Futurity, Time, and Archaeology

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Abstract

There continues to be much archaeological discussion concerning temporality and the complex relationship between the past and present, but less attention is paid to how the future figures into archaeological thought, method, and interpretation. This introductory essay provides the theoretical framework for an archaeological consideration of futurity, an approach that takes seriously the expectations and imaginations of people in the past while also recognizing the urgency of our present here-and-now. An archaeology of critical futurities opens the discipline to potentialities of action, to imagine worlds otherwise in the past and to strive for change in the future. By broadening archaeological approaches to time to include futures, authors in this collection demonstrate the global potential for an archaeology poised for action in addition to exploring how the future is a critical component of understanding the past and present.

Futurity, Time, and Archaeology

An archaeological concern with the future may seem counterintuitive. Readers of this journal are likely familiar with the ways in which archaeologies of the contemporary are challenging more traditional approaches to time and chronology, but for many, the future as an archaeological concept runs against the grain of a disciplinary privileging of the relationship between the past and present. The papers collected in this special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology* suggest that archaeology can and should be concerned with the future – that ours is a discipline that can take seriously the urgency of emergent futures (Harrison 2016) and the responsibility of future-making.

Keywords: futurity; futures past; potentialities of action; temporality

Journal of Contemporary Archaeology 6.1 (2019) 1–15
ISSN (print) 2051-3429 (online) 2051-3437 https://doi.org/10.1558/jca.36830

We do so with a unique perspective, and with a tool kit well-equipped to analyze the ways in which the material past impinges upon our present and frames our future. Given this inevitable intermingling of past, present, and future, the present here-and-now, as suggested by Hannah Arendt (2006 [1961]), can be considered a vibrant coalescence of multiple temporalities entrenched in moments of struggle. The papers collected here demonstrate that archaeology can and, perhaps, must engage directly and consciously with that struggle.

The future traditionally denotes that which is not yet, what is to come. It can function as the closing bookend in the tripartite temporal structure of past, present, and future, signaling a progressive linkage between the three in which the future is distinct, separate, and after the past and present. This framing, of course, says little of the phenomenological or experiential dimensions of time often espoused in critiques of time as uniform and linear. Furthermore, it doesn't demonstrate the dynamic folding, intersections, and entanglements of time that characterize multi-temporal archaeological approaches (Hamilakis 2011; Dawdy 2016; see also Minkowski 1970 [1933]). This introduction, therefore, serves to shed light on how the future comes to bear on archaeological thought, and, more specifically, to address how thinking about the future beyond its status as a temporal category can bring the concept of futurity into archaeological parlance.

What is being proposed in the present issue is not an archaeology *of* the future, *per se*. A 2015 session at the Theoretical Archaeology Group conference organized by Karen Holmberg addressed this very topic, featuring contributions that pushed archaeologists to creatively double as futurologists by reorienting the archaeological gaze from the deep past to the deep future. Additionally, a budding archaeology of future-making has highlighted archaeology's increasingly important role in asserting a disciplinary dedication to heritage futures and developing practical, materially grounded strategies for coping with potentially disastrous futures (Högberg and Holtorf 2013; Winter 2014; Harrison 2015, 2016; Holtorf and Högberg 2015; Zetterstrom-Sharp 2015; Harrison *et al.* 2016; Joyce 2016). While informed by and in conversation with these archaeological considerations of the future, there are some subtle distinctions in how the future – or, rather, futures – are framed in this issue. Partly inspired by archaeologies of the contemporary, the authors in this collection, following Graves-Brown *et al.* (2013, 11), build on the notion that "archaeology […] is a form of futurology, in that it imagines a future in which this past has significance", but also, at the same time, a past in which the future has significance.

A distinction therefore rests between futurity as an analytical concept and the future as temporal frame for the hereafter. As a concept, futurity can be approached archaeologically in a way less limiting than the future. Materials and landscapes visible in the archaeological record can be indicative of future-oriented behavior in the past: mundane operations like the planting of agricultural fields, the digging of a builder's trench, lithic manufacture, and the laying of cobblestone streets all reflect actions that anticipate future use or yield. The materialization of an intended or anticipated future, or its failure to appear, becomes a limited instantiation of the initial possibilities and pluralities of envisioned futures – i.e. a plural futurity as opposed to *the* future. Such pluralities and desired alternatives, however, are in themselves just as worthy of archaeological consideration as materialized outcomes that are often only visible in hindsight.

This collection brings together archaeologists who consider the concept of futurity from four broad but interrelated perspectives. The first, related to the discussion above, engages with what Reinhart Koselleck (2004 [1985]) refers to as futures past, or those futures conceived and mobilized in the past that may or may not have coalesced. Case-studies from Mexico (Amaral) and Senegal (Richard) demonstrate colonial frictions in how futures are envisioned by subjects whose aspirations compete with colonial designs. The second considers how the past intrudes on the future. Similar to archaeological discussions of future-making, case-studies from Detroit (Ryzewski), Bolivia (Roddick), and Ireland (McAtackney) consider how the past can be operationalized at city, community, and national levels, respectively, to forge political claims to the future. Futurity can also be a powerful conceptual tool for the purposes of decolonizing archaeological thought and practice. Case studies from Western and South Asia (Rizvi) and Latin America (Benavides) remind us that colonialism, both in archaeological practice and geopolitical violence, hinders emancipatory futures. Finally, three authors (Olivier, Witmore, and Wurst) critically take stock of the scope, scale, and trajectory of archaeology in an age of increasingly uncertain futures plagued by environmental devastation and unhinged capitalism.

At this juncture, the distinction between the future and futurity is not as salient as it was when outlined above. Futurity as an analytical concept that garners archaeological attention demands a consideration of the circumstances and processes that allow for the materialization of one particular future over another. Furthermore, alternative futures envisioned in the past can serve as inspiration for archaeological praxis, or those action-oriented approaches to archaeology that can be transformative, politically engaged, and aspirational (Liebmann and Rizvi 2008; McGuire 2008; Atalay *et al.* 2014; Gnecco and Lippert 2015). Nonetheless, futurity and the future are dependent on how we conceptualize time and understand the interrelatedness of the past, present, and future. Futurity, therefore, is perhaps a needed analytic that provides a cutting, decolonizing, and politically charged bent for archaeological meditations on epistemology and ontology, in that it pushes archaeologists to "examine the present and the politics of manipulating the past and its relics" (Domanska 2005, 395) with an eye toward the future. As archaeologists continue to explore the relationship between the past and the present, considerations of futurity can therefore make interventions that expand the scope of archaeological time.

Despite efforts to push "beyond chronology" in order to rethink how time "can open up new possibilities of doing archaeology and interpreting the past" (Lucas 2005, 27), building and understanding linear, chronological time still occupies a tremendous amount of archaeological interpretive effort. This adherence to chronology can be partly attributed to the conceptual development of historical time and its effect on the archaeological discipline (Thomas 2004; Olivier 2011). History, viewed as a horizontal plane on which events are ordered in succession, suggests that "[n]o event can be narrated, no structure represented, no process described without the use of historical concepts which make the past 'conceivable'" (Koselleck 2004 [1985], 112). Events, structures, and processes are what make the historical past conceivable, but they can also be helpful in "taking us beyond the simple temporal succession of chronology into alternative conceptions of historical process" (Pickering 2004, 274).

This metahistorical maneuvering speaks to the relationship between experience and

expectation (described in more detail below), and has been employed in analyses of, for instance, tension and expectation between the world wars (Parchasi 2009; Saint-Amour 2015). In her analysis of French anticipation between the wars, Roxanne Parchasi (2009, 162) observes: "That ideas about the future should depend on the experience and recollection of the past, its more and less accurate representation, is perhaps not surprising", adding that "[a]nticipation also has an important role to play in determining and shaping what will become the stuff of cultural memory at a given historical moment." The entanglements of experience and expectation also have material correlates and consequences that don't neatly comport with the traditional tenets of historical time, allowing analyses of expectation to bear archaeological fruit. Archaeology can undertake a process of "opening time" (Olivier 2011, 98) in which the past – as memory and experience – envelops the now, informing "emergent futures" (Harrison 2016).

What this means in practice is that even the most innocuous artifacts – glass bottles, agricultural tools, items of adornment – can reflect aspirations in the past, realized or deferred desires in the now in which these traces exist, and an unknown future in which these past expectations held significance. For instance, bottle glass found at sites of Senegalese peasants during the French colonial period (Richard, this issue) can be indicative of colonial desires and material strivings that fail to meet modern expectations of prosperity. This futurity is compounded in the present by anxieties surrounding African futures more generally. Similarly, but on a broader, landscape scale, Haskell and Stawski (2017) and Sassaman (2012) consider how people in the past experienced, contemplated, and attempted to best utilize their environments with an eye toward the future. In the case of pre-colonial Florida, Sassaman (2012) notes that human intervention on the landscape was intended to address environmental change and prevent undesirable futures – a practice of consequence for those archaeologists looking to the past for lessons on how to divert potentially disastrous futures.

As Zoë Crossland (2014, 126) surmises: "In the work of archaeology the traces of a past are encountered and an anticipated future is evoked." Part of a concern for enacted experience includes consideration of aspiration, anticipation, and imagination – the key components of what Arjun Appadurai (2013, 286) calls the "future as a cultural fact". The material manifestations of expectation can be visible, as mentioned above, in the built landscape, consumption patterns and preferences, ritual behavior, and agricultural practices. On the other hand, expectations are often unmet – buildings are abandoned, decay sets in, desired socioeconomic mobility results in hardship, and utopian visions crudely succumb to violent ends – highlighting tensions between competing visions of the future and future realities. This suggests that an archaeology attendant to the "time of things" (González-Ruibal 2016) should be untethered from the strictures of historical time to more adequately address multi-temporal materialities that include futures, or those material traces of "possibilities and expectation carried from the past" (Geissler and Lachenal 2016, 16).

Material Becoming and Critical Futurities

To be clear, an archaeology concerned with futurity, as proposed in this issue, is not meant to be prophetic or to claim that the discipline can be so (but see Kelly 2016 and

also Domanska 2005 for alternative perspectives of prophetic archaeology); it does not attempt to anticipate future trends in archaeological research or navigate the cumbersome waters of (diminishing) funding resources, or try to plot the waxing and waning of particular paradigms in archaeological thought (see for instance Kintigh *et al.* 2014). Furthermore, this issue makes no pretensions about addressing the problematic issue of what future generations will or will not value in terms of material heritage (Holtorf and Ortman 2008). While these subjects are of extreme consequence to our discipline and its societal roles, many contributors to this issue instead focus on how humans in the past and present envision(ed) their or our collective futures, and how archaeologists can address these concerns.

Analysis of the "cultural fact" of the future is necessarily a political project. In response to the crowd-sourced overview of the "grand challenges" facing archaeology's future provided by Kintigh *et al.* (2014), Charles Cobb (2014, 590, 592) laments "that history was so quickly relegated to the dustbin of, well, history" and that the authors adopt "a very neutral stance with regard to the broader implication of our work". Archaeology, as a science, in addition to being predicated on the persistence of archaeological materials into the future, is well-positioned to address long-term social change, continuity, and cultural processes. At the same time, the material "nowness" of global devastation and destruction threatens our futures, demanding further consideration for what archaeology really stands to contribute to the social and natural sciences – a consideration for many of the authors in this issue. Archaeology's future as a discipline is not a given (see Wurst, this issue), but its methodological and conceptual strengths can certainly be applied to our own anticipations and expectations of what kind of futures we imagine. Part of this imaginative process is dependent upon the metaphysical dimensions of materiality.

If, as Appadurai (2013) asserts, the future is a cultural fact, it is necessarily a material becoming. Here I refer to the metaphysical openness that was central to Nietzsche's philosophy on the phenomenological and temporal. Nietzsche borrows from the Greeks, specifically Heraclitus, who radically suggested that our world is one of "absolute becoming", meaning that nothing is stable, fixed, circumscribed, cyclical, or continuous: most famously, he is attributed with having observed that "we cannot step into the same river twice, since fresh waters are always flowing upon us" (as phrased by Small 2010, 4). For Nietzsche, the tangible and metaphysical are enmeshed in ceaseless acts of becoming. It is the elasticity of materials that allows matter in flux to be assembled, disassembled, formed, and transformed in endless permutations of becoming. Human–material interactions are affected by this notion of becoming, and archaeologists encounter material in a nowness predicated upon ever-shifting temporalities. In other words, a future-oriented approach to archaeological materials recognizes the differential futures of an artifact from its moment of production to its use, deposition, recovery, and so forth. Shifts take place in how objects are perceived, but ontological modifications also ensure material transformations, suggesting that materials can be different things at different times (Novak and Warner-Smith 2019).

Rather than being inert, materials are in a state of absolute becoming that form limitless possibilities for human–material interaction (Bennett 2010). These interactions comprise socio-material futures, or as Tim Ingold (2012b, 435) suggests, the interaction

between people and things is "perpetually on the threshold of emergence". He argues against pre-existing forms or the concreteness of material being that would situate an object in a singular spatio-temporal context, instead emphasizing the ineffable qualities of the material realm that refuse permanence in the past, present, or future. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, he (Ingold 2012a, 10) mediates the relationship between perception and reality, foregrounding the role played by futures: "In this world, indeed, there are no objects to represent, only materials; no fixed and final forms, only potentials for things to grow and transform." This incessant becoming is what allows archaeological vestiges to be future-oriented, open, and pregnant with potential. In other words, things and landscapes can be aspirational, infused with multiple becomings and futurities that were not or are not yet realized. We might then, for example, recognize how archaeological assemblages, materials, and even soils engage *us* in these processes of becoming (Rizvi, this issue).

Placing an emphasis on futures unlocks new ways of exploring the past through the material traces that bear witness to past futures. Elizabeth Grosz (1999, 11) endorses such a position, arguing that "[o]nly if we open ourselves up to a time in which the future plays a structuring role in the value and effectivity of the past and present can we revel in the indeterminacy, the becoming, of time itself." Grosz's potentiality of revelry, however, should be considered with caution. The metaphysics of becoming notwithstanding, what is lacking is the sense of urgency that is often sutured to anticipation, expectation, and imagination in moments of socio-political duress. In her philosophico-historical treatment of crisis, Janet Roitman (2014, 28) employs Koselleck to elucidate how crisis "is a matter of a moral demand for a difference between the past and the future". How one chooses to define crisis in geopolitical, socioeconomic, or humanistic terms is open to debate, but, as a historical concept, its salience lies in its pressing concern for radically differential futures.

Placing these metaphysical considerations in dialogue with the urgencies that weigh heavily on past and alternative futures ensures that archaeological considerations of futurity are wedded to the inequities that have made possible certain futures while hindering others. This collection of essays therefore serves to provide teeth for more cutting discussions of becoming that are attuned to the politics that shape material ontologies. This means considering becoming beyond the material, and commenting upon, for example, socioeconomic, geopolitical, environmental, and humanitarian becomings that have material dimensions or underpinnings. As Paul K. Saint-Amour (2015, 24) suggests, what is needed is a critical approach to futurity:

> We need a loose rubric for work that applies skeptical pressure to reflexive invocations of the future. Call it *critical futurities*: scholarship that takes as its object past and present conscriptions of "the future," the rhetoric, poetics, and ideology of such conscriptions, and their ethical, political, and historiographic import.

An archaeology of critical futurities looks to how the future was and is materially invoked; it posits that material culture can be indicative of envisioned futures, shaping our interpretations of if and how those futures were realized. The use of "critical" need

not imply some inflection of an *un*critical agenda. Instead, it serves as a reminder to take seriously those futures that failed to unfold but were nonetheless rejoinders to particular political moments and circumstances. Critical futurities, however, aren't solely the domain of scholars invested in the politics of temporality or the affective dimensions of past experiences. Rather, they can also be an exercise in voicing dissatisfaction about the past and present through the conjuring of alternative futures. This critical praxis engages with actions taken by people in the past and present to fashion their own futures – a worthy subject of archaeological analysis and activism. Critical futurities, therefore, might inform both archaeological approaches to futures past and archaeological efforts to explore potentialities of action in the present.

Futures Past

Reinhart Koselleck (2004 [1985]) dedicates the final part of his *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* to the concept of *Neuzeit*, or new time, with the last chapter explicating how the Enlightenment ushered in a new conceptualization of time and history. The relationship at the center of this formulation is between the "space of experience" and the "horizon of expectation". We can view these concepts as being in opposition to one another while simultaneously intermingling in the present. As he argues (Koselleck 2004 [1985], 262): "[I]t is the tension between experience and expectation which, in ever-changing patterns, brings about new resolutions and through this generates historical time." While experience had once dominated and determined expectation, Koselleck suggests that the Enlightenment, specifically the French Revolution, and the emergence of a technologically driven society engendered a rupture between experience and expectation. Progress and acceleration provided the impetus for a new experience of time in which "all previous experience was inadequate to the establishment of expectations derivable from the process of a world reforming itself technologically" (Koselleck 2004 [1985], 272). This "rupture in continuity" between the space of experience and horizon of expectation is an asymmetry "which could be deduced anthropologically" (Koselleck 2004 [1985], 268). This issue takes up the challenge put forward by Koselleck, to scrupulously analyze the asymmetries between experience and expectation that are socially and materially observable without being shackled to historical time.

While acceleration and other tenets of supermodernity (Augé 1995; González-Ruibal 2008; Harrison and Schofield 2010) may indeed pose challenges for envisioning futures based on pasts in an increasingly globalized and technocratic society, the political realities of the past and present provide the space to formulate critical readings of the utter failures of progress. The experience of modernity is often one of abject destruction, ruin, devastation, and violence, and archaeologists have recently begun to engage with humanity's misapprehensions about the material consequences of progress. There is an ever-growing body of literature, particularly within the field of contemporary archaeology, concerned with ruination, decay, dereliction, global conflict, and the perils and plights of development (e.g. Saunders 2004; Shanks *et al.* 2004; González-Ruibal 2006; Dawdy 2010; Pétursdôttir and Olsen 2014; Orange 2015; Hanson 2016; McAtackney and Ryzewski 2017) that highlights the fractures and fault lines exposed by those critical of the telos of progress and other missions of modernity.

The long tentacles of colonialism and capitalism demand an archaeological approach to critical futurities that isn't relegated to a post-industrial gaze on, for example, the American Rust Belt or western Europe. The twin forces of colonialism and capitalism unloaded the material consequences of progress across the globe, including in the Global South (González-Ruibal 2016, 2017). As geographer Joel Wainwright (2008, 13) curtly remarks: "To put it baldly: development emerged as a global alibi for the imperial extension of specifically Western modes of economy, spatiality, and being […] – essentially soliciting capitalism to become development." At a moment when futures are a topic of heated debated in the so-called Third World (Richard, this issue), archaeologists are well positioned to comment on how the localized experience of colonialism and capitalism, what David Kazanjian (2016, 16) refers to as "quotidian globalities", has hindered horizons of expectation due to the material vestiges of progress that scar twenty-first-century landscapes.

This is not a reification of dichotomies like colonizer/colonized, North/South, West/rest, or First/Third World. Rather, it is a call to push archaeologists to engage with futures beyond their traditional comfort zones, and to confront the ways in which emergent futures have been conceived, experienced, realized, and thwarted on a global scale (e.g. Piot 2010). Future-making was not and is not solely the preoccupation of the West, and the persistent privileging of Western exceptionalism when it comes to the modern telos of progress woefully underestimates how the past, present, and future are carefully navigated by all people in the past and present. Colonial pasts don't necessarily determine, but they do fundamentally impinge upon, futures. Such spatio-temporal geographies are the subject of Ann Stoler's (2016, 169) recent analysis of colonial pasts and futures: "History in an active voice is only partly about the past. More important [sic.], it is about how *differential futures* are distributed" (emphasis in original).

The distribution of differential futures can be charted through geopolitical analyses of the waxing and waning of colonial processes, but they can also be manifest in localized experiences and material realities. Communities collectively and individually engage with the past and present in the process of constructing futures, especially those communities most severely impacted by colonialism. Understanding the past as palimpsest provides further support to curtail progressive, linear, or even cyclical conceptualizations of time, instead suggesting that past, present, and future can be experienced as "co-related", or a temporal entanglement defined by "simultaneity" – an approach that Deborah Thomas (2016) has utilized to describe how histories of slavery become inscribed and embodied in forms of violence in contemporary Jamaica (see also Bonilla 2015 for Caribbean futures).

Despite temporal entanglements and intersections, there can simultaneously be disjunctions, especially with regards to the ruptures observed by Koselleck between expectation and experience – as noted above, beginning with, in his formulation, the French Revolution. Where does this leave us in terms of having the past inform our future? LouAnn Wurst and Stephen Mrozowski, following the work of Marxist thinker Bertell Ollman, suggest that archaeologists should take the present as their starting point and study history backward in order to inform our considerations for moving forward. While the language of backward and forward connotes a linear, directional temporal framework that is critiqued above, they instead emphasize the relational elements of this temporal rendering, arguing (Wurst and Mrozowski 2014, 221):

> Given that we know the outcome of choices made in the past, an archaeology of the future offers the potential to ask whether those choices were well reasoned or whether alternative trajectories would have produced a different future.

The relational intersections of past, present, and future are here applied to think productively about alternative futures based on a dissatisfaction with the past and present. Therefore, it is necessary to account for those who wielded power in attempting to bring unsavory or unequal futures to fruition. At the same time, however, conceived futures are multiple, as are the methods by which they are produced and contested. Futures comingle with, but aren't necessarily defined by, the past and present.

Radical ruptures in moments of tension can inspire processes of forgetting or denial, dissociating the past from present and future. Furthermore, geopolitical and epistemic violence can stall political visions. David Kazanjian (2016, 229) recognizes such unsettling or speculative experiential disjunctures in how social scientists approach multitemporal episodes or processes, noting that "even as we chart the repetition of structural knowns in what we study, our futures depend on cultivating an attention to what and how structures fail to know." Consociality, a phenomenology-inspired approach that situates things and beings in a shared space and time (Lucas 2015), also suggests that generational memory can be fundamental in conceptualizing futures and the rhythms of lived temporality (Scott 2014; see also Birth 2012 for how objects relate the experience of temporal rhythms). The experiential dimensions of time, situated as they are in specific geo-political circumstances, might therefore shed light on the affective sentiments linked to the future such as anxiety, expectation, imagination, reluctance, pessimism, optimism, and action.

Issue Outline: Potentialities of Action

This special issue of *JCA* brings together scholars presenting diverse case-studies that suggest how a discipline traditionally defined by its focus on the past can potentially contribute to dialogues about futures, but not necessarily prophetically. As such, they recall Hannah Arendt's collection of essays *Between Past and Future* (Arendt 2006 [1961]), which considers our troublesome situatedness in a potentially cataclysmic present. In her reflection on Greek and nineteenth-century philosophy, Arendt brings us to the twentieth-century realm where the future is in jeopardy because of human action or, rather, inaction, and by placing Marx in conversation with the likes of Plato, she succinctly operationalizes Marx's philosophical praxis that now provides a rallying cry to archaeologists anxious to turn their interpretive practice into action-oriented praxis (McGuire 2008; Stottman 2010): "The philosophers have interpreted the world long enough; the time has come to change it" (Karl Marx, quoted in Arendt 2006 [1961], 21). The essays in this collection seek to explicate how an archaeological approach to critical futurities might fuse interpretations of the past and present with a serious engagement with emergent, alternative futures. Such an approach pushes archaeologists to harness imaginative futures past for contemplative and direct action. As Laurent Olivier demands in his contribution to this issue, archaeologists can no longer work under the assumption that we can simply know or

describe what happened in the past; rather, the past can offer archaeologists multiple futures that shape the realm of possibility in the present. While most of the contributions to this volume include case-studies from the recent past, all archaeological work is conducted in a here-and-now fraught with uncertainty and inequity linked to immediate and distant pasts that could have materialized otherwise.

The collection thus begins with Olivier's inquisition into "what happened". Through an exploration of the age of presentism, Olivier addresses the urgency of our present moment, one beleaguered by modern destruction and the threat of future oblivion. Olivier asserts that the post-World War II age of devastation and the Great Acceleration has rendered the past inoperable from the present and future. This "presentism" signals a transformed relationship between archaeology and history in which the past is emergent and *in* the present. In a present mired by the threat of environmental destruction, Olivier sees the future of archaeology as being dependent on our ability to account for how the present contains the past and impinges upon our future.

Poignantly reminding us that the fantasies of progress and failures of modernity are not relegated to the West, O. Hugo Benavides employs science fiction to highlight the continual violence meted out in Latin America by colonialism and capitalism on the body of the "other." Finding inspiration in works of fiction, Benavides expands the archaeological dataset through an exploration of how science fiction offers a window through which to explore the material and corporeal dimensions of colonialism. The essay pivots between the Foucauldian implementation of archaeology that is more epistemologically oriented and an archaeology concerned with the material consequences of modernity. Lamenting that archaeological critiques of colonialism and capitalism can potentially conceal disciplinary complicity in such processes, this essay exposes how science fiction can be frighteningly revelatory of material realties confronted by archaeologists.

Visions of sovereignty dating from the eighteenth to the twentieth century are materially marked by ruins on the contemporary Mexican landscape. Through a case-study of the village of Amapa, in Veracruz, Adela Amaral presents the challenge of how to archaeologically analyze futures past that range in scope, expectation, and implementation. Futures in such a colonial realm exceeded the grand visions of imperial expansion and domination. Acts of resistance like marronage, in which enslaved peoples absconded from their plantation prisons, can and should be viewed as future-oriented acts that proclaimed one's own ability to strive for and demand autonomy over one's body and future. Amaral's essay explores competing visions of the future in this maroon settlement in Mexico, both from the perspective of colonial authorities and the maroons themselves, to comment on detritus of futures past.

François Richard demonstrates that the future is at the tip of the tongue of those invested in the study of Africa, in his essay specifically West Africa. Whether couched in the language of crisis, instability, or scarcity, the centuries-long developmental and colonial "project" in Africa has severely restricted African voices in discussions pertaining to the making of pasts and futures. Seeking to pluralize the singular, modern, and colonial metanarrative of African history, Richard compellingly demonstrates that strategies for building futures were always complex, multiple, and materially grounded. Through an analysis of material culture from a Senegalese peasant community, Richard

demonstrates how local community members envisioned their own futures, even if such visions didn't neatly comport with colonial notions of subjectivity and development or global renderings of the so-called "Dark Continent" in the twenty-first century.

Krysta Ryzewski situates urban archaeology in Detroit in a present moment in which the past comes to bear on competing visions for the future. Developers and archaeologists can make for strange bedfellows, but Ryzewski demonstrates how archaeologists can work with developers and grassroots organizations to mitigate the destruction of progress through community collaborations that celebrate tangible and intangible heritage. In Detroit, short-sighted futures of fiscal development and urban renewal demand archaeological intervention to ensure a future with links to a proud, if contentious, past.

The coalescence of pasts and futures in contemporary developmental discourse is also at the heart of Andrew Roddick's analysis of potters in the Bolivian Andes. Highlighting how ceramic traditions from the Middle Horizon period impinge upon the contemporary landscape and potting craft-industry of Chijipata Alta, Roddick showcases some of the strengths of archaeological ethnography while challenging some of the approach's political and temporal assumptions. Like Ryzewski's essay, there is a similar commitment to engaging with how local communities are affected by development discourse. If futures are on the minds of community members who are the subjects of or collaborators in archaeological inquiry, so must they be on the minds of archaeologists.

Laura McAtackney explores how the past or pasts are remade through material interventions at a site of memory in Ireland. Kilmainham Gaol is a space of contested national memory in Dublin where individuals and groups have staked their claim to particular pasts and futures through material structural alterations. Through a chronology of the prison, McAtackney demonstrates how competing versions of the past intersect with competing visions of the future. Graffiti on prison walls and its intentional removal indicate that material interventions speak to broader issues of national memory, silencing, and erasure.

Using the stunning work of Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky to frame his discussion, Christopher Witmore posits that archaeologists need to manipulate scale and scope in order to meaningfully approach things that exceed the archaeological purview. Witmore proposes an archaeological approach to what he refers to as the hypanthropos, or that which is in excess of the monstrous, in order to develop a disciplinary framework for dealing with the things of supermodernity that are immense and immeasurable but most consequential to our existence on this planet. The literally earth-shifting degree to which humans are now affecting the planet, as seen, for instance, in the construction of Three Gorges Dam in China, demands a reorientation in how archaeologists, and humans in general, perceive their material world and their impacts upon it.

Uzma Rizvi is concerned with how things and the past approach archaeologists. In thinking epistemologically and ontologically about the foundations of archaeological thought, Rizvi suggests that speculative archaeology might be a fundamental and necessary part of the disciplinary decolonization process. Using material as mundane as soil, her essay addresses how materials approach and transform archaeologists. Pushing back against symmetrical approaches, however, Rizvi never loses sight of the inherent asymmetries that affect the archaeological production of knowledge and the

colonial violence of the past, present, and future. The essay has an eye toward the future, positing that speculation might be critical to an archaeological consideration of futures.

The volume concludes with a provocative essay by LouAnn Wurst asking not whether archaeology *will* have a future but if it *should* have a future. Highly critical of archaeology's complicity in the capitalist-driven system of higher education, Wurst questions whether a future with archaeology is even desirable if it isn't making a concerted effort to promote substantive and equitable change. Rather than fulfilling the role of Gramsci's traditional intellectual, Wurst proposes that archaeologists instead embrace the revolutionary potential of the organic intellectual (see also Crehan 2016). If archaeology should indeed be "useful" (Dawdy 2009), Wurst makes the case that it should be useful for the purposes of emancipatory action to demolish the monumental infrastructure of capitalism.

The concerns raised in this volume are related to issues of historical production, temporality, memory, politics, materiality, the archaeological discipline, and, of course, unknowable futures; these issues affect the ways in which we interpret the archaeological record, engage with the material world around us, and conceive our roles as archaeologists. An archaeology sensitive to critical futurities can illuminate the false promises of progress, modernity, and postcolonialism, enticing us to imagine and strive for the "possibilities" of worlds otherwise (Graeber 2007). Documenting, as many of these essays do, the material detritus of futures past sheds light on the forces that can and should be combatted. At the same time, however, there is ample space to expand, positioning archaeology to explore the potentialities of multiple futures that are made possible by the amalgam of futures past.

Discussing French philosopher Henri Bergon's dissatisfaction of the linear view of causality and determinism, DeLanda (1999, 34) suggests that

> if all the future is already given in the past, if the future is merely that modality of time where previously determined possibilities become realized, then true innovation is impossible. To avoid this mistake, he [Bergson] thought, we must struggle to model the future as truly open-ended and the past and the present as pregnant not only with possibilities which become real, but also with virtualities which become actual.

These virtualities, however, are limited by the forces and conditions that engender struggle. Envisioned futures that fail to materialize, or futures past, often lead to "a *disenchanted* world, a world defined precisely by the loss of that promise of revolution, a world of temporal aftermaths" (Scott 2014, 36, emphasis in original). Perhaps, then, Marx was thinking more of futures than pasts: we make our own future, but we do not make it just as we please. The authors that comprise this collective, however, express an archaeological commitment to potentialities of action that ceaselessly strive to turn critical futurities into sustainable and equitable realities.

Acknowledgements

This special issue is the result of a conference held at the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, Brown University, in April 2015. I am incredibly grateful to Sue Alcock, John Cherry, and Peter Van Dommelen for their encouragement, support,

and suggestions in the planning stages of this event. Many thanks to Sarah Sharpe and Jess Porter for all of their hard work in making this conference a reality. Rodney Harrison, Esther Breithoff, and Richard Bartholomew at the *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology* were extremely patient and dedicated, making this an enjoyable and productive publication experience. This introduction was made stronger by generous comments provided by Tate Paulette and anonymous reviewers. My greatest debt is owed to the gracious participants in the conference and this publication. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with you. Thank you for your patience and good will, and for sharing your inspirational scholarship.

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