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## Review of "Points in Time: Structure and Event in a Late Northern Plains Hunting Society" by Philip Duke

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**Points in Time: Structure and Event in a Late Northern Plains Hunting Society.** Philip Duke. Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1991. xii + 225 pp. Photographs, illustrations, and references. \$29.95 cloth (ISBN 0-87081-226-2).

The first processual studies in archaeology began appearing—and making an impression on the field as a whole—nearly 30 years ago. These studies ushered in a revolution in American archaeology and forever changed how this field is taught and practiced. A great deal of heat was exchanged between the processualists and the traditionalists as the new paradigm slowly was accepted into mainstream archaeology. Much of this heat was unfortunately expended uselessly as people spoke past one another both in person and in print. The processual school eventually won the struggle, and such studies today are themselves traditional. Efforts by a new group—the postprocessualists—now are being made to recast the goals of archaeology. These efforts are making headway very slowly, largely, I think, because of the obscure language in which they are broached.

In *Points in Time*, Philip Duke offers us our first essay in the application of postprocessual concepts to Plains archaeology. The language is straightforward, and Duke's contribution is an exciting, thought-provoking look at the hunting cultures of the last two millennia in southern Alberta, Canada. The Besant, Avonlea, Old Women's, and One Gun phases of the middle and late prehistoric periods lived in the area where the historic Blackfoot Indians were the principal inhabitants. Although the archaeological record there is one of little change, Duke warns us against using historic analogy for the prehistoric picture: in punctuated equilibrium, transitional forms (sites) may be so rare as not to be found. The early historic Sheyenne-Cheyenne site in North Dakota, for example, has no known precedents, nor are there any later sites resembling it.

Duke argues that “during the last 2,000 years of Alberta’s prehistory and history, there existed a structural continuity that profoundly affected human behavior.” He focuses on such structures as technology, economy, and social organization—and is particularly “concerned with the symbolic importance attached to the procurement and processing activities, a symbolism manifested during the historic period in gender relationships” (pp. 1-2).

The discursive essay that follows concludes, in part, with the generalization that the late prehistoric period (specifically Avonlea) was organized along at least one major structural division: gender. Bison hunting was a source of prestige, and it was intensified at the same time Avonlea projectile points were being embellished beyond any reasonable utilitarian necessity. This example of hunting symbolism correlates with the widespread adoption of pottery-making—perhaps a response by other members of society to the dominance and prestige that accrued to hunters. “Ethnographically, there is strong evidence for equating these two groups with male and female” (p. 183).

Unless it is to be unnecessarily sterile, archaeology must be both scientific and humanistic. Duke provides us with a helpful model that shows one means of accomplishing this end. His study, as he assures us, is experimental. I look forward to his next one, and congratulate him on his efforts to date. **W. Raymond Wood**, *Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri-Columbia*.