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Response to Hayden

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Hayden and I share a number of interests in how prehistoric societies and how they work, but we start from very different positions regarding how to investigate these common interests. Hayden is concerned that archaeological evidence for storage is unreliable and inaccurate (see Villeneuve and Hayden, this volume), and therefore turns to ethnography and uniformitarian assumptions, where contemporary traditional societies effectively represent fossilised examples from the past. I see this as a hangover from colonial arguments that have been used to dismiss such societies as 'primitive', rather than examples of the great diversity of contemporary lifeways.

My own argument is very simple. Ethnographic analogy can be of some value where the ethnographic example is close to the archaeological one, in time, space, environment, and ideally historical context. These critically important conditions make direct analogy with late Pleistocene/Early Holocene societies in Southwest Asia impossible — they are far removed in time, space and environment from any modern hunter-gatherers. Furthermore, the changes in climate witnessed over this period — through the Bølling-Allerød to the Younger Dryas, and then onto the Holocene — cover such huge climate changes that there is no remote possibility of a suitable modern analogue. No modern society could conceivably be a good analogue with the Natufian — a society that changes, adapts, and develops over its several thousand year history. Villeneuve and Hayden's bald statement that comparisons between the contemporary Canadian Northwest Plateau and the Natufian seem "apt" therefore seems hard to justify. The detailed economic costings produced on this questionable analogy sit on very shaky foundations, even before they reach the suggestion that Natufian society may have included slaves. I've helped a student make lime plaster at Beidha, and while generating the temperatures required is hard work, procuring the raw materials, even in today's deforested landscape, takes little time or effort. In the absence of any potential for direct analogy, what we need to do is turn to the archaeological data — data that has been developing very rapidly, with a combination of new fieldwork and the development of an ever-more sophisticated suite of archaeological science techniques.

The documented diversity of hunter-gatherer lives is an illustration of the range of behaviours that exist in a sadly massively truncated anthropological present. We can

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safely assume that the range of behaviour will have been even greater in the past. As Artemova observes, no contemporary hunter-gatherer society shows any indication that it is on the same or similar trajectory to that taken by Natufian or early Neolithic societies, rather that modern societies have followed "their own evolutionary paths, very diverse and complicated indeed, and that their contemporary cultures are derivatives of alternative ways and directions of historical development" (Artemova, this volume). There is no doubt: the late Pleistocene and Early Holocene societies of Southwest Asia have no contemporary, or near contemporary analogues. To further emphasise the point, the debate regarding potential cognitive changes occurring around this period in the past further illustrates how poorly ethnographic analogy fits the context — we are still working out how people's minds worked during this period (Sterelny, Watkins 2015). Hayden's conception that our interpretation of the ancient past requires a contemporary "ethnographic warrant" appears not only to close down our understanding of the past, but to be fundamentally flawed as an approach that inevitably leads to a re-creation of the past-as-present.

The scatter-gun of the hyper-analogic approach can be seen in the use of Southeast Asian analogies, referring to the multi-family longhouse residences of modern rice farmers as a good analogy with the small, functionally specific, non-residential structures of hunter-cultivators of PPNA Dhra'. Two of the great values of archaeological data are the specificity of the information we can unpack, and its diachronic nature — valuable attributes that we should not lose in a global *smorgasbord* of analogy. In my paper, I refer to the possibility that the large multi-purpose structures of the Late PPNB represent corporate entities, associated with the growth of lineages and clans. The point is that this is in stark contrast to the archaeological evidence from the PPNA. The argument is based on direct archaeological data and does not require reference to the Torajan or Sumban ancestral houses! Hayden's more limited archaeological horizons can be seen in his comment on Peterson's paper, when he states that archaeologists focus on economic and social types of hierarchies. The multi-facetted nature of hierarchy is important to any attempt to understand past society. Interest in ritual and political hierarchy has a long history in archaeology, while the role of gender has been of increasing focus over the last decades.

Hayden states that the "lack of special mortuary treatment is an extremely unreliable indicator of egalitarian social organization" and cites Feinman and Neitzel (1984: 76, table 2.9) in evidence. Feinman and Neitzel's data is entirely based on ethnographic data from the Americas, casting some immediate and considerable doubt on its universal application or relevance. More directly, it contradicts his preceding argument, that special burials are indicative of attempts by lineage heads and ambitious individuals to exalt the deceased or promote their lineages. In only two of Feinman and Neitzel's American examples do special burials serve as status markers of leaders, and their argument is the mirror image of Hayden's, as they argue that special burial practices are an unreliable indicator of leadership. Within the terms of Hayden's analogical approach, it would appear that the complexities of early Neolithic burial practices are unlikely to indicate activity by lineage heads. More specifically, to return to the archaeological data, to state that plastering of skulls "must… have been… meant to exalt the individual family member" is to simply make an unsupported assertion. Furthermore, skull plastering (often concealing identity by reshaping heads), is only one form of burial practice, geographically and chronologically constrained within the Neolithic. The key example of burial practice I refer to in my paper is that of mixing individuals in secondary burials, where there can be no argument made that this

relates to the exaltation of the individual. (Alternative arguments based on skulls and the individual have been put forward, such as the role of skulls as trophies, taken from enemies.)

The detail of archaeological information is important, vital if we wish to use archaeology to make contributions to anthropological debates, rather than acting as consumers of analogy. It is important not to lose the specificity of the data in interpretation. For example, the early version of the communal building at Jerf el Ahmar served as a multi-functional building, with significant storage space, with its interior substantially made up of compartments (see Stordeur 2015: 149, fig. 51). It is re-purposed in its second incarnation, with a bench surrounding a central area — at which stage it no longer appears to have been a storage structure, but some form of meeting space. The storage function of the earlier phase is lost as the importance of meeting space increases, and the storage does not pertain to the individuals meeting, as the entire purpose of the structure had changed.

In my paper, I refer to the likelihood that private property existed in the Natufian, prior to the Neolithic. My point was to draw attention to the way that visibly private property appears to then vanish in the PPNA, before resurfacing by the Late PPNB, albeit in a more corporate context. Hayden's comparison with Hallan Çemi would support my argument — it is an Epipaleolithic site, generally equivalent to the Natufian in date, with evidence of fine personal jewellery (although whether these are prestige items is another matter) — but Hallan Çemi is located on the Upper Tigris in Southeastern Anatolia, a region remote from the southern Levant, and characterised by a very local and distinctive early Neolithic process.

It is also important to remember that PPNA society was truly small scale. As with the Natufian, most sites do not exceed 2000 square metres, and that includes all the special purpose buildings. The largest site in Jordan, Dhra', which is perhaps a hectare in size, is not only characterised by a range of special purpose buildings, but also by a significant amount of space between structures, including buildings that were not in contemporary use. In contrast to the Late PPNB, PPNA settlements are extremely unlikely to have sustained complex political manoeuvring between different households, kingroups, or sodalities.

There is a common misunderstanding that storage (and food production) equate to surplus. Kuijt (2009), makes the point that these different concepts have become overly entwined in the literature, and often decontextualized. There is some limited evidence for small-scale storage in the Early Natufian, possibly linked to individual residences, no storage features evident in the Late Natufian, and the storage that subsequently emerges in the early Neolithic is small-scale and not linked to individual residential structures. A surplus does not exist if stored goods solely satisfy immediate subsistence needs, cover seasonal shortages, and the seed needed for the next season's crop. Kuijt is clear, there has not been any analysis that shows that any true surplus was available until late in the Neolithic, and in my paper I note that it is unlikely that large-scale surpluses were created during the period under discussion.

Hayden also refers to evidence for sacrifice and cannibalism from the Middle Euphrates, citing the sole headless body and "cooked heads" from Jerf el Ahmar, and the disarticulated human remains with cut marks at Göbekli Tepe (I will ignore the central Anatolian example from later in the Neolithic at Çatalhöyük — it is remote in time and space). Unfortunately, the identification of these behaviours is not well grounded. Stordeur, the excavator of Jerf el Ahmar has assured me she never reported "cooked heads" (personal communication), while amidst the huge diversity

of mortuary practice, to seize upon a sole example of a headless body placed within a structure as evidence that sacrifice is characteristic of the PPNA is a giant leap. Skulls, frequently selected as elements within the hugely diverse set of PPNA mortuary practices, do not become evidence for sacrifice, even if located in what may well be votive positions. Similarly, whilst there are some human remains with cut marks on them within the enormous dump deposits at Göbekli Tepe, the excavators make the much more parsimonious case that these are post-mortem cuts related to the manipulation of bodies, within a possible context of excarnation (Dietrich, Notroff 2015).

Hayden notes that he doubts generalisations can be made about Australian aboriginals in the terms used by Peterson. The problems inherent in such an approach, when describing broadly contemporaneous societies on the same continent, illustrates why I find the use of direct analogy, especially between far-flung societies living in entirely different historical and subsistence contexts, deeply problematic. The specificity of the archaeological data stands in sharp contrast to the generalisations created through global ethnographic analogy.

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