. This of course was particularly the case with the nineteenth-century museums, and still is the case with many private collectors today. The art object may be taken to be iconic representation of some enduring human qualities such as beauty or sensibility, a cultural sign. Objects are also collected as being evidence; here again they are cultural signs. They are collected because they are believed to be meaningful in some way, of value.

In contemporary capitalism value is especially related to a notion of property. If something is valuable it can command a high price in the market, and this sort of value can be owned. The nature of the object's value, the means by which the antique vase achieves its sale price are irrelevant to the owning. An object may possess beauty, a collector may own a classical vase, a museum may own (in the name of a country or institution) a collection of artifacts. The common factor is possession. (The word 'property' can mean possessions, something of value, the right to possess and use something, a piece of land (intrinsically valuable), and also the qualities or attributes something possesses.) The public collections held in the great national museums are the material embodiment of culture. It can be said that nation states 'have' culture, found in its theatres, galleries and museums. Such culture may be cosmopolitan western high culture, or specific to the nation state. States compete to possess cultured individuals producing 'great' human works, and to have a distinctive national identity. This is the ambiguity of 'culture' as a noun denoting national traditional folkculture, or the achievements of cultural progress and civilization, intellectual and artistic works. So the collections held in museums are conceived as part of national culture and identity. And having a wealth of culture can be associated with identity being a sort of wealth. Identity also implies belonging to somewhere or some community.

Value (as related to ownership) may be based on various perceived qualities of the object. It may be aesthetic quality; and objects may have qualities which it is believed can lead to knowledge. This latter is of course archaeological value. For objects to be witnesses to the past they must have age and authenticity. Their age implies that they have been saved from decay while authenticity implies that their origin or context is known, we know where they belong. These qualities of age and authenticity are essential, it would seem, to the possibility of archaeological knowledge. If objects are not authentic they are either mistakes or fakes. Fakes are the *bêtes noires* of archaeology and the art market. Authenticity is also a concern of cultural identity. The ideal is the aboriginal, that which is indigenous, which has been there from the beginning.

So archaeological objects are collected into systems of value and meaning according to principles of authenticity and originality. All classifications of the object by date, provenance and type depend on these qualities. Dispelling the anxiety of placing confidence in the fraud or simulation, they order the world of objects, separating positive from negative, orthodox article from heretical fake. They are the basis for a secure archaeological past. But how secure are these qualities? Can they be so relied upon?

It has frequently been pointed out that personal as well as cultural identity is associated with acts of collecting. And not just material goods but also memories and

knowledges. Unpacking his library, Walter Benjamin writes of the similarities between collecting and memory. 'Every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector's passion borders on the chaos of memories' (1970a, p. 60). Here then is a constellation of collection, identity, memory, objects, value and knowledge. Memory is not like a journal, an objective record of life in the sequence it occurred. Memory is of the present and a disorder of select moments, impressions and subjective states.

9. I remember that on the original LP sleeve of 'My Fair Lady' a benign Bernard Shaw, esconced in heaven, dangled Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews on puppet strings. I also remember a fad for cashmere cardigans a la Professor Higgins.
10. I remember tasting Coca-Cola for the very first time. It was at Prestwick Airport (or 'Aerodrome', as it was then known) and was offered me by an American serviceman.
11. I remember Spinola, the Portugese 'Kerensky', with his monocle, his flamboyantly braided uniform and his resemblance to a decadent aristocrat in a Simenon novel.
12. I remember the craze for matching shirts and ties, usually of a flower pattern.
13. I remember that Sophia Loren served a two week prison sentence for tax evasion.

(Gilbert Adair, *Myths and Memories,* 1986, p. 158)

Or an *apparent* arbitrariness. These fragments are charged and encapsulating, crystallizing. Personal and cultural gems, or needle points; stigmata; states of contentment, dull visceral aches. And memory is not passive: it is an active act of remembering from the present, albeit one in which the present may play a role of precipitant rather than choosing at will. 'For what else is this collection', comments Benjamin, 'but a disorder to which habit has accommodated itself to such an extent that it can appear as order… "The only exact knowledge there is," said Anatole France, "is the knowledge of the date of publication and the format of books." And indeed, if there is a counterpart to the confusion of a library, it is the order of its catalogue' (1970a, p. 60). We do acquire our memories, as a collector may acquire collectibles, and order them from our different vantage points.

The collector focuses on the object, getting to know and cherishing the background, anything it suggests—period, method of production, previous owners, place and occasion of acquisition, history of the object in the collector's possession, the memories and associations it evokes for the collector. 'For a true collector the whole background of an item adds up to a magic encyclopaedia whose quintessence is the fate of his object' (Benjamin 1970a, p. 60). This magic encyclopaedia, a physiognomy of the object, is full of commentary, review, classification, association, evocation, and is never complete with a growing collection and the collector's ongoing life. It is the object's resistance to classification and order.

The physiognomy of the collected and personal object is a power to fixate. As with memories, this is a quality of uniqueness. Collectibles and memories do not just inform or educate. They return to haunt. Their disconcerting fascination is one of dis-ease and disruption. 'The true, greatly misunderstood passion of the collector is always anarchistic, destructive. For this is its dialectics: to combine with loyalty to an object, to individual items, to things sheltered in his care, a stubborn subversive protest against the typical, the classifiable' (Benjamin, quoted by Arendt 1970, p. 45). Collection and travel tap this interplay of order and fascination; tourism holds it out as promise.

Gilbert Adair lists his four hundred memories. There is an order to them. Not their numbering, but a coherence given to them by our recognition of things held in common with him, and the significance of the memories he notes. We all have such collections of memories which are vital components of personal and cultural identities.

Ornamental fountain before a Vanbrugh stately home; Sunday cricket on a village pitch; the smell of wild garlic in a bluebell wood; a drovers' track over a sheep moor; disused lime kilns; war memorials; oak trees; steam traction engines; a pint of cask ale; a moated castle; cuckoos in spring; a Norman parish church; fish and chips. These might be some of

Drawing by Ann Hartshorne

the things which would come under a heading of 'English Heritage'. These are bizarre juxtapositions, but loaded and directed towards particular ends by personal interests, commercial and political powers.

SURREALISM

> Wherever the living pursue particularly ambiguous activities, the inanimate may sometimes assume the reflection of their most secret motives: and thus our cities are peopled with unrecognized sphinxes which will never stop passing dreamers and ask them mortal questions unless they project their meditation, their absence of mind towards them. But if the wise have the power to guess their secret, and interrogate them, all that these faceless monsters will grant is that the dreamer shall once more again plumb their own depths.
>
> (Aragon, *Paris Peasant*)

Surrealism is an aesthetic strategy which directs fragments into unexpected juxtapositions and exotic collections. As a literary and artistic movement it made a plea for a revival of imagination as irruption of otherness from the unconscious, and championed irrationality, accident, magic, dreams and symbols. Its intelligibility, or rather accessibility (especially through the polished figurative techniques of Magritte and Dali), has enabled its takover by the advertising industry, from *Vogue* to corporate imaging. And in our (post)modern condition we all make sense with wildly eclectic cultural mixes, massive surreal image and memory banks in our heads.

But surrealism was also part of a distinctly modern sensibility of revolt. Fascinated with the profusion of cultural objects, surrealist art arranged incongruous meetings of everyday objects (Lautreamont's summation: beauty as the chance encounter on an operating table of sewing machine and umbrella), evoking childhood astonishment and mocking confidence in reality's external form. The forms of things mutate in the defamiliarized and permeable world of surrealist painting, while fetishistic objects, fur tea cups and mannequin sex dolls, disturb the repressed calm of bourgeois reproductive sexuality. Not all of this looks dated now in its professed revolutionary subversion. It may no longer shock, but it adds to a considerable tendency in capitalist modernity to question a reality with identity defined in terms of an exclusion of otherness.

Archaeology has its immediate surrealist elements: juxtapositions of fibula and quernstone, gold ring and ox scapula in sifting through the cultural rubbish tip; the strangeness of some of those things which mystify archaeologists and which they call 'ritual' objects. This may often be just a momentary feeling of the bizarre, it may not.

The archaeologist gathers objects, selecting those to be studied on the basis, ultimately, of age and authenticity, originality. But these are not intrinsic values, essential qualities. What would be an essential quality of 'authenticity'? Truth to self? The hope for such a quality involves abstract definitions of self (object self) and truth, on the basis of which the inessential may be excluded, it would seem. Alternatively the archaeologist prefers to guarantee authenticity through context—where the object comes from, the traces remaining of the objects 'present'. Though the traces are of our present, the

object's value depends on it being removed from the present. And to return to the question of value. Value may be exchange value, what something means to someone else, its value for an other. Or it may be use value, the object's relevance to some interest or purpose. This makes of the object a tool. Tools are fitted to particular purposes, are useless for others. In the same way choice may be exercised in selecting and gathering objects, in this case for archaeological purpose. Both these forms of value include acts of choice and selection on the part of agencies beyond the object itself. Value is about *desire*.

To think of age and authenticity as essential and intrinsic disguises the relation of exchange which exists between past and present. It is to forget that an object's value is decided in moving from past to present through the work of desire. Archaeologists *want* what they find. What is found is not naturally 'authentic; its 'original' context is not natural. (What is natural about the commingling of the cultural garbage heap, of the abandoned home? Only perhaps the decay and entropy; disruption and disorder.) There is no 'archaeological record' as such. What is found becomes authentic and valuable because it is set by choice in a new and separate environment with its own order and its own temporality—the time coordinates of the discipline archaeology which give the object its date. This is a moral setting.

The systems of value according to which archaeologists gather and order their 'finds' are not natural then, but tactical and strategic. This is *not* to say arbitrary. I am not saying that the archaeologist's choice is arbitrary, though if I were a surrealist I might well say that the archaeologist's choice was as meaningful as the irruptions of irrationality and the unconscious represented by the surreal object. Archaeologists gather with particular meanings in mind. And we may wish to think of the purpose and interests lying in the archaeological order and use of the past. To this I shall return.[24]

HERITAGE AND SYMBOLIC EXCHANGE

The fragmentary experiences and impressions of Heritage, such as those I have listed, seem to speak of a (post)modern condition, especially of the 1980s and beyond.

Those visits I made to the castles in Northumberland some twenty years ago, collecting the guide books which explained the castle's history, its lords and lieutenants, locating the place in a rational account of local and national history, consistent and as complete as could be. Technical and official history, didactic, explained by learned authority. I never read them. Yes, they were about the part of the castles in history and may have described life within; the guide books were deeply concerned with the meaning of the monuments. But not to me. Too distant. Now the heritage site of the 1990s may not fit into a coherent and chronological account. Sites are interpreted for me, much more now, but in spite of the didactic reliance on words (all the interpretive signs for me to digest scattered around the site), the experience of heritage is about encounter and images. Not the objects and sites themselves so much as what they say of *us,* of national or local identity, what they symbolize and evoke. These are not primarily cognitive experiences where facts and knowledge about the past are acquired from the official learned guide book. They are affective. And like the disorder of memory, heritage is piecemeal. In Britain heritage places considerable emphasis on this relationship with

memory, relating sites and objects with images, sounds, impressions of a sort of cultural collective memory. Things we think we may hear from our grandparents.

Amgueddfa Werin Cymru, the Welsh National Folk Museum, at Saint Fagan's, Cardiff, is a setting for reconstructed cottages, farmhouses, rural industrial buildings, chapel, schoolhouse. The familiar interpreting 'inhabitants' explain things; the guide book gives a little information. But wandering around the sites is about fragmented evocation of premodern, pre-industrialized times. Spare puritan methodism, dark smoky interiors, rural labour. Schoolchildren visit, dress up, sit in old school benches and listen to teacher forbid them to speak in Welsh. Complaint may justifiably be made that this is a very particular authentic Welshness which is being presented. What of the major nineteenth- and twentieth-century experiences of the South Wales valleys—coal-mining and steel production? The major complaint against heritage in general is that it involves a distortion of the 'real' past. Sometimes that it is incoherent and more to do with spectacle and entertainment than the 'real' past (Hewison 1987). A typical response of archaeologist or historian may be to produce an ideology critique revealing the distortions engendered by the heritage display, oppose it with the 'better' (more real or authentic) accounts produced by those more in line with the disciplines of

Warkworth Castle, Northumberland, August 1989

archaeology and history. I have taken this line myself (see for example Shanks and Tilley 1987a, Chapter 4). It seems a natural impulse to defend the rational values which constitute part of one's identity as an archaeologist. But such ideology critique makes little difference to the many people who visit, and only perhaps to some future heritage managers. I think such responses to heritage miss a vital point.

Heritage's choice of things is made according to criteria which are very different to those of archaeology. Heritage is not about the attractive *presentation* of a past as it is

understood by archaeology. The power of heritage is that it is about signification—things meaning *for* what we are now. Life in the North East of England in its Victorian 'Geordie' heyday at the European Museum of the Year, Beamish, County Durham. Pioneer colonial spirit and culture at historic Deerfield, Massachusetts. Heritage is symbolic exchange; it is a sacrifice of the past for the present. This does not mean that the past is necessarily of no importance. In fact the opposite is true of sacrifice. It is vital that the victim is correct for its purpose. It must be scrutinized thoroughly to achieve the power of sacrifice which is communion with an other. Heritage's symbolic exchange is about sacrifice and consumption rather than accumulation and hoarding. In this logic the meaning of the past does not lie in the dusty cellars of a museum. The meaning is what the past can do for the present. Consumption does not necessarily mean the past is served up for consumer society suitably trimmed and cooked. Consumption means that it is taken in within the self. I believe that this symbolic exchange is the vital energy of heritage. Above all it is accessible to people other than those acquainted with the academic value system of archaeology.

The symbolic exchange of heritage is not primarily about the past at all; it includes so much more, as any listing of its elements shows. Heritage is about this surplus over and beyond the past. But it does make claims about the past, about what it was like. This is to be criticized if it is a presentation of another 'authentic' past, root of an authentic cultural identity. But according to my argument, this criticism is not to be made from the vantage point of a more authentic archaeological or historical past. It is better to criticize on the grounds that an authentic past is really a past within a particular moral and evaluative setting, a past with a purpose which we might not wish to support. Heritage quotes the past; this is to be criticized if it is in favour of a consumerist order designed to console and keep people happy, if it is to sell another hollow experience for the benefit of a commercial concern. The vital potential energy of symbolic exchange is one of disruption, just as the collector's object is resistant to classification. The quotation of a genuine past explodes petty moral orderings. The sacrifice of a genuine past points us to the boundaries of our moral and social order, to the other beyond.

THE GENUINE ARTICLE

Can archaeology not learn from the collector and from heritage? Does the increasing commercialization of archaeology and the expansion of consumer leisure industry not demand that archaeology looks beyond its academic comforts, understands what is happening to the object past? Producing the defined orders of a past through its material traces is valid and essential but only as the counterpart of another knowledge. Following the interplay of past and present, order and disorder, where the accumulation and preservation of a separate authentic past is disrupted by the quotation of the past in the present. Following the fate of the object, its decay and emergence in the life of the present. Following not authenticity but the material content of the past, the directions the look of the past points, anywhere, anything. Writing those magic encyclopaedias of Walter Benjamin. Heritages of dreamings and desires, longing and belonging.

The past is dead and decayed, but it has suffered a sea-change. We can dive for those pearls and coral, bring them up to the surface. We can accept change and loss, the decay, because the sea-change may be crystallization, past and present reflected within.[25]

What is a genuine object? As we commonly use the word, genuine means not pretending, frank and sincere, original. But it holds a deep cultural meaning. Genuine ultimately comes from the Latin *gignere,* the Greek *gignomai,* the Sanskrit *gán, gánami*—beget, give birth, come into being, become, produce, cause.

NON-IDENTITY

What is this bicycle of mine?

The word bicycle already seems to speak of what it is not: heavy, black, neglected, basic; not up with high-tech 1990s sixteen-valve fuel-injected turbo-charged twin-cam automobile.

A means of transport; yes, I use it to get around.
Crowds of Chinese.
Tubing: fine, rigid but springy.
Materials science.
Component brakes, gearing, bearings.
Italian style, or the infuriating practice of
Japanese technologists to modify every few months.
Geometry and mechanics;
the subtleties and feel of changing an angle by just
a degree.
Joe Waugh who built the frame;
workshop factory down by the shipyards.
Efficiency;
taking a bend at speed, but speed of a human scale.
Naked, open;
it shows all without embarrassment.
Nervous, tense, tight; not rigid,
but a lithe sensuality.
Balancing weight.
Narrow alloy rims.
In touch;
I feel the ground.
Cadence and flow;
blood flow.
Flies sticking to me on a hot afternoon;
empty water bottles.
The muscles in the back of my neck on a climb,
shifting position.
Wide landscapes; or pressed by grimy traffic;
they don't see you.
Bike-shop enthusiasts;

electric-blue lycra shorts.
Histories of bike styles;
their evolution.
'Push-bikes' and working-class culture.
(Doesn't design include all of this?)

I have written of a subversion of identity and of origin, meaning deferred, of differing and becoming other, rather than being something. But the past seems a vital field of cultural and personal meanings and identities. How are these two dimensions to be reconciled? I shall try to clarify.

A common view of archaeological finds is that they are brought into order by processes and forces which are beyond them. This can be part of an instrumental view of the object world, that it is open to manipulation and control by human reason and action, and this is its meaning. So archaeological finds may be considered as the product of social behaviour. Archaeologists interested in an economic analysis may conceive the natural world of the past as material resources to be exploited, controlled and exchanged. This has been a major focus of social archaeology: formulating social logics of exchange networks and consumption of luxury 'prestige' goods controlled by elites. Such social networks or prestige goods economies can be held to explain the exploitation of distant materials and their distribution often far from their source, or elaborate items found far from their place of manufacture. Objects may also be treated as signs of social interaction, their similarities, differences and distribution reflecting contact between separate communities. Objects may be considered simply as by-products, secondary to the primary goings-on of society. This may make it very difficult to get to the primary essence or structure of society. Objects may simply be 'rubbish', and the most secure thing archaeologists can do is concentrate on the things themselves, as art or technology.

The archaeological object may also be treated as a sort of relay, the pot taking the archaeologist to the mind of the potter; images and the symbolic logic of objects taking the archaeologist to the social reality represented therein; objects as sources leading the archaeologist to knowledge.

This treatment of the object world as secondary to people and what they do or want to do may even be connected with contemporary society's attitude towards the natural world—that it is raw material for development and exploitation, the stuff of progress. (On a recent visit to the United States I asked archaeologists and anthropologists their opinion of the Native American claim to have a say in the fate of the material remains of their ancestors. A phrase cropped up a couple of times: 'My God, they're taking away our data base!' Walter Echo-Hawk, Native American: 'We want to be treated like people, not dinosaurs or snails.')

'Raw material': the term suggests that particular uses are being subsumed under a more general idea. In archaeology particular objects are brought under more general concepts. The particular pot becomes an expression of a style, of a social group, or of a strategy of an elite group designed to bolster their position by hanging on to the supply of luxury goods. Objects are suspended in a relation between particularity and the general. But usually with a distinct separation of the two: the object is representative of its type, style, group. This is what classification is all about, and it is a vital part of archaeology.

To write of non-identity involves taking another look at this relation, but more from the point of view of the particular object itself.

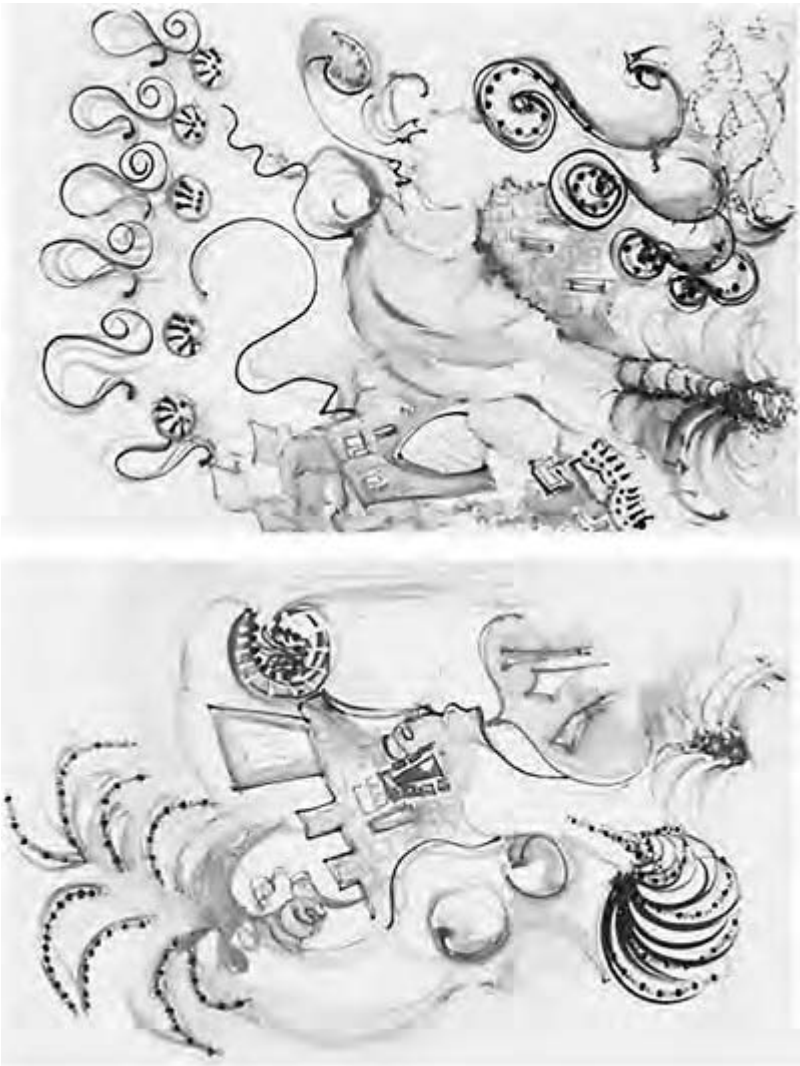
A beginning is to deny that history or the past or society actually have material existence. Society may be taken to explain why something is the way it is, but this does not mean that society is somewhere to be found. And the past is not an untold story. To think so is a paradox of unknown knowledge and involves a project of finding and revealing this story-for-all-time; this is a theology. A denial that society or the past can be found seems unexceptional. Most field archaeologists, I think, would willingly accept that they recover data and not a past society. And the denial does not threaten the past. The past (or society) may determine what objects are, but only by virtue of what archaeologists (and others) are doing in the present. And others: archaeologists have no natural right to discovery, appropriation and work on the material past. As the usurpation of heritage has shown.

Non-identity means accepting a dynamic to objects; they are now *and* then. They do not necessarily belong in museums which would involve their assignation simply to the past, to the categories of art or material culture. The Zuni of New Mexico have objected to the display of their war god figures—Ahauuta—in museums and have reclaimed them as stolen traditional property of the Zuni nation. The significance of the dynamic object is not that it is a case of the general but that it is contingent, particular. Not an example of a wider and perhaps universal timeless category such as society, social structure, nature, the past, art, mind; but transitory. The object found is not a 'pot' or 'ceramic', an absolute identification. It is of a moment. It is not identical to itself because of the dynamic it has suffered, what has happened to it, its relationship with its maker, those who used it, its society; and later, the archaeologist and their context. The significance of the object is that it is elusive, its particularity defying the very categories (style, social class …) it expresses. It cannot be decided how to finally classify the pot I have found; it is undecidable. There is always an excess which overflows the categories. The need to select out those attributes of an object relevant to a particular question or project has long been recognized in archaeology. It is part of the notion of problem orientation. Objects are selected in excavations and from museums according to their relevance to a problem; others discarded. Not everything can be recovered in excavation. No explanation is ever complete. But the excess is more. Every new insight about an object literally changes what that object is, its identity, and thus our attitudes and actions towards it. That piece of pot cannot be held still as substance with attributes; we always understand it already as something else. In this dynamic the ordering of archaeological things is checked and subverted by a sensuous receptivity to the particularities of the object. What I found is always different to the identity given to it. It could be said that the object possesses heterogeneity. This is non-identity.

Sensuous receptivity makes me think of something that Ian Hodder has written. Those specialists who study plant remains from the past—palaeoethnobotanists—tend to classify according to contemporary scientific species lists. But it could be equally possible to consider plants according to their qualities of scent, stickiness, leaves, period of flowering (1986, p. 133).

In this incongruence between word and world archaeological description always *fails*. It can never really be said what something is; undecidable meaning is unsayable. We only

ever say what something is not. Meaning involves us in moving off into paraphrase, circumlocution,



metaphor. Irony seems ever necessary. The question arises of how to represent such non identity. I shall consider this in Part 4.

DEATH AND NECROMANCY

In the excavation the raw existence of the past is impenetrable. The sands and rubbles are merely what they are. Absurdity, not fitting with reason. They are beyond, transcendent. And with the loss of tradition (and the death of God) there are no answers to this element of beyond. It is the nausea of the physical existence of the self confronted with what it will become. Morbidity and decay.

The particularity of what I find is fascinating, unsayable, uncanny. It is dis-covery, uncovering what was hidden, showing our homely and familiar categories and understanding to be insufficient. It also declares a gap between what I find and what is said of it. The uncanny is a confrontation with absence; the pot is not what it is. Here is a hidden lack of being. It is death. The sands and rubbles are merely what they are and absolute signification or meaning never arrives. The only absolute signifier is death.

Archaeology excavates a hollow. There is an emptiness. The raw existence of the past is not enough, insufficient in itself. Waiting for an epiphany is in vain. What is needed is our desire to fill the hollow, raise the dead. This is archaeology's necromancy.

Fringe archaeologies can be read in this context. Leyliners, dowsers, New Age mystics explicitly or implicitly pose the question of the identity of the past, recognizing some element of transcendence, the unsayable, the spiritual. They assert the necessity of a human involvement in perceiving the past. Scientific rationality is conceived as partial at best, harmful and destructive at worst.

The notion of non-identity I would relate to the criticism of archae-ology's apparent reliance on ideas of objectivity and a method for gaining knowledge of an objective past analogous with science. I have already mentioned how some see such criticism as leading to difficulties in preferring one account of the past to another: what sure ground is there if there is no objective reality or absolute identity? Colin Renfrew, a significant figure in the discipline and articulate proponent of what I have termed a critically rationalist archaeology, has asked if there is any difference between fringe archaeologies and those which question the sovereignty of science (1989, pp. 37–8).

I do not think that fringe archaeologists should be dismissed out of hand as cranks, weirdos and hippies. I have tried to show that the impulse to think and mine the subjective and affective, holistic and meaningful aspects of the past is a reasonable one. What is perhaps more unreasonable is a social science which is not very able to deal with these aspects of the past, creating a gap filled by popular, media and fringe archaeologies. No, the problem with fringe archaeologies, with their mysterious powers in the past, spacemen and catastrophes, is the overwhelming tendency to mysticism and irrationalism. Intuition, inspiration, extra-sensory perception, initiated wisdoms, mystic energies are fertile ground for nonsense. They can certainly lead to a past-as-wished-for rather than a past as it is. And is science as rationalist as it might wish, according to its own standards? Since Thomas Kuhn there have been many, notably Paul Feyerabend and Richard Rorty, who have pointed to features of the social organization and development of science which are little to do with method and objective reality and more to do with power and consensus (Kuhn 1970; Feyerabend 1975; Rorty 1980). And these are only at the end of a long tradition of such thought. Nor does science have a monopoly on

rationality and reason. I am trying to show how there are reasonable ways of extending science's partial view to include reflection on the vital human dimension of the past.

CULTURE AND IDENTITY

What is it to belong? (After the critique of authenticity and identity the question is not 'what is it to be?') Our cultural identities are not something inherent in us or essential. Archaeological things and collections are so often taken as components of national and ethnic heritages and identities. Monuments and artifacts are brought together in narratives, experiences, evocations of histories and myths which help provide a meaningful shape to the experience of a social group. Of course archaeological monuments and artifacts are only one raw material in the construction of cultural identity. It is also misleading to write of 'raw materials'. They are always encoded already, these forms of everyday life and experience, things signifying within which analogies and correspondences can be formed.

Identities are strategic constructions, by which is meant not that they are necessarily conscious projects, but that they are constructed in relation to others. Heritage and nationalist identities may implicitly deny the active component in their images of community and belonging which they articulate. Central ideas here are those of natural unity, of tradition and continuity, a depth to the belonging, anchors in locality and history, perhaps language. Greek men still sit round on the sidewalks in discussion, as in the great days of Socrates. Places, landscapes and communities are fixed like fetishes. This is making an aesthetics of politics: overlaying negotiation, relationship, mediation, transaction, the active constitution of social forms with the emotive power of the components of identity and heritage—myths of blood and soil, race, fatherland, destiny. The focus is on the experience of owning culture and belonging. It is also ideological, presenting what is fabricated as natural, perhaps establishing an emotive and sentimental unity in place of reflection on social division.

Punk in the 1970s: anything as long as it was out of place, ruptured from accepted (and suffered) commonsense. Hair dyed conspicuously; make-up obvious marking out the face; kitsch, lurid, torn, uselessly zipped, graffitied school shirts, T-shirts; fly-boy drainpipes; rubber mini skirts; sex-fetish leather, fishnet, stilettos; bondage chains and belts. Was it Sid Vicious who never cleaned his teeth? It may have defined itself simply as rupture and revolt against the accepted, but Punk tore a space for its sub-culture of bizarre combinations of what were often mundane items. Spectacular and animated display of defining oneself not so much in negotiation as confrontation with others (Hebdige 1979).

In 1976 the Wampanoag of Mashpee, Cape Cod, filed a law suit reclaiming 16,000 acres for their tribe. Other land claims were being filed by Native American groups in the late 1960s and in the 1970s. When it came to court in 1977 the issue was more about whether the Indians of Mashpee were a tribe. James Clifford gives his anthropologist's account of the proceedings in his book *The Predicament of Culture* (1988, Chapter 12).

There had been what was known as Indian Town on Cape Cod for some three centuries, but the Massachusett language had disappeared from use around 1800 and there seemed little evidence of institutions of Indian tribal government. The town was

Presbyterian and Baptist and intermarriage meant that none of the plaintiffs looked distinctively 'Indian'. They were also very much incorporated in Massachusetts social and business life. The defence brought in an expert historian witness who presented the documentary record of Mashpee's history. The case was that there never had been a Mashpee tribe, that the Indian community was formed in the colonial encounter. In conventional terms of authenticity based on continuity of formal tribal structures and ancestry, the case was against the Mashpee Indians. In their turn they talked of their experiences as Native Americans: attending pow-wows (summer gatherings), peace-pipe ceremonies, learning and teaching crafts and traditions. Medicine man John Peters, Slow Turtle, talked of his training, though there were no formal ceremonies or rites of passage. He and Chief Flying Eagle were said to be much respected. For the plaintiffs expert witness anthropologists presented a flexible concept of tribe, stated that the Mashpee were a distinct cultural group, indeed a tribe. They were a group of people knowing who and where they were.

The verdict went against the Mashpee Indians.

Clifford challenges the organic metaphor at the heart of the conventional understanding of culture: wholeness, continuity, growth, roots, stable and local existence. This metaphor does not account for actual historical and cultural practices of compromise, subversion; it masks invention and revival, and being both Indian and American. And in cultural contact it need not be a case of absorption *or* resistance. All the 'critical' elements of identity—language, blood, leadership, religion—are replaceable. Clifford was convinced that organized Indian life had been going on in Mashpee for the past three hundred years, that a revival and reinvention of tribal identity was underway.

Archaeological sites and finds play a vital role in the construction of cultural identity. Visible in the landscape, subject of visits, viewed, felt, contemplated, whatever. They may be brought into narratives and myths. The role of academic archaeology is a restricted one at the moment. It does help recover the archaeological past and its theories and explanations may be cited and used in interpretations. But a distinction is made between sources and resources. The archaeologist is primarily recovering and dealing with the past as a source; further interpretation may use the source as resource, for popular writing, literature, journalism, creative arts; but this is separate. Liberties may be taken and archaeologists may wish to comment, perhaps, as I have said, on distortions and mistakes; but that is the limit of their role as archaeologist.

I have been arguing that the separation of source and resource is not a good one. It depends on notions of past as origin (the real context of the archaeological object), discovered by archaeologists and passed on for preservation, display, whatever. Instead I say that the past is dynamically formed; archaeological finds are resources from the outset, tools for constructing the past. And present. To return to the question of identity: to belong is not about ownership and being. The past cannot be owned, only taken. To belong is about use and becoming. Places and things from the past are resources for invention. The directions this can take depend on our purposes, interests, experiences, skills, and may have more or less to do with cultural identity. But I argue against one particular invention being somehow authentic in the sense of primary and original. The inventions may be torn and vulgar, of confrontation and dispute—punk archaeology. They may be about a nation state asserting its political identity in a region. But, and this

is crucial, responsibility is owed to the past. To ignore what the past is and use it to justify any desired invention is an injustice against the past and an offence against reason.

Of Stonehenge Peter Fowler has written (1990, p. 128) that rights of access to the monument itself (closed off to the many tens of thousands of visitors) contain an obligation to contribute as well as consume. Most consuming interests are erosive, introverted, self-gratifying; and the monument is suffering. I read this as an obligation to construct and invent. Invention is a process which includes dimensions of creativity and reason; it can also be inept and unreasonable. So I would hold on to the notion of authenticity. In respect of the past it means being true to the genuine object, following its interplay of order and disruption, its fate, its physiognomy. Authentic identity: not ownership, but exchange (the symbolic exchange I have described), and also dialogue, conversation and dispute, and hospitality. How are people to know that their reception of the past is a hospitable one, that they are fulfilling their responsibility to the past? Is this not the role of the archaeologist? The object past will be used whether academic archaeologists are bothered or not. They might want to focus on their traditional concerns with gaining knowledge of the past. But might not this also include producing those magic encyclopaedias to which others might look in *their* cultural invention?

Of course this already happens. I worked for some years investigating the remains of a medieval friary in Newcastle upon Tyne. Much of it had remained in some sort of use after Henry VIII dissolved the Church. The city wanted to do something with the place. Archaeologists were consulted (in excavating the site). The refectory was sensitively restored (windows reinvested, fourteenth-century flooring and layout adapted) to be used as a café-restaurant. And it contains pleasing evocations of monastic dining. This is a straightforward example and it owed much, I think, to the architects as well as the archaeologists and planners. But it illustrates an archaeological component in planning and development. The object past is all around. Archaeologists can do much to make more of this presence and of their role in community futures.

Archaeology is a cultural activity. With James Clifford and others it is right to question notions of organic, wholesome and unified cultures, to uproot them and think instead of syncretic strategies—practices which combine diversity and cultural fragments. But this is not to privilege fragmentation and dispersal; order is reasserted in the diversity. And I would like to hold on to the organic metaphor sedimented in the word culture. Culture as a process: tending to or a tending of. Horticulture: fostering, tending to growth in a creative and perhaps aesthetic whole—the garden. But containing also an essential diversity. Archaeological gardeners.

WALLINGTON HALL

Wallington is a country house in Northumberland, England. Like Belsay to the south and other local halls, it began as a stronghold tower up in the moorland middle marches of the border county. Now the only remains of the medieval tower are in the cellars. With its Tudor house it was demolished in the eighteenth century to make way for the present mansion, overflowing with rich rococo plasterwork, set in parkland. Built with the coal fortunes of the Blacketts, it was the family home of the Trevelyans, a family with political and intellectual aspirations.

House and gardens are open to the public now; the family no longer live there. As with many such halls, a visit to Wallington is an experience of a domestic interior, a house, an ancestral and private interior; and in this the experience is familiar to most visitors, especially in those smaller rooms where there is an element of undesigned and 'homely' clutter or personal accoutrement. There is an aspect of voyeurism, of being allowed a glimpse of the private life of the wealthy upper classes of days gone by. This domestic is unfamiliar too. The larger scale of some rooms designed for more public use is hardly domestic. The wealth and opulence are perhaps unfamiliar, but more distinct is the labour and craft invoked in the appearance of much of the interior, from woodwork finish, cabinet fittings to paint and plasterwork (elaborate and Italian at Wallington). Wealthy items are more familiar, I think, than living with such labour visible in the hand-finished interior fittings. The interior evokes the craftsman, its size the servants, portraits the family ancestry: a differentiated and wholesome community (to produce such a domestic interior).

There is a strong sense not just of a wealthy family, but one of distinct and diverse abilities, characters, and of social and intellectual connection. Here are the desks at which Macaulay wrote his *History of England,* George Otto Trevelyan his history *The American Revolution*. The well-known English social historian George Macaulay Trevelyan was also of the family. Several were members of government. Pauline, Lady Trevelyan, knew and supported the Pre-Raphaelite art movement. All sorts of culture crowds stayed at Wallington in the nineteenth and early part of this century. This hall was a heart not just of the private and incidentally intimate, but also of the great and significant. The central courtyard was roofed over in the 1850s at Ruskin's suggestion and decorated in Pre-Raphaelite style by William Bell Scott (with a little help from Lady Pauline, Ruskin and Arthur Hughes). Panels show figures and scenes from the history of Northumberland. With its great figures, actions and deeds this decoration marries well with the sense of the family being at the heart of things. This is their history of their Northumberland, it might seem.

Wallington, Northumberland

Romans, medieval knights and later industrialists are interspersed with floral decoration and foliage. There are stuffed birds, books on natural history, a picture of poodles from which a Blackett bred the local Bedlington terriers. And Wallington is the centre of a designed rural landscape. Ceremonial arches, grand stone arches span the little river Wansbeck in a bridge by Paine; woodland park grounds (Capability Brown, born in nearby Cambo it is said, may have played a part in their design). A pillared sundial stands on the terrace overlooking parkland which runs right up to classical pediment front of the house. Upon the sundial an inscription reads *Horas non numero nisi serenas,* I count not the hours unless they are peaceful. Hardly the time of colliery or factory shift. Items of classical connection abound—stone urns in the grounds, to aspects of architecture and interior decoration, to the complete library of pristine leather-bound classical texts in elegant glass cabinet.

Maps on the wall show the Wallington estate. The English aristocracy have been country-based for centuries, farming and estate management their central concerns. The land designed for profit and recreation.

> Agriculture stood to land as did cooking to raw meat. It converted nature into culture. Uncultivated land meant uncultivated men; and, when seventeenth-century Englishmen moved to Massachusetts, part of their case for occupying Indian territory would be that those who did not themselves subdue and cultivate the land had no right to prevent others from doing so.
>
> (K.Thomas 1983, p. 15)

Natural and academic history. Nature loved and exploited. On the way to the walled garden the visitor enters the East Wood and passes by larches given by the Duke of Atholl in 1738, a megalith known as Poind's Man and moved there from Shaftoe Crags in

about 1830, the classical Portico House, a pond of carp and tench. By the walled garden is a conservatory built in 1908 by George Otto Trevelyan for his collection of fuschias, geraniums, bougainvillaea, heliotrope and exotic climbing plants.

Wallington is a story of a cultured class perfectly at home in their world. It is also an allegory. Of public and private, classical cultivation of nature, the agency and place of the individual. Wallington is the hearth and home of the country, consolations of the private and of a differentiated community, sensual experiences of art, craft, ancestry and history, parkland and the natural weathering of stone and brick. These contrast with the urban, industrial and institutional, the uniform and classless welfare state, municipal grey and egalitarian modernity. Stately home and council house.

This allegory of city and country (and its variants) is written deep within contemporary consciousness of course (Williams 1973), and is frequently referenced in heritage, cultural politics (municipal authority versus entrepreneurial individualism for example), and in cultural style (country house decor, high-tech urbanity, classical and modern). Ultimately this division and opposition of city and country, state and private individual, is part of that conception of culture and labour which I have been describing as riven by dichotomy. It is the split between reasoned action and contemplative, feeling leisure. It is the split which takes the beauty and history of Wallington from me.

The conservatory, Wallington. Michael Shanks (senior), with Carl Otto Trevelyan as god Apollo

EXPERIENCE AND THE PAST

The encounter with the artifacts and monuments of the past occurs within experience; we visit places and museums, conduct archaeological excavations and surveys. I shall now consider the connection between our knowing the past and our personal being in society through the notion of experience.

KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST

To do archaeology implies interest. As commonly used, the word 'interest' has two shades: a sense of curiosity, an impulse towards something which is of concern; and something in which we are concerned. I have already written much about the desires which take us to archaeology and the material past, the fascination the past can exert. I have argued that the object past exists not so much in itself but in a state of being *for* some purpose; the past which concerns us is always relevant to a project within which it is actively constructed. Selection and collection of object pasts also imply interests beyond the things themselves. Projects and interests are about power: the ability to collect, the power to carry out particular projects. That these aspects of interest involve choice also means power is involved.

What are these archaeological projects?

Jurgen Habermas has presented a theory of cognitive interests, particularly in his book *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1972). For him, interests come between life and knowledge and arise from particular dimensions of social organization and social practices. They form the conditions within which experience is possible and meaningful; they form the domain of objects which is relevant to our experience.

Rational labour which is dedicated to a purpose is associated with an interest in technical control and uses empirical and analytic inquiry. Communication and interaction with others involves an interest in understanding and interpreting the interaction, and uses historical and hermeneutic inquiry. Finally self-reflection involves an interest in freeing oneself from domination and systematically distorted ideas and communication; this involves critique and the analysis of power and ideology. According to Habermas then, there are three types of scientific inquiries, each associated with a particular type of experience and each constituted by a corresponding interest.

Labour is the experience associated with the development of science and technology. Its purpose is technical control and manipulation of a world of objects. It is rational in that the total environment is treated as object, systematically observed in controlled experiment, and described in a monologue of abstract language which is different from what is used in day-to-day experience. General propositions are formulated according to which predictions are made. This is empirical and analytical inquiry. But because an interest in technical control links science to 'labour' which is a particular and restricted human interest, it cannot be exhaustive. It cannot do justice to other forms of experience.

One of these is communication and interaction with others which depends on signs and signification. Here objectivity refers not to a world of object things but to people who are trying to communicate. The interest is in understanding the dialogue, finding intelligibility and removing confusion. Understanding proceeds in the manner of historical inquiry and hermeneutics which I have already described as involving a process of anticipating what is being said or communicated and then checking it out. However, communication, language and signs are also the scene for dominating others, the use of social force, and for ideology. Power interests may distort our communication.

This is the subject of the critical social sciences. Their analysis of power and ideology is related to the experience of self-reflection and involves an interest in emancipation. A model of such activity and inquiry is held by Habermas to be psychoanalysis which aims in psychotherapy to free the subject from symbolic distortions underlying things done.

Archaeology can be seen now to incorporate these three orientations. Archaeology practised within the sovereignty of science; approaches which treat archaeological finds as the meaningful product of social interaction; and archaeology which emphasizes ideology critique and an interest in removing distorted views of the past (Preucel, forthcoming).

It is important to realize that this typology of interests, experiences and sciences need not be a rigid one. They seem very intellectually orientated too. The relevance of other experience and orientations seems vital to me, in particular an affective and communicative relationship with nature and the emotional dimension of human relationships. The separation of work and interaction may be important in challenging the importation of technical reasoning into social issues, but labour does not necessarily involve a total subjugation of the object world. Craft skills are about creative response to materials as well as control and manipulation. And more generally an aesthetic response to the object world can, I think, be brought within reason. This is an experience of nature and objects not under an interest of control. Nature itself transcends people's attempts at control, as contemporary environmental issues and problems dramatically show; there are limits to exploitation when nature clearly responds. Communicative action and interaction are also about self-understanding and may be critical. Dialogue and communication are not just about consensus; they may also be about emancipation which involves an understanding of interaction and the organization of society.

The vital thrust of what Habermas has written is that science is not dis-interested, and that practical issues (of the organization, purpose and practice of archaeology for example) cannot be reduced to technical problems with which science concerns itself. This is not a new recognition; it goes back at least to Aristotle, who argued that social life and politics are about the good and just life, that these are not technical matters but questions of practical knowledge *(phronesis)* and of guides to action, educational projects of the cultivation of character. In archaeology a scientific approach is part of a particular experience of the things we find and involves technical problems. More importantly here is another argument that reason can be applied to other experiences and interests which are of at least equal worth. These relate to the human meaning and political significance of the past. For me, this work of Habermas again raises the question of the nature of our *reasoned* response to the object past and prompts a multi-dimensional and critical labour of archaeology. With the demotion of practices which treat the things we find as 'objects'

and raw material, here is a prospect of a 'green' archaeology of sensuous receptivity to the past.

EXPERIENCE AND (POST)MODERNITY

Habermas gives one classification of interests and attendant experiences. These are rooted in ideas of what it is to be human: survival, relationships and self-reflection. I have already referred to John Dewey's distinction between the 'holy' experience of what is taken to endure, and the 'lucky' experience of day-to-day work. Perhaps more directly relevant are reflections on our historical experience of (post)modernity.

Modernity arrived with urban industrial labour and mechanization. Prospects of progress, growth, emancipation from toil and prospect of political revolution combined with disintegration of old answers, the death of God, dissolution of traditional social bonds and their consolations, uncertainties of self, loss of location, time driving all before it. The experience of modernity is still with us, augmented now by a new descendant: 'postmodernity is modernity without the hopes and dreams which made modernity bearable' (Hebdige 1988, p. 195). This experience is of image overload, TV and media advertising, disintegrated consumer instants, information excess, referencing the past as consolation of nostalgia, doubt, surfaces—no depth, the implosion of meaning, an association of the banal with the apocalyptic (TV game show and global catastrophe), cynicism and the end of utopia, no more 'meta-narratives'—those grand narratives and systems such as the progress of civilization or the triumph of reason, Marxism or positivism, which provide overarching significances.[26]

Such experience is related to a shift in the organization of the capitalist nation states of western Europe and the United States. David Harvey (1989) describes it as a transition from *Fordism* (corporate power, mass production and consumption) to *Flexible Accumulation* (flexible with respect to labour, production and patterns of consumption). The following listing captures the main aspects of this shift:

Extractive and manufacturing industries	Organizational and service sectors
Articulation of state and monopoly capitalist industries	Independent multinational monopolies
	Challenges to centralized state bureaucracy
Regional concentrations of labour force	Dispersed and diversified labour
Specialized work	Flexible worker
Protestant work ethic	Temporary contract
State power	Financial power
Interest group politics	Charismatic popularist politics
National collective bargaining	Attacks on union power
Class politics	Social movements and politics of issues
State welfare	Neo-conservatism
	Privatisation of collective needs

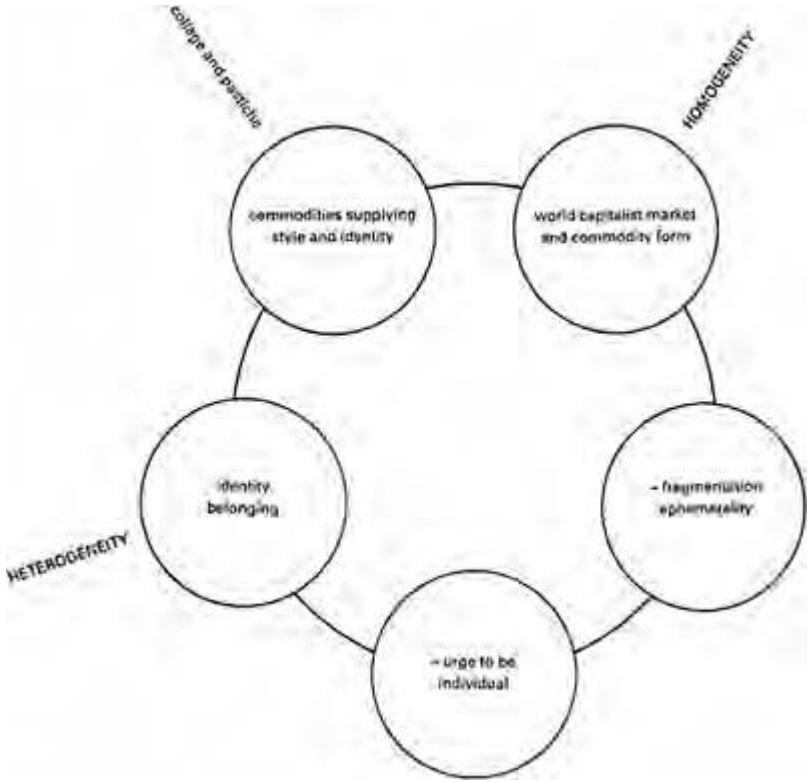
Metropolis—industrial cities dominating regions	Counter-urbanization, suburbia and refashioning of inner cities
Mass consumption of consumer durables	Individualized consumption of style packages
Technical-scientific problem solving and progress	Cultural fragmentation and pluralism

(from Harvey 1989)

The experience of (post)modernity is of process and change, dislocation, as traditional coherence and meaning are supplanted by the logic of the market which says anything can be bought; everything becomes the same with the common denominator of money. But this homogeneity depends on fragmentation, on pulverizing the world into bits to be purchased and owned, on shattering time into units of labour time, into ephemeral instants of 'experience'. Anything can be bought, and everything changes. Fashion and cultural styles feed on novelty and incite the urge to be individual. The decline of traditional community makes us look for identity and belonging. And new commodities and style packages are produced to answer the impulse: buy your identity and belonging, pay for the authentic experience of belonging, of nostalgic reminder of past belonging (that never was). This furthers the commodification of the world.

This is the cultural counterpart to the entrepreneur's search for competitive advantage in a global market; capital is mobile, but different places lure according to their particular characteristics or identities.

Archaeology and heritage are tied into the cycle. Both can supply images and meanings which may be used as commodities to feed this nexus of capital and commercial interest. But archaeology and heritage need not be part of consumer culture, of course, and I have argued the grounds on which authentic use of the material past (in constructing cultural identities) may be distinguished. Real differences, identities, and genuine pasts *can* be ascertained on the basis of criteria which are not part of economic growth and capital accumulation. Fragmented postmodern experience is not total, having supplanted all others. It may be the 'rush' of experience of New York city executive yuppy living a 25-hour day, eating in sushi bar, listening to portable compact disc player, dressed in silk Hong Kong suit and Italian shoes and planning the next stock market deal or ski trip. It may indeed be the experience of French intellectuals who seem to revel in discussions of the postmodern. But the atomized experience of abstract information and moments of cultural spectacle are necessarily countered by those experiences around which life organizes itself—growing up in the social world, partnership, home, birth and death. I argue that there are experiences which are peculiarly one's own. There is heterogeneity which implies qualitative difference and not just fragmentation. There is still a poetry of the life-world, as Henri Lefebvre described it.



Heritage and the commodity:
homogeneity and heterogeneity

I raise some questions. What are archaeology's interests in relation to such experiences? What strategies might archaeology take in this condition of (post)modernity? What are archaeology's projects? (Are they to aid cultural fragmentation? To produce an homogeneous past, object of scientific method?) I want to sketch some more dimensions of personal experience before returning to these questions.

THE PERSONAL AND THE SUBJECTIVE

Of course there is a personal element to the practice of archaeology. As I have described, the orthodox attitude to this dimension is varied. The personal and the subjective may be disavowed—given acknowledgement as the experiences of actually doing archaeology (rainy days and mud) and as the impossibility of ever reaching a purely objective account, but then ignored in a method which supposedly aims to stick just to the facts. There may be a negative scepticism of what can be said with certainty of the past (because of the inevitable subjective dimension), and of the person of the archaeologist. There is an idealism (of perhaps some fringe archaeologists) which would have only

personal pasts. Often the archaeologist and the past are put in separate compartments. A personal and subjective aspect of archaeology may be recognized as having to do with feelings, ethics and values—orientations towards the past and its study, guides to the most appropriate behaviours in a profession dealing with a product (the past) for a client (public, state, student, development corporation). Finally critique and analysis may be offered as a means of controlling the personal and subjective bias—a self-reflecting and self-regulating discipline.

I am arguing that these orthodox attitudes to the feelings engendered of the material past and its study in archaeology are inadequate.

Archaeology is immediately biography. The material remains of the past are brought to light in practices which are part of people's lives. Archaeology is people's jobs. Excavation is a particular type of living or doing which produces facts or data. Central to its experience, and therefore to the construction of the facts of the past, is the telling of stories. As I excavate I talk with others, describing what I have been doing, trying out ideas which give some order to the things I have found. This verbal account takes the form of a kind of story and is accompanied by a written account of some sort (notes, records and such have to be kept). The final report of the excavation is only a story of what a group of people did, but a story with a particular rhetoric (I shall return to this rhetoric). Selecting and discarding, fitting together into a whole (which need not be singular or coherent—the site may have been poor, for example) are this activity of narrative. My recounting of what I have been doing involves thinking of other related stories, what someone else tells me they have been doing. Together we may relate our ideas to wider narratives which give another order of sense. These may be grand stories such as the death and decay of the past and its saving, its redemption through reason, or more particular stories of the historical place of the site. Narrative provides a plot for what I am doing; it is a basic means of making sense.

In telling my stories of how I dug and what I found I construct myself as a coherent (perhaps!) interpreting and communicating archaeologist. My self-identity is bound up with these stories, with archaeology. This is *suturing* which I have already mentioned. I recognize myself in archaeology the discourse, the set of practices and their effects which create meanings. I may say that I am an archaeologist, and, whatever I mean by that, my conception of myself is bound up with what archaeological things I do and the experiences they involve. Hence the attention I gave in Part 2 to images and analogies of archaeology.

This does not just apply to archaeology of course. Stories and their retelling are vital components of personal and cultural identity generally. We tell our stories to others, selecting and amending; and we listen to theirs. These knit into cultural narratives, together making sense of experience, but a sense which is never final.

Academic archaeology encourages the creation of particular selves or characters. These are to do with aptitudes to engage in the cycle of archaeological method and include traits such as rational assertiveness, reasoning out in the open for attention and scrutiny, appearing decisive and positive in belief and action, perhaps following an academic career path. There is a place for feeling and for emotion, but in the character of an ascetic idealist. Such a character has had the sensibilities trained, refined and heightened so that they may appropriately describe the values within the archaeological object. The response to a pot may be described in terms of the quality of ceramic form, its

tectonics, the character of its line. These may be conceived not as subjective but objective qualities disconnected from the present and the perceiving archaeologist, objective in the sense of subjectively true and revealed through carefully controlled senses. I think here of the more traditional Classical archaeology and its approach to its 'artistic' ceramics, sculpture, architecture and jewellery. These cultured objects are held to require a cultured response; a rhetoric of culture. We read of monumentality, maturity, fussiness, decorative effect, vivid humour, subtle sinuosity, unruffled dignity, etc. (Boardman 1973). Bernard Schweitzer describes the transition from Greek Mycenaean pottery to its successor Geometric as a shift from 'voluminosity', a quality of space, to vertical and sculptural form (1971). These appear as precise and abstract principles, rooted in the sensuous response of a purified self.

The characters of orthodox archaeology are gendered; they are masculine. They fit with the masculine-centred focus of much social science. This involves an emphasis on rationality, with the personal and emotion tamed in the concepts of intentionality (motivation and aims) and agency (the personal ability to achieve desired ends); or it may be put to the margins as irrational and natural instinct, impulse and behaviour. Interest in androcentric social science centres on the public, visible and official, with dramatic role players, situations defined. This is set against private, informal and unofficial 'support spheres'. There is the tendency to instrumental knowledge involving control and manipulation through precision, quantification and abstraction. Knowledge may be conceived as decentred, public and a property of a transcendental ego (a self abstracted from the particular circumstances of history, society and experience) (see Harding 1986). To return to the list of distinctions introduced in Part 1:

Through their experiences and interests, knowledges are gendered. My proposal is that a reasonable objective would be not a patriarchal or matriarchal archaeological self (taking one or other side of this list), but a 'sublated' self: the masculine and feminine reconciled in difference. (Whether these are definite differences is to be questioned anyway.)

objectivity	subjectivity
abstract	concrete
rationality	emotion
truth	beauty
culture	nature
public	private
detached	involved
MASCULINE	FEMININE

THE CASTRATED ARCHAEOLOGIST: SUBJECTIVISM AND RELATIVISM

Subjectivism refers to a position which would celebrate those elements which are conventionally identified with the feminine (some are listed here); it is the triumph of subjectivity; it is this matriarchal order which would castrate the archaeological self. The archaeologist who follows the conventional order of knowledge gendered masculine fears the Father who disciplines his self with the authority of reason. There is the fear of disappointing and of succumbing to the other, the bestial, mythical, magical whose penalty is the castrating loss of reason and security (if objectivity gives way to beauty, the emotional, the body, how can the past ever be known with security?). The objective look of surveillance watching and observing the past, making it the object of reason, keeps the past in its place. The fear is that the past might not only look back, it might bite! Nevertheless the past fascinates the archaeologist, it fixes; there is desire to know.

Subjectivism, or the rule of the personal and the subjective, brings also the fear of relativism. What might relativism mean? It may be the idea that any explanation of the past is as good as any other since all are value-laden, part of the present and so not objective. But this assumes that values are subjective. Surely our experience would indicate that this is not so; we do not just make up values on our own. Is there therefore not an ethics of explaining the past? Our explanations of what happened in the past may be distinguished on ethical grounds (some proceed from better values), on grounds of purpose (some serve more appropriate purposes than others), and on objective grounds (some objects from the past are better to study than others). This would mean looking at why archaeologists are doing what they are, and whether it is worth it.

There are undoubted difficulties with another relativism. This may arise from a humanist and romantic respect for other cultures, proclaiming their potential absolute difference to what we have ever encountered; they cannot be compared. Consequently cross-cultural study of other cultures and evolutionary schemes which compare cultures and rank them in types of societies must be abandoned. These latter are major components of how contemporary archaeology explains the past. Schemes of cultural evolution in archaeology involve types of societies (such as chiefdom, band, lineage-based tribe) together with logics of social change which move societies through different stages (models of relations between core and periphery economic systems, inflationary economic spirals, types of contradiction within societies) (see Shanks and Tilley 1987b, Chapter 6). We may wish to find fault with the reliance on notions of social progress in some forms of cultural evolution, or with the way societies and their institutions are classified into types. But there are major problems with maintaining that different societies and social groups cannot be compared because they are fundamentally different in terms of the way they see the world. This entails there being separate social worlds each with its own knowledge and means that the past (as a different society) can never really be known. It also means that each society or social group will have its own past. As to what these different life-worlds are, together with their attendant sets of truths, we shall presumably never know. The past will also fragment into many parts, all dependent on the particular viewing community, and all incomparable and equal.

Richard Rorty has mounted an attack on epistemology (1980) as the search for secure (rational) foundations of knowledge. He holds that reason, objectivity, rationality and truth have been *set up* as values, as moral principles, and adopted for various historical and social reasons. Might there be a relativism of reasoning? This would not question the ultimate existence of a real world, or that societies can get to know each other, or that they can be compared, or that different views of the past can be compared. But it would maintain that the criteria for deciding whether something is reasonable are not fixed for all time and space; reason is not absolute. There may be different ways of reasoning, styles of reasoning (Hacking 1982), different ways of working towards truth and falsity which would focus on different aspects of the world. This idea may be compared with the cognitive interests of Habermas.

My argument is that reason (as applied to the past) is not a set of rules received from authority; it involves ways of thinking about something (the things found by archaeologists). We form ourselves historically and reason emerges in our experience of things, our dialogue with the world. And a not insignificant part of this experience is archaeological.

SELF AND OTHER

What then of the archaeologist experiencing the archaeological world, and their 'self'? I have argued that experience is never a full encounter with primary 'raw' reality, and that we find ourselves in the otherness of existence. I shall expand.

Psychoanalysis displays the absence of something whole and of itself which we could call the self at the centre of the individual, sensing and experiencing. To look for the meaning of what archaeologists do cannot involve looking outside of the archaeologist to the things found which somehow find their way into the archaeologist. It means looking within to those internally located elements which fix archaeological thoughts and experiences. In a psychoanalytic account these elements are sexuality, consumption, life and death; desires and the social.

Jacques Lacan's scenario for the formation of the subject is a provocative one (1977). For him identity arises from an insertion of the self into an external order. What we think of as the self is constructed in a series of partitions and in its eventual insertion into the symbolic order of language and culture (structured like a language). Subjectivity is a trace created in the otherness of existence. I know myself only through that which is not I, identifying with something other than me, and entering into a symbolic system, the domain of the Law in which I know myself only through language and discourse (thinking of myself is possible only in terms of the discourse which is not me). Lacan's incomplete subject, always other, is concerned with loss and lack. Desire is the impossibility of satisfaction; in order to long for something it must already have been separated from the self, lost.

This psychology may be taken to imply a subject with no real identity, fully determined by culture. But here also are insights of a subject never separated from the social and object world, and I have already used the idea that our subjective experience is always an imaginary 'as if' relationship with a world which is socially organized, not a direct experience of the 'real'. Even if the parts do not add up, we can know ourselves as

constructed, as reasoning selves, and recognize our partiality. Reasoning implies a willingness to change and an openness to the object world which is resource for constructing our identities. I have claimed that narrative plays a vital part in this.

POETRY, FANTASY AND HORROR

We always need to go beyond the object we have found, follow it in becoming something else. It cannot be brought down to the results of empirical and analytic treatment. There is a necessary creative component in coming to know—being open to the other, receptivity, metaphor, the circumlocution, writing the genuine and generating object. Because meaning is ultimately unsayable, poetry is necessary. And discovery is invention. As an archaeologist I un-cover or dis-cover something, come upon it (*invenire* in Latin, from which is derived invent, means to find, to come upon, to invent). Invention is both finding and creative power. The logic of invention, poetry and the imaginary is one of conjunction, making connections. It is both/and, between self and other, not either/or. The thing I have found, the site I visit is both this and that, it is there and here, past and of the present. Archaeology's poetry is to write what the found object is not, overshooting and exaggerating. This is the work of fantasy.

> The task of [poetry's] unceasing labour is to bring together what life has separated or violence has torn apart. Physical pain can usually be lessened or stopped only by action. All other human pain, however, is caused by one form or another of separation. And here the act of assuagement is less direct. Poetry can repair no loss but it defies the space which separates. And it does this by its continual labour of reassembling what has been scattered…. Poetry's impulse to use metaphor, to discover resemblance, is not to make comparisons (all comparisons as such are hierarchical) or to diminish the particularity of any event; it is to discover those correspondences of which the sum total would be proof of the indivisible totality of existence.
>
> (Berger 1984, pp. 96–7)

We all know Dracula is un-dead, and his bite drains the victim of life. Frankenstein created his creature out of dead bits, reanimating flesh; but the creature (un-named) turned monster. In Ridley Scott's movie *Alien,* spacecraft 'Nostromo' encounters the creature. It metamorphoses from egg through intestines of human host to phallic devouring alien, purely alien, amoral, silent, creeping the shadows, hunting the crew. John Carpenter's *Thing* is another alien, unnameable. It has survived aeons locked in ice, and discovered by Antarctic scientific mission transforms itself at will into any form, living or inanimate, turning itself into replica humans to take over. Mr Hyde hides within Dr Jeckyll, his bestial other released by metamorphic potion. Full moon and the werewolf walks.

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.

Working through the tensions between

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

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 John Berger's historical novel *G* (1972) is full of insight, his *And My Heart, Our Faces, Brief as Photos* (1984) concentrated and philosophical reflection on time, place and people. Produced with Jean Mohr, *Another Way of Telling* (1982) gives fertile impressions of narrative released into imagery. Susan Buck-Morss (1977, 1989), Richard Wolin (1982), Michael Jennings (1987) and Julian Roberts (1982) have written introductions to Walter Benjamin. I like Terry Eagleton's *Walter Benjamin: Or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (1981). These books have helped me make the most of Benjamin, particularly the collection 'Illuminations' (1970). See also Gillian Rose (1978) and Jameson (1990) for Adorno. Bataille's work resists classification surrealistically. His *Inner Experience* (1988) and writings collected in *Visions of Excess* (1985) have influenced me. See also Richman (1982).

PART 1
ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHOD

2 New archaeology was much more than a proposed scientific fundamantalism or scientism, and it had many antecedents. A significant characteristic is that it was a vigorous *polemic* against what were held to be the procedures and assumptions of traditional archaeology. In its later and developed forms New archaeology is usually known as 'processual archaeology' (the two terms are often used interchangeably). Willey and Sabloff (1980) and Trigger (1989a) provide accounts of its emergence and development with full references. The standard texts are Binford (1972), Watson, LeBlanc and Redman (1971), and Clarke (1968).

3 See for example Salmon (1982) and also Watson (1990). Colin Renfrew, a major proponent of a New archaeology in Britain, has written a concise defence of a critically rationalist archaeology (1989). For accounts of realist or objectivist philosophy as it may be in archaeology see Wylie (1989a; 1989b), and Gibbon (1989).

4 A classic programme for a systems-based archaeology is *Analytical Archaeology* by David Clarke (1968). See also Renfrew (1984). For critical discussion with examples of systems theory in Anglo-American archaeology see Shanks and Tilley (1987a, 1987b).

5 The main features of New or processual archaeology are as follows.

- An anthropological orientation towards explaining the archaeological record in terms of regularities in human behaviour.
- This has often involved specifying connections, in systems terms, between technology, subsistence and the environment.
- Processual archaeology takes its name from a concern with the workings of social groups—social process and change.
- Social change has usually been conceived as cultural evolution.

(1980) covers archaeological aspects. Innovative approaches to ceramics and iconography can be found in *La Cité des Images* (1984) and by Anthony Snodgrass (1987). A fine example of a processual Classical archaeology is *Burial and Ancient Society* by Ian Morris (1987). I have drawn on anthropological and structuralist work in Classical Studies as represented, for example, in Gordon (ed. 1981). My presentation also builds on a reading of Theweleit (1987, 1989), Hegel's master-slave dialectic, and Bataille's general economy.

PART 3
THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE PAST

23 This section owes much to James Clifford's essay on collecting (in 1988).
24 James Clifford relates the encounter between ethnography and surrealism in his book *The Predicament of Culture* (1988).
25 I owe the association between Benjamin and the passage from *The Tempest* to Hannah Arendt (1970).
26 There are very many works now on the experience of modernity and post-modernity. I like Berman (1983) and Harvey (1989). See also note 31.
27 Fuchs (1986) has produced a book on Richard Long. For landscape art in general see Sonfist (ed. 1983). Compare also Andy Goldsworthy's sculpture (1990); one is pictured on p. 194.

Dunstanburgh Castle, Northumberland

28 I have used the guide to the castle by Hunter-Blair and Honeyman (1955). A recent archaeological guide to medieval castles is by Kenyon (1990). Medieval archaeology is moving away from a simple support to conventional narrative history: see Austin (1990), Austin and Thomas (1990) and Champion (1990).
29 Pam Graves (1989) and Roberta Gilchrist (1989) have produced interesting analyses of the design of medieval ecclesiastical establishments.
30 Space is of much interest to archaeology and ancient history, is well established almost as a sub-discipline in the former. Much inspiration is taken from geography as might be expected. On the social logic of space see Hillier and Hansen (1984); see also Gregory and Urry (eds 1985). For a poetics of space there is the work of Gaston Bachelard (1969).

PART 4
WORKING ARCHAEOLOGY

31 Works on (post)modernism which I have found stimulating are Appignanensi and Bennington (eds 1986), Foster (1985a) and Foster (ed. 1985b), Harvey (1989), Kroker and Cook (1988), Lunn (1985) and the journal *Theory, Culture and Society* special issues 1985 and 1988, 'The Fate of Modernity' and 'Postmodernism'.
32 That the arts and crafts movement failed (expensive craftworkers ended up producing luxury items for wealthy clientele) is not so much an indictment of its philosophy and conceptions of labour as due to the failure to take strategic account of entering a market dominated and structured by capitalist economic relations.
33 Discussions of craft which have some relevance here are by Fuller (some essays in 1985), articles in Thackera (1988) and David Pye's work (1980, 1983).

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