Afterword

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This symposium is the latest installment in the long running annals of domesticity and the domicile in social anthropology. "Empirical" gives the clue as to the common approach of the papers, and the recurrence of demographic, economic, and historic concerns makes clear that we are looking at behavior rather than meanings. But it is not immediately apparent whether the emphasis falls on structure or process, household morphology or activity, or the functional themes of integration vs. purpose.

An earlier study of household structure categorized the types. Hammel and Laslett (1974) defined simple, extended, and multiple family households, leaving us with such curious permutations as the no family household, that could be applied to the co-resident celibate siblings of St. Bart. We also remember those earlier anthropological precipitates of post-marital residence "rules" like the avunculocal household. Some of these forms embodied cultural images of an ideal household like the big happy family of junior couples under a benign patriarch that was blown away by Peter Laslett's (1965) demonstration of the antiquity of the English nuclear family and Hajnal's (1965) analysis of north European late marriage and high celibacy. But ethnographic and historical accounts of local household diversity do not remove the evidence for real, enduring, regional patterns. The Japanese stem family household and the Slavic joint family suggest cultural values, preferences, even "noumenal norms" (Laslett, 1984) passed down through the generations. These do not seem to reflect rule-bound behavior, and there are no social sanctions for living in households of the "wrong" type. Shared symbols and aspirations, mental templates of familiar and desirable domestic arrangements, do affect people's choices, but so does practical reason, ecology, and economics in the

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dialectic that the late Robert Murphy (1971) so presciently defined. People do not talk much about changing the norms or the regulations, but they do alter and adapt the time at which they form households, the periods that members stay in them, and how they break them up. We still need statistical models of household behavior where it counts and is counted—what Leach (1961) advocated in Pul Eliya, but long ago stopped doing, and what Sahlins (1957) found in Moala but then forgot in the excitement of the Hawaiian discovery of Captain Cook.

All anthropological research raises questions, but empirical questions have answers. These papers arouse a host of questions of facts. As the editors point out in their introduction, those facts are evidence for supporting assertions and data to test hypotheses. There are (if you will pardon the expression) positivistic, scientifically verifiable standards of (again, my apologies) explanation. This is not a text interpreted apart from its context of arid zone cattle or New Guinea coffee; we cannot deconstruct demography into beliefs about fosterage or venereal disease, though we cannot leave these out, nor can we maintain that thinking about sex never changes, despite the remarkable continuity and physical resemblance of the act cross-culturally.

Anthropologists, for all their professed interest in culture change, often have difficulty in analyzing the process and in convincingly quantifying the behavior that is varying. This is assuredly the case when we have assimilated a particularly rich and categorically compelling ethnographic account like that of the !Kung San. Richard Lee's analyses beginning in the 1960s changed our mental landscape and substituted a new ecological model of hunting-and-gathering societies. It is uncomfortable and disorienting to learn from Draper and Kranichfeld that all !Kung have settled down, and that foraging contributes relatively little to subsistence. But even "acculturation," a term that predated "dependency" and "subordination" (though it implied some of the same relationships), is inadequate to express what happens when ethnically and economically distinct populations come into prolonged contact. There are not one, but four, new settlement patterns, and the villages (we mourn the passage of nomadic camps) range from those intimately linked to resident Bantu by labor and sexual ties to independent, distinctly !Kung enclaves. Greater dependence and more lasting social ties to Bantu are economically disadvantageous, though it is not clear whether the entire village including the Bantu inhabitants is less prosperous. The key to !Kung social reproduction appears to be a village population with enough adult males and co-resident kin to allow efficient cattle herding (and to deter !Kung women from forming attachments to Bantu men). The hypothesis that those !Kung who have become dependent are the victims of truncated kindreds through mortality, lower fertility, and