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Champion, Matthew (2019) A fuller history of temporalities. *Past & Present* 243 (1), pp. 255-266. ISSN 0031-2746.

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A Fuller History of Temporalities*

Matthew S. Champion

Thinking with temporalities offers historians new ways of approaching the past. For, like many key categories of historical analysis, the more we push at the category of ‘time’, the more it appears not as the neutral ground on which history unfolds, but as central to practices, self-perceptions, and group identities that are critical to the unfolding of events, fundamental to the plots and schemas of cultures. This perspective on the ‘fullness’ of time – events, actions, perceptions saturated in, and made from, time – emerges from a fuller, transdisciplinary practice of history.

In keeping with an emphasis on a history which ‘inhabits the interspaces’ of the disciplines, I will take a conversation with medieval music as the *cantus firmus* of this viewpoint.¹ There are three reasons for this choice. The first is that modern temporalities are often constructed in opposition to the medieval – as a medievalist, this temporal frame strikes me as particularly unhelpful to developing our understandings of time.² The second reason is that music is an art intimately connected with time and its measurement – yet in the historiography on time to date, it has rarely played a meaningful role. This suggests a third reason for suggesting a musicalized history of temporalities: histories of time have often been closed to

* My thanks to the anonymous reviewers at *Past & Present*, and to John Arnold, Sean Curran, Emma Dillon, Alexis Litvine, Miri Rubin, Miranda Stanyon, Katarina Stenke, Alex Walsham, colleagues in the Department of History, Classics and Archaeology at Birkbeck, University of London, and the participants in the DAAD-Cambridge Research Hub symposium ‘History and Temporality’ for their help in developing and drafting this piece.

¹ The phrase is taken from Philippa C. Maddern, ‘Inhabiting the Interspaces’, in Rob Gerrand (ed.), *Transmutations* (Collingwood, 1979).

² Recent considerations of temporality from across medieval and Renaissance studies include Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago, 2008); Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York, 2010); Margot E. Fassler, *The Virgin of Chartres: Making History through Liturgy and the Arts* (New Haven, 2010); Karen Elaine Smythe, *Imagings of Time in Lydgate and Hoccleve’s Verse* (Farnham, 2011); Patricia Dailey, *Promised Bodies: Time, Language, and Corporeality in Medieval Women’s Mystical Texts* (New York, 2013); Keith Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History* (Durham, NC, 2013); Jacques Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, 2014); Matthew S. Champion, *The Fullness of Time: Temporalities of the Fifteenth-Century Low Countries* (Chicago, 2017).

genuinely cross-disciplinary conversations. If the history of temporalities is to offer new responses to old questions about time and its structures, perceptions, and meanings, it needs to open up dialogues across disciplines and methods, and stop worrying about whether or not it can understand things like music. To conclude, the viewpoint turns to think about another transdisciplinary conversation – the dialogue between anthropology and the *Annales* school – to seek out a history of temporalities which enfolds events, agents, structures, and the short, medium and long-terms.

I will start with Augustine, whose famous wrestling with the question ‘what is time?’ in the *Confessions* has repeatedly framed historians’ discussions of temporality.³ But what might happen if we set out from a different “origin”, Augustine’s less well-known *De musica* (On Music)? Music, for Augustine, is the *scientia bene modulandi* (knowledge of good measuring), and is intimately bound up with the vast frame of knowledge of time and eternity, and with the minute temporal rhythms of language, the patterns of short and long syllables in poetry.⁴ We can parse Augustine’s engagement with time and music in *De Musica* through the categories associated with the most famous and influential theorist of music in the middle ages, the sixth-century Roman senator and philosopher Boethius. Boethian music theory divided music into three kinds, the *musica mundana* (music of the spheres), the *musica humana* (human music), and *musica instrumentalis* (instrumental music). Time, for Augustine, is involved in all these musics. It is measured in the *musica mundana*, the music of the heavenly bodies and their intricate dance (to play on the multiple meanings of the verb *modular*), and so with the astronomical shape of our seasons and calendars. Time

³ Augustine, *Confessions* (ed. James J. O’Donnell), 3 vols (Oxford, 1992), XI.14.17.

⁴ Augustine, *De musica* (ed. Finaert and Thonnard, i.3.4, 30). See also Philipp Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis: Speculative Music Theory and Poetics, from Saint Augustine to the Late Middle Ages in France*, trans. Michael J. Curley and Steven Rendall (Baltimore, 2013), 57–66.

is experienced and framed through the *musica humana*, the ratios and balances of the human soul and body, and so is concerned with medicine, contemplation, sex, and politics. Finally, time is measured in the *musica instrumentalis* – those orderings of sound produced by instruments, including the human voice – the category we most often think of as ‘music’ now. Such music carries traces of the other musics that situate us in a wider cosmos of actions and agencies, of bodily and political comportments, of mingled intellectual, affective and aesthetic commitments. A history of time that is musicalized in this Augustinian-Boethian sense, then, must aspire to an astonishing fullness, almost an *histoire totale*.

Augustine’s connecting of music to temporal measurement is, in part, about rhythm. While in more recent times Boethian music theory fell into disrepute as unscientific and overly metaphysical – unusable as a methodological resource in secularising academia – modern historians continued to be fascinated by the extended meanings of rhythm.⁵ Why? This is a question for modern historians of temporalities to answer in the detail it deserves. But it seems at least suggestive that emphasising rhythm allows moderns to avoid thinking about harmony, broadly conceived. Harmony, in this generally unmusical history, is by definition detemporalized, an attempt to produce a totalitarian and static world. Religion becomes aligned with these harmonizing attempts to escape time. (There is little room for notions of harmonic rhythm here, or of the intimate relationships between dissonance and harmony.) But do religious temporalities stand up to this characterization (or caricature)? We could also note that an increasing interest in rhythmic complexity harmonizes with transformations in twentieth-century Western art music which, as it

⁵ Classic attempts to track and interpret the waning of Boethian theory include Leo Spitzer, *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony* (Baltimore, 1963); John Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500–1700* (Princeton, 1961).

broke away from traditional harmonic languages, also developed increasingly complex and systematized rhythmic notations. The relationship between this sound world and the sonic properties of modern industry must also be a key interlocutor in the stories we construct about a transformation away from analyses of time, music and harmony, towards histories of temporalities, sound and rhythm.⁶ Another persuasive, and perhaps less straightforward, place to look is the history of philosophy.⁷ We could look to the long legacy of Nietzsche's understandable but nonetheless awkward alignment of Apollo with harmony and Dionysus with rhythm. In our fascination with what we may broadly be called the Dionysian, we have been led to think 'with' rhythm, and to think that rhythm is a more 'modern' category – concerned with movement, excess, and disordering – rather than its own category of (contingently imagined) order and disorder, just like harmony.

Yet whatever we think about the historical origins of (and problems with) recent interest in rhythm, it can radically reorder historical organisations of the past. Witness, here, Jean-Claude Schmitt's recent *Les rythmes au Moyen Âge*, which ranges from the proportional rhythms of the music of the spheres to the rhythms of a pilgrim's feet.⁸ Henri Lefebvre's earlier influential *Rhythmanalysis* (1992) likewise insisted on the rhythms of the body, the interpenetration of time and space, on repetition and difference in the everyday.⁹ And, significantly, it urged historians to 'listen' to the rhythms of the past. If sight is often criticized as transporting us into a masculinist, rational, and timeless or eternal perspective, then the patient temporal act

⁶ These questions are, of course, important to recent developments in sound studies. For an introduction see Trevor Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies* (Oxford: 2011).

⁷ I am indebted to Miranda Stanyon for the following observations.

⁸ Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les rythmes au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2016).

⁹ For the English translation, see Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (Bloomsbury, 2004). Lefebvre was drawing particularly on Gaston Bachelard's *La dialectique de la durée* (Bouvin, 1936).

of listening could seem to offer an attractive alternative.¹⁰ But we must also be aware that our vocabularies for understanding temporalities will need to be full of other sensory modalities, including those beyond the Western five sense taxonomy – time’s touch, and the touch in time; the sense of sudden evocations of the past through taste and smell; the temporalities of speech, listening, or balance.¹¹ Take, for example, the temporalities of the markedly olfactory world of the Ongee people on Little Andaman Island in the Bay of Bengal.¹² The times of waking and sleeping are distinguished through smell – during the day people’s odours are dispersed, and during sleep they are reintegrated into the body; seasons are marked by changes in winds which can signal whether ‘scent-hungry spirits’ hunt in the forest or at sea; the life-cycle, the times of illness, life and death are marked by changes in intensities of smell.

Or we could take just one example of a history of temporalities inflected by the history of sound and listening: what happens to the history of time when we include the melodies played by musical clocks? In the fifteenth century, musical clocks in the Low Countries hymned the Holy Spirit on the hour, and the Virgin Mary on the half hour, enfolding time in a sanctioned auditory temporal regime that mirrored the annunciation of Christ’s incarnation to the Virgin Mary: time pregnant with the presence of God. In late twentieth-century Melbourne, by contrast, when a new musical clock was installed in a central shopping centre housing a major new branch of the Japanese department store Daimaru, its music provided globalized capitalism with a nationalist soundtrack. The clock played the tune *Waltzing Matilda*

¹⁰ On vision, see Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley, CA, 1993). For resistance to filling sight’s empty throne with hearing, see Veit Erlmann, *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening, and Modernity* (Oxford, 2004), 4.

¹¹ For subtle temporalizations of the gaze, see Michel De Certeau, ‘The Gaze of Nicholas of Cusa’, *Diacritics*, xvii (1987). On recent developments in sensory studies, see Yannis Hamilakis, *Archaeology and the Senses: Human Experience, Memory, and Affect* (Cambridge, 2013).

¹² For the following, see Constance Classen, ‘McLuhan in the Rainforest: The Sensory Worlds of Oral Cultures’, in David Howes (ed.), *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (Oxford, 2005), 153–57.

each hour, a melody considered by many Australians as an alternative national anthem. The Japanese department store has long since vanished, but the clock still retells a ‘timeless’ rural origin myth of Australian swaggies, billabongs and billies in the heart of the global city. A history of time which includes listening can thus suggest the kinds of stable identities and relations to the past we make for ourselves and others, hour by hour, and how these identities change (and don’t change) across time and place.

Traditionally, however, those historians who have studied time have tended to zero in on technologies and systems of measurement largely disconnected from sensory bodies. There is the early work of Gustav Bilfinger, Jacques Le Goff’s famous essays on the introduction of clocks to Europe, Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum’s magisterial *The History of the Hour*, and a host of studies on calendars across the world, systems of periodization, or visual measurements.¹³ How might music enrich this scholarly tradition? Where, for example, do we place the change, prominent in the sources of Notre Dame polyphony from the thirteenth century, to a notation of music which is temporally synchronized, so that multiple voices can sing at the same time from the same score?¹⁴ How might notational practices like these relate to the synchronization of knowledge and bodies in the new universities of the period, or to medieval urbanization, with its expanding range of rhythms which increasingly placed pressure on earlier synchronizing political and social arrangements? Or where do we situate the complex changes in durational measurement of the so-called *ars nova* (new

¹³ Gustav Bilfinger, *Die mittelalterlichen Horen und die modernen Stunden: ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte* (Stuttgart, 1892); Jacques Le Goff, *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1980); Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Chicago, 1996). An important history of time that points towards temporalities more broadly conceived is Stephen Kern’s *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (London, 1983).

¹⁴ I am grateful for advice from Emma Dillon and Sean Curran (whose forthcoming monograph *Voices from the Archive: Old Music and the Motet, c. 1300* will address these issues) on this point. See also Anna Maria Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (Berkeley, CA, 2005).

art) of the fourteenth century, in which complex new forms of notation emerge alongside new polyphonic genres and textures?

Notice that the contemporary fourteenth-century designation '*ars nova*' is a powerful deployment of the language of the *new*, which presupposes something older, an *ars antiqua*. Here in this story of sound we also find a thread in that longer history by which objects are measured in the Augustinian sense of measuring *well* (music as the *ars bene modulandi*), with that little adverb *bene* summoning up a whole world of close engagement with that which is measured. Objects are 'valued' by being placed in temporal schemas. When and why does new = good?, new = bad? Or is the new simply inevitable, the object of a supposedly 'neutral' gaze? A history of temporal markers quickly becomes bound up with particular commitments, ideologies, politics. Medievalists are well attuned to this: their 'middle' period is commonly constructed as timeless, static, religious, and feudal, over and against an accelerating, dynamic, secular, and democratic modernity.¹⁵

The edifice of a timeless middle ages, proposed by a number of scholars of time, has much in common with the positioning of the timeless primitive other in anthropology compellingly critiqued by Johannes Fabian.¹⁶ Music can seem to support the 'timelessness' thesis: medieval chant notation, neums, lacks easily defined and definite specifications of rhythms and tempi. Neums might be contrasted with the more 'objective' notations of modernity (including, from the nineteenth century, compulsive metronome markings that assert the primacy of both the author, and

¹⁵ See recently, Stephanie Trigg, 'Medievalism and Theories of Temporality', in Louise D'Arcens (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism* (Cambridge, 2016). Also Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia, 2008); Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now? Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* (Durham, NC, 2012).

¹⁶ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York, 1983). The standard narrative often situates the Renaissance as a cipher for modernity more generally. See Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (London, 1969); Ricardo J. Quinones, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time* (Cambridge, MA, 1972); Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York, 2004).

modern machine-dominated forms of measurement), or with postmodern, abstract and performance-generated notations (like those of Morton Feldman, for example).¹⁷ Experimental postmodern notation can easily complement a history of time's fragmentation, sitting alongside twentieth-century fragmentations of subjectivity and its reformations in performativity.

But what happens if, in relation to chant, we resituate neums in the sophisticated temporalities of the liturgy, its carefully modulated times of reading, recitation and (other) bodily gestures and actions? Or if we simply refuse a vocabulary of 'timelessness', since human productions are always temporalised? Even placing one note after another is an ordering of time, no matter how vaguely that note's duration is defined. In practice, that 'vagueness' may have been quite precise to contemporary performers. Note-length was certainly regulated by habits of speech, breath and the body, and liturgical discourses that stressed slow and steady movement with decorous pauses and attention to proper measure. The 'timelessness' thesis is even less secure if we examine the extremely complex notations associated with the motet, or the temporal games played by fifteenth-century composers recently analysed by Emily Zazulia.¹⁸ Finally, we might reject a broader premise of the argument – that precision, as an objectivizing scientific account would define it, is a sure sign of progress and modernity.¹⁹ Then, the edifice crumbles and we have to deal with the more interesting task of excavating and differentiating the plural layers of time in social, cultural, intellectual, political and economic life of all periods.²⁰

¹⁷ On Feldman and time, see Philip Gareau, *La musique de Morton Feldman ou le temps en liberté* (Paris, 2006).

¹⁸ Emily Zazulia, 'Verbal Canons and Notational Complexity in Fifteenth-Century Music' (Univ. of Pennsylvania Ph.D. thesis, 2012).

¹⁹ Compare Hanß's contribution in this collection.

²⁰ See Peter Burke, 'Reflections on the Cultural History of Time', *Viator*, xxxv (2004); 'Performing History: The Importance of Occasions', *Rethinking History*, ix (2005).

This diversity of times can also help, backwards, as it were, to unlock possible new understandings of historical objects and actions. Take again the example of music: its sounds, its meanings or lack of meanings, and our responses to those sounds. If we take it as axiomatic that situation in time colours our perception and experience of the world, we can return to our sources to look again for the diverse temporal structures, memories, habits, and rhythms that shape our experience of music (or any other cultural form or social experience).

There is a theoretical principle here, with a long history and strong medieval credentials: objects and structures can change according to the *diversitas temporum* (diversity of times).²¹ In medieval European musical discourse, *diversitas temporum* might mean that the experience of music should change according to liturgical season. Lent's penitential colouring makes the sorrowful sighing of simple plainchant most appropriate, whereas the joy of Easter or Christmas sees joyous polyphony.²² Music is thus tied to particular affective narratives that shape, and are shaped by, the expectations of time. This means that the history of temporalities should increasingly develop in dialogue with the history of emotions.²³ Diversity of time extends, of course, to the life of individual listeners: the same sounds can mean different things for different people, and for the same person at different times.²⁴ So, it is perfectly in keeping with a medieval hermeneutic to excavate normalizing temporal structures alongside the variegated experiences of historical agents.

²¹ See Klaus Schreiner, "'Diversitas temporum' – Zeiterfahrung und Epochengliederung im späten Mittelalter", in Reinhart Herzog and Reinhart Kosellek (eds.), *Epochenschwelle und Epochenbewusstsein* (Munich, 1987); Carlo Ginzburg, 'The Letter Kills: On Some of the Implications of 2 Corinthians 3:6', *History and Theory*, xlix (2010).

²² See, for example, Gilles Carlier, *Tractatus de duplici ritu cantus ecclesiastici in divinis officiis* (ed. Cullington and Strohm); Alexander Blachly, 'Archaic Polyphony in Dutch Sources of the Renaissance', *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, liii (2003), 184. These examples are discussed further in Champion, *Fullness of Time*, chapter 3.

²³ On the developing historiography here, see Matthew Champion, 'Emotions, Time, and Narrative: A Liturgical Frame,' in Susan Broomhall and Andrew Lynch (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Emotions in Europe, 1100–1700* (Abingdon, forthcoming 2019).

²⁴ See, for example, Jean Gerson, *Tractatus secundis de canticis*, section 23 (ed. Fabre, 383).

Something like *diversitas temporum* appears in the words of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), cited by Reinhart Koselleck in the opening of his influential study of temporal horizons, *Vergangene Zukunft*: ‘every mutable thing has the measure of its own time within itself ... no two things in the world have the same measure of time ... There are therefore ... at any one time in the universe innumerably many times’.²⁵ Herder was a subtle theorist of the powers of music to rearrange and disrupt static conceptions of time, often expressed through the aesthetics of the sublime. Sublime sounds can astonish auditors because of their unexpected interruption of our temporal flow: ‘all at once the thread of our thoughts and moments of time is torn apart’.²⁶ This does not destroy all sense of time, but ‘suddenly transplants’ us into a different flow of successive moments, or a different kind of temporality. Beyond the aesthetic-temporal effects Herder is describing and creating, there is a methodological point to be drawn for the history of temporalities: music can interrupt our histories, forcing us to think with more subtle *diversitas* about the temporalities of the past.

Herder can vault us into my concluding frame for reflecting on the history of temporalities: the *Annales* school, the twentieth-century historiographical tradition most attuned to the analysis of time. And among the Annalistes, the figure we might most immediately associate with time (or its absence) is Fernand Braudel (1902–1985), the theorist of the *longue durée*. In contrast to Herder, Fernand Braudel’s most famous essay on time and historical analysis, ‘Histoire et sciences sociales: la longue durée’ (1958), radically downplays the capacity of events to change structures.²⁷

²⁵ J. G. Herder, *Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1799), i, 120–21. For wider reflections on Koselleck, see the contributions by Hanß, Fryxell, and Ogle in this collection.

²⁶ *Kalligone*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1800), iii, 122–23: ‘auf Einmal [wird] der Faden unsrer Gedanken und Zeitmomente zerrissen’. On the musical sublime, see Miranda Stanyon, ‘Musical Sublimes in English and German Literature of the Long Eighteenth Century’ (Univ. of London Ph.D. thesis, 2014).

²⁷ Fernand Braudel, ‘Histoire et sciences sociales: la longue durée’, *Annales ESC*, xiii (1958).

Braudel, not unlike Boethius, develops a three-part schematization. There is the history of events and the short-term, the *histoire événementielle*, viewed by Braudel as capricious and delusive as an object of historical analysis (we could call this Braudel's equivalent of the *musica instrumentalis*). Better is the second layer of analysis, the *conjoncture*, which broadly encompasses the medium-term, and social and economic trends. But the most important layer, excavated most famously in Braudel's history of the Mediterranean, was the slower tempo of history bordering on the motionless, the *longue durée*.

Braudel's schema, however problematic, draws our attention again to the critical role of assumptions about time in framing historical practice: historians make time through their divisions into periods, or layers of analysis. This form of temporalization includes our quotidian activities as well as our methodological horizons. The slow, almost motionless tempo of years in the archive (often fetishized) is now commonly exchanged for the swift dash between teaching terms; the 10-year+ arc of a PhD is replaced with regimes that police a 4-year limit, as is currently the case in the UK. Similar processes might be discerned in the trend towards histories grounded in big data or distant reading: the slow, close consideration of a single text is replaced with a glance which attempts to survey thousands.²⁸ In short, there are temporalities of historical practice which emerge within our current temporal regimes and which help to construct them. We need to be careful not to make methodological mistakes because of the temporal dynamics of our contemporary cultures, framed as they often are by thin presentisms, obsessions with time's monetary value, and social

²⁸ Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge, 2014); Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London, 2013).

acceleration.²⁹ That said, a fullness of time in historical practice means including the big with the small, the distant with the close, the swift glance alongside sustained contemplation.

Another way of making the point is to turn to the engagements of the anthropologist Marshall Sahlins with Braudel and with the *Annales* school more generally. Sahlins advocates interpreting a ‘structure of the conjuncture’, meaning the ‘practical realization of ... cultural categories in a specific historical context, as expressed in the interested action of the historical agents’.³⁰ Sahlins reconfigures Braudel’s categories, explicitly changing Braudel’s meaning of conjuncture, to resituate the event and the historical agent at the heart of transformations of historical structures. Various layers of time are conjoined in practice, in the event and in the everyday. This revision of Braudel is mediated through another strand of the *Annales* tradition, the work of the co-founder of the journal, Marc Bloch (1886–1944). Very early in Sahlins’s *Islands of History*, Bloch appears in a crucial formulation: ‘Culture is ... a gamble played with nature, in the course of which wittingly or unwittingly – I paraphrase Marc Bloch – the old names that are still on everyone’s lips acquire connotations that are far removed from their original meaning’.³¹ The passage from Bloch reappears to conclude the first chapter of the book: ‘What Marc Bloch observed of fifteenth-century Europe happened even more dramatically in Hawaii: “although men were not fully aware of the change, the old names which were still on everyone’s lips had slowly acquired connotations far removed from their original meaning.”’³² For Bloch, according to Sahlins, ‘practice was the reason for this process’. Sahlins’s

²⁹ Compare here the analyses of modernity offered elsewhere in this collection. On acceleration, see Hartmut Rosa, *Alienation and Acceleration: Towards a Critical Theory of Late-Modern Temporality* (Malmö, 2010).

³⁰ Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago, 1985), xiv, 125n11.

³¹ *Ibid.*, ix.

³² *Ibid.*, 31; Marc Bloch, *French Rural History: An Essay on its Basic Characteristics*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (London, 1966), 90.

text thus neatly performs his analytical principle in relation to Braudel's text – using the old names, the agent (Sahlins) changes the meaning of a cultural schema (Braudel's *conjuncture*). This takes place in the 'event' of the text, the practice of intellectual life, the collision of different agents and structures of thought (Braudel, Bloch, Sahlins, and their texts).

In this moment, then, layers of time are being woven together and played off against each other in an active reinterpretation of traditions. This is no thin presentist regime of historicity of the kind critiqued by another *Annaliste*, François Hartog.³³ It relies instead on an active understanding of the possibilities of a historical practice which is 'full' – which does not position the past as an inactive, dead, foreign country, but allows voices from different times and places to speak in a temporally variegated present. It is full, too, in that other, transdisciplinary sense. Sahlins allows anthropology to be changed by its dialogue with history, just as the history of temporalities has been constantly enriched by dialogues with anthropology.³⁴

A fullness of time: the metaphor is a risk, one which has a complicated history, bound up as it is with prophesy and fulfilment, ancient metaphors of *kairos*, and the coming of the Messiah. The human search for any absolute fullness will fail. But paradoxically, to be full, any account of fullness must also include emptiness: and so even within the potentially totalizing language of the 'full', a space is opened for acknowledging our partial histories. We can then search, to use the language of Walter Benjamin, for presents 'shot through with splinters of the past', even as those pasts are forgotten. And we can know that we will hear, and fail to hear, the polyphony of past times in different arrangements and balances depending on where

³³ François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*, trans. Saskia Brown (New York, 2015).

³⁴ For a wonderful survey of time and its place in anthropology until the 1990s, see Nancy D. Munn, 'The Cultural Anthropology of Time: A Critical Essay', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, xxi (1992).

we are standing. A fuller history of temporalities might then avoid the pitfalls of split languages of old and new, static and progressive, the early and late, the *longue durée* and the event, the agent and the structure – the closest we might come to a time ‘filled by the presence of the now.’³⁵

³⁵ See Walter Benjamin, ‘Über den Begriff der Geschichte’, in Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Gesammelte Schriften*, 7 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1972–89), i.2, 691–704. English quotation from Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zorn (London, 2015), 252–53 (thesis XIV). On empty and full time, see also Hans-Georg Gadamer, ‘Concerning Empty and Full-filled Time’, *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, viii (1970).