
Commentary

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Does non-anthropocentrism necessitate a turn away from marginalized people? This is a crucial question, asked lately by a growing number of archaeologists. Some see a turn toward things as a turn away from people, while others take a more nuanced view. Greer falls into the latter group, exploring this question by highlighting important contributions and corrections from Black Studies. Although the paper is framed as a challenge to posthumanism, I read it as a broad critique of non-anthropocentric approaches; after reflecting on these relationships over the last few years, I no longer draw strong associations between posthumanism and symmetrical archaeology, entanglement theory, or even ANT; for me, posthumanism involves a relatively greater degree of social and political concern than the others.

Greer provides an insightful history of humanism, tracing its connections to colonialism, capitalism, and the exclusion of people who differ from ideals established by Enlightened, white, western, privileged societies. This critique parallels posthuman philosophers' concerns over 'humanist Man' (e.g. Braidotti 2022). Yet Greer argues that posthumanism 'missteps', focusing most energy on critiquing anthropocentrism while reifying humanism's incomplete and problematic version of humanity. Greer argues that posthuman archaeologies must place greater emphasis on understanding humanity's *multiplicity* akin to the ways they seek to understand non-human multiplicities. I agree with Greer, but, in my reading, this is a task that some posthuman approaches have already begun (discussed below).

Posthuman critiques and non-anthropocentrism were imported into archaeology as a response to human exceptionalism—implicit assumptions that *all* humans are fundamentally different from everything else. As Greer indicates, these non-anthropocentric frameworks are often concerned with bringing non-humans and their contributions into focus, rather than studying different human

experiences and standpoints. I agree with Greer that humanism only privileges certain forms of humanity. This slant is baked into humanism's history, but what about more recent approaches that draw inspiration from it? Take, for example, archaeology's engagement with agency. Is it Greer's assertion that, over the last four-plus decades, archaeologists treated agency as a transcend quality possessed by only certain *Homo sapiens*? In my reading, archaeological discussions of agency tend to lean towards human exceptionalism and tend to include *all* varieties of *Homo sapiens* as the primary agents making differences in the world (cf. Foucault-inspired approaches to power and practice). In other words, archaeological discussions of agency tend to assume that humans (in my reading, all of them) have exceptional qualities that set them apart from their surroundings (cf. Crellin & Harris 2021); they assume that the most important difference in all times and places is that between humans and the world around them. Non-anthropocentric approaches seek to challenge these assumptions. I do not see this as a misstep, but I do understand Greer's point about how such a focus potentially leads to two key problems: 1) reifying a universalized human that does not account for different situated forms of humanity; and 2) losing sight of how the interpreter views the world from a particular (often privileged) vantage.

One way of challenging transcendent and universalizing approaches that narrowly conceive of humans in a limiting way is through a turn to *relations* (e.g. Harris & Cipolla 2017). Non-anthropocentric, relational archaeologies seem to align with Greer's discussion of Sylvia Wynter's ideas. Relational approaches tend to look to affect instead of agency (Crellin & Harris 2021), where no entity (human or otherwise) is assumed to have a stable essence. Instead, entities are defined by the *particular* relationships that they have with their surroundings. A key component of this work is recognizing how

archaeologists sit in relation to the worlds they write about. Greer emphasizes this point with his discussion of Pétursdóttir's writings on an abandoned factory. Greer offers a critique, asking about the implications of Pétursdóttir's apparent disregard of local knowledge about the factory. Greer explains that, because of this disregard, only a particular perspective, that of 'those deemed (more) fully human' is included in the discussion of the site, 'since within the framework of OOO there is no need to include other voices'. Is this situation about being more human, or is it about being more correct or more relevant to the specific point of Pétursdóttir's argument? I do not see these things as exactly the same, but this does not discount Greer's main point. Pétursdóttir's approach seems to gloss over their positionality—who they are and who they are not. This resembles Haraway's (1988, 584; see also Tallbear 2014) classic critiques of the view from everywhere and nowhere.

I was less convinced by Greer's critiques of posthuman feminist archaeologies. As with the critique of Pétursdóttir's work, Greer asks how posthuman feminists are situated. Again, this is an important question, but, in my reading, Greer's review is incomplete and slightly unfair. Greer argues that posthuman feminists 'fail to note the ontological importance of the exclusion of marginalized people'. In reviewing Crellin's article on Bronze Age warriors, for example, Greer argues that it 'does not incorporate other *Homo sapiens*' into the discussion. Should Crellin herself, who identifies as a woman, count as one of those *other Homo sapiens* who have been written out of such histories? That exclusion is a major motivating factor of Crellin's (2020; see also Crellin *et al.* 2021, chapters 8 and 9) work. Unlike the factory example, Crellin situates her knowledge frequently in her writings. In short, I feel that approaches like Crellin's align well with what Greer aims to accomplish.

Greer's essay is a welcome addition to the literature. My questions and concerns should not be taken as anything but those of a highly interested reader who believes heartily in the importance (and inseparability) of socially aware and non-anthropocentric forms of archaeology. There is clearly scope for further discussion between posthuman feminism and Black Studies. I look forward to these discussions, and to seeing how these concepts inform future case studies.

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