



Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) USA 2019: Slow Archaeology CFP; May 3-5 2019 Syracuse, NY

Slow Archaeology

Archaeology, along with other disciplines in the humanities and sciences, has kept pace with the accelerated and accelerating tempos and rhythms of the modern world. This acceleration has produced what some have called “fast science,” characterized as “managerial, competitive, data-centric, technocratic, and alienated from the societies it serves and studies” (Cunningham and MacEachern 2016:4). Critiques of these accelerations have emerged as offshoots of the broader “slow movement” in the sciences that call for the multivalent benefits—in theory, method, practice, publication, and teaching—of “decelerating” archaeology. Advocates for slow science—and slow archaeology in particular—highlight the importance of social relationships, long-term engagements (both social and material), and careful contemplation and collaboration.

These main tenants of slow archaeology are enmeshed in other concerns in archaeology, and in anthropology more broadly. For example, slow science parallels the new materialist move towards careful attention to the multiple valences of diverse elements of historical assemblages. A slow approach allows for the “details” (DeLanda 2006) or “doings” (Barad 2007) of such assemblages to be followed through their historical unfoldings. Others note that such “empirical ontologies” (Law and Lien 2012) offer emancipatory potential, aligning with the goals of postcolonial, indigenous, non-white, and feminist archaeological critiques, as the focus on “doings” leads to a more accurate reconstruction of both actors and actions, misrepresented or absent in dominant narratives. As such the “ontological turn” is more than thought experiment. Rather it is simultaneously an “onto-ethico-epistemology” given the real life consequences, and effects of its articulation and deployment. The focus on collaborative action in slow archaeology also echoes calls for approaches situated in an ethics of care, co-becoming, and “making-with.” These ethics are central to multi-species and post-human histories that require situated voices and decolonized, more inclusive storytelling practices that dismantle dominant narratives, human exceptionalism, and isolated agents and causality (Haraway 2016; Tsing et al. 2017; Tsing 2015).

At the same time, we should consider whether archaeology can become “too slow,” losing immediacy and relevance, or becoming accessible only to certain privileged practitioners over others, thereby exacerbating the very relations of power and historical hierarchies it aims to dismantle. As slow contemplation invites, this theme is intended to be open-ended and broad; we do not seek a narrow statement on the meaning of slow archaeology, the state of the discipline, or the path forward. Rather, we intend this as a catalyst to wide-ranging conversations (and potentially focused action) around the affordances of current theoretical approaches; the suitability of our methods to our theory; the politics and ethics of archaeological practices; the broader political-economic conditions structuring our discipline; and our relationships to other/allied ways of investigating and knowing the past/present.

Call for Sessions and Papers

We welcome sessions and papers that engage in any/all issues encompassed by the broad scope of “slow” approaches to archaeology and encourage sessions and papers from individuals/collectivities outside of archaeology and anthropology. A direct/overt engagement with slow theory and approaches is not necessary, and of course critical perspectives on the potentials/problems of the theme are welcome. Sessions and papers may engage with any number of topics that draw together the contributions of the ontological turn, with a consideration of the ethics, consequences, opportunities and emancipatory potential of its articulation. For example: The Politics, Ethics and Political Potential of New Materialist Archaeologies; Slowing down Multiscalar Analysis: Entangling Micro and Macro Historical Approaches; Theorizing “care” in Archaeological Practice (from analytical methods, to disciplinary labor relations); Slow Collaboration in an Accelerating Academic Structure; Fast Effects and The Anthropocene; Archaeologies of Tempo and Rhythm, and more.

Proposals for sessions may include up to 12 papers at 20 minutes in length each. Each session proposal should include a 250-word abstract and a title at time of registration. If you are co-organizing a session, only ONE organizer should submit the session when they register. All TAG sessions will be *open* sessions, meaning colleagues can propose a paper for your session. We encourage participants to reach out to session organizers about their interest BEFORE submitting a paper to their sessions. **ALL SESSION PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY January 15th, 2019.**

Proposals for 20-minute papers should include a title, list of authors, and a 250-word abstract. Authors who wish to participate in an existing session should contact the session organizers directly. If the paper is not proposed as part of a session (i.e. a General Submission), the conference organizers will assign the paper to an appropriate session (in coordination with session organizers) or create a new session for papers of a similar topic. **ALL PROPOSED PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY March 1st, 2019.**

We invite artist proposals for artworks related to the topic(s) of “slow archaeology,” broadly construed. Please fill out the registration form, and provide a title and description of your proposed work. Given the unique needs of artist proposals, please contact us directly to help coordinate, and for information regarding exhibition space and resources available to facilitate your proposal. **ALL ARTIST PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY January 15th, 2019.**

For more information, find us at: tag2019.maxwell.syr.edu or contact us at: tag2019@maxwell.syr.edu.