A cross-cultural study of modesty

This cross-cultural survey of sex customs treats sexual modesty in clothing and speech, privacy for intercourse, ceremonial license, and joking and avoidance. Sexual modesty is found to be uncorrelated with a number of sex taboos, but positively correlated with the attempt to confine sexual intercourse within marriage. This combination of sex restrictions, termed modesty-chastity, is very much the property of peasant societies, as opposed to primitive societies. The most sexually free cases in the sample tend to have a narrowly genital orientation to sex and to be preoccupied with sexual jokes and obscenity. The conclusion lists the full range of sex restrictions and sexual fears and proposes a germinal sex problem, best accounted for in Freudian terms.

[Accepted for publication: May 1970.]

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This survey, which was begun under the sponsorship of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, 1, was intended to collate the writings of anthropologists on matters pertaining to obscenity and sexual modesty—modesty (or the lack of it) in talk and dress, privacy for the sex act, also ceremonial license, and joking and avoidance. Most of the generalizations that follow derive from the 92 societies listed in the ethnographic bibliography. At certain points I borrow from previous cross-cultural reviews. The discussion of ceremonial license owes much to Norbeck's "African rituals of conflict" (1963), Evans-Pritchard's "Some collective expressions of obscenity in Africa" (1929), and the Encyclopedia of Sexual Behavior (Elli and Abarbanell 1961). A few cases are cited from early compendia by Havelock Ellis (1905), W. I. Thomas (1937), and Sumner (1906), and some data from my previous cross-cultural studies (1962, 1963) are occasionally brought into play.

Whereas modesty with respect to other body functions is not treated in the ensuing discussion, a word might be said about it here. Elimination is seldom mentioned in ethnographies; what few reports we have suggest a positive correlation between sexual and eliminative modesty. The Dobuans, Manus, Chiricahua Apache, and Hindi Indians, described as being especially prudish about urinating and defecating, are likewise sexually modest. Tikopians, Siriono, and Hopi, who urinate in public, would rate low on sexual modesty. Also, when obscenities are described, they sometimes include scatological jokes and epithets 2. As in our own society, "dirty jokes" include, literally, joking about dirt.

A certain measure of privacy and taboo also attaches to eating and drinking. This may take the form of a generalized embarrassment or shame, so that people eat rather furtively, perhaps back 3. Or it may be a taboo upon—or shame connected with—eating in public, outside the privacy of one's home 4; or sex-segregation for eating 5. Eating taboos also figure in avoidance and deference relationships.

A final aspect of modesty customs which deserves mention here is their patchwork nature. Thus the Kurutchi defecate in public and eat in private, the Balinese expose the breasts and hide the legs, Baganda men had to be fully clothed but women could go naked, and so on. A mosaic of taboo and license is further achieved by the interweaving of avoidance and joking relationships and by periodic relaxation of some rules of decorum on certain ceremonial occasions. Whereas this seems rather typical of tribal peoples, peasant societies tend strongly toward a comprehensive code of sexual repression and hence, one might say, are more consistent.

Privacy for Sexual Intercourse

Copulation—at home—must seldom be in private, due to the prevalence of the one-room house. For 35 cases, it is reported that infants and young children sleep with their parents 6. (For no case in the sample was it said that young children did not sleep with their mothers 7.) For 16 of these, there is explicit mention that children, occasionally at least, witness sex 8. For 3 of these cases—Manus, Modjokuto, and Tepoztlan—informants deny that children have any sex knowledge, even though they are in the same room. In the polygynous compounds of Dahomey, it is customary for a wife to go to the husband's house for sex; and early-adolescent boys seem to be ignorant of the sex act (Herskovits 1938 : 277, 279). This arrangement may be common in other places where husband and wife live in separate huts, but in the present sample it is recorded only for Dahomey.

Aside from children in the room there may be other relatives, co-wives, or—for peoples who live in communal dwellings—an entire small community. Ordinarily, it seems, some attempt is made to achieve privacy of a sort: a couple waits until the others appear to be asleep, or they copulate quietly in the dark, or it is considered impolite to watch. Instances of deliberate copulation before witnesses are described for 21 cases: at home (Baiga, Copper Eskimo, Deoli, East Bay, Goulbourn Island, Hopi, Kamano, Marquesas, Mohave, Ojibwa, Samoa, Truk, Ulithi, Valle Caña); in bachelors' houses (Kipsigis, Muria, Marquesas); drunken orgies (Mohave, Ojibwa); group trysts (Samoa, Goulbourn Island, Mohave); group rape (Cheyenne, Kamano); ritual copulation for fertility (Goulbourn Island, Kiwai, Marquesas); also in Tahiti and Ontong Java. No account describes complete indifference to privacy. Some peoples seem rather careless (especially the Mohave, Marquesans, and Kamano); for some, observation is occasionally invited; in none, it seems do people copulate like the animals, innocent of any notion of tabu.

Clothing and Nakedness

If a few complicating details might be overlooked, the cases in the sample could be placed along a clothing-modesty scale:

1. The people are entirely naked. (Australian aborigines—Murrin and Goulbourn Island; Kwoma, Mundurucu*, Nyaky-

3 Kwoma, Kurutchi, Bakai. Bakai and Warrau citations (note 5) are taken from Ellis 1905: 48.
4 Bili, Kahyle, Trobiandis.
5 Carriacou, Guaymi, Warrau. Crawley's (1927) extensive review of eating taboos gives many more cases.
7 In a previous study this was customary—for boys—in over half the sample; in 36 societies adolescent or preadolescent boys left home, in 27 they did not (Stephens 1962: 79).
8 Alor, Baiga, Copper Eskimo, Deoli, East Bay, Goulbourn Island, Hopi, Kamano, Marquesas, Mohave, Ojibwa, Samoa, Trobiandis, Truk, Ulithi, and Valle Caña.
Ceremonial license may take the form of erotic song and dance; sexual clowning and joking; sexual taunts, threats or abuse; pantomime copulation; display of the genitals or complete nakedness; representations of the genitals in costuming (artificial phalli), emblems or other art works used in rituals, or actual sexual intercourse outside ordinarily permitted relationships, which is occasionally public. As the footnotes suggest, it is very widespread—or was, at least, before primitive societies were Christianized and deculturated. It seems to have been particularly prominent in Africa and Australia, less well developed in the New World (Ellis and Abarbanel 1961: 95), and perhaps widespread in Oceania and among the aboriginal tribes of Asia, although here my evidence is scanty. The ceremonies most marked by sex-display appear to have been the great rites of passage—initiations for boys and girls, marriages, and funerals. But it occurs in a variety of ceremonial occasions; also, erotic songs and sexual joking may lighten the load of collective work, which may or may not be ceremonial.

On the larger subject of sex expressions in ceremonies I would make just three summary points.

(1) In many instances it is clearly "license," i.e. behavior that would be improper or shocking in normal life; while in other cases it is not; and in many more cases it is impossible to tell from the accounts. (2) Mapping the distribution of ceremonial license requires a bit of inference, since ethnographers rarely report it to be absent. Among peasant and aristocratic groups, historically Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, or Muslim, it appears to have been rare. Of 14 such cases in the sample for which there is some detailed description of sex and modesty codes, ceremonial license is mentioned for only 2 (Suye Mura and Deoli). We know that through the history of each of the great religions it was common from Africa, largely due to borrowing from previous reviews of ceremonial license in Africa by Norbeck 1963 (the single asterisk cases) and by Evans-Pritchard 1929 (double asterisks).

(3) Ellis (1905: 17) cites numerous instances of genital modesty for one sex but not for the other. – There are peoples who wear something in the way of clothes, yet seem to have little in the way of genital modesty. (Acholi*, Chagga, Dinka*, Kamano, Kavirond*, Luo 10, Masai, Hopi, Zulu.) – Clothing may be put aside in special situations, as with the public baths of Japan, Bali, and Medieval Europe; athletic spectacles in classic Greece; in the home (Eskimo); when no women are present (Tikopia, Trobriands); or at times of ceremonial license.

In addition to breasts, buttocks, and genitals, other female body-parts have occasionally been sexualized, covered, and charged with erotic interest: the foot (China); the navel (Bomba*); the hair (Yakuts, and some Arabs and Indians).

Many of the peoples cited above have now been Christianized, and wear more clothes than they did in precontact times. Old collections of early travelers' tales refer to numerous "tribes" who were naked, or nearly so. (Ellis 1905, Crawley 1927, Summer 1906, Thomas 1937, also C. K. Meek's tribal survey of Northern Nigeria.) Nakedness and genital exposure must have been widespread among primitive peoples living in warm climates in South America, Africa, Australia, and Oceania. The correlation between clothing-modesty and cultural evolution is striking. Nearly all peasant cases, located historically within one of the preindustrial civilizations, are excessively modest. Only these cover the breasts. (Exceptions: Bali, Dahomey, Nayars of Malabar; also Mohave and Ojibwa. In some tribes, the breasts were sometimes covered, or were casually and imperfectly covered.) None expose the genitals. It appears that notions of decent body-covering seldom extended beyond hiding the genitals, until sometime after the advent of the high civilizations.

** Asterisk citations here are taken from Ellis 1905: 8-32.
10 Sumner 1906: 438.

11 In citations throughout, where descriptions of customs are given for both before and after contact, the customs cited will be the old, precontact ones.
has occurred; but it must have been very uncommon. (Ellis and Abarbanel 1961: 536, Campbell 1962, Taylor 1954, Sumner 1906: 447-49). (3) Much ceremonial license might be clas- sed as obscenity: sexual clowning and joking, sex terms and gestures figuring in ritualized abuse and insult-contests. Again, generalizing is hazardous, because most accounts are lacking in detail. In a few cases, "erotic songs" are clearly enjoyed as dirty songs; and the "licensed" behavior brings laughter or has some sort of shock value. In a number of instances where there is some detailed description, obscene sen-
timents of the sort we are familiar with in our own culture do seem to come into play 26.

[ p7 ]

Sex Talk

Here again, intersocietal range is enormous, with peasants being much more modest than tribal peoples. Among the Muslim Kabyle, "May my wife be unlawful" is a powerful oath. The Muria of India use the term 'motherfucker' so indiscriminately—by a woman to her little daughter, daughter to mother, and so on—that it is practically divested of any obscene potency. Doubtless no society is completely restrictive of sex talk. For what seem to be the most prudish cases in the sample, there is mention of occasional euphemistic references for some 27, occasional obscenity for others 28. Like-
wise, I suspect, no society permits perfect freedom. Of the 34 cases in which a great deal of open sex talk is said to occur, in 22 of these it is subject to some restriction; in certain social contexts, sex either is not discussed or the talk must be euphemistic 29. For the other 12 cases, my guess is that the restrictions were there but were simply unreported 30.

In the accounts, the emphasis on sexual humor is striking. In 49 of the cases for which there is any mention of sex talk, sexual joking is mentioned for 36 31. In 16 of these, a great preoccupation with sexual humor is described 32. The forms of the humor are familiar:

- Kidding (with the humor apparently being connected with embarrassment): "You've been to the women again"; "What a big penis you have!"
- Kidding with derogation, verging over into insults: "Copoluate with your mother who is dead"; "What a small penis you have!" (Sexual epithets, used in kidding, as abuse, as "oaths" sworn to underlie some assertion, or simply as exclamations addressed to no one in particular—as with the profane and scatological epithets in use in our own society—appear also to be very common around the world.)
- Double entendre, sex allusions from common words and phrases.
- Sexual storytelling.
- Horseplay and practical jokes.

[ p8 ]

Finally, for some peoples the mere mention of sex is apparently funny (Ireland, Lepcha, Marque-
sas, Mohave).

As to why sex should be humorous—first of all, in some of the joking one can imagine extrinsic sources of interest: the playing with aggression, which appears to be involved in kidding; play on words with double entendre and other allusive talk; ridiculous and incongruous social situations in the sex stories. Firth, discussing the Tikopians, explains sexual humor as a rebellion against, and momentary "release" from, various restrictions on sexual activity—as with, particularly, incest jokes (1936: 314-15). A general interpretation of sexual humor and obscenity as abreaction—expressive of resent-
ment at restrictions and guilt over tabooed impulses—collides with a curious fact. The peoples who seem most preoccupied with sexual joking and obscenity are not those who appear to have the most to abreact, but those who should have the least. They tend strongly to be the most sexually free, the least constrained by taboo and modesty rules.

Avoidance

In most societies for which there is information, modesty and decorum are particularized by rela-
tionship. With some persons one may be relatively free, talk obscenely, and so on; while with others one feels "respect" and "shame." The relationship-break may be sex (less restraint on sex talk and body contact for same-sex persons than among opposite-sex persons), or generation ("respect" to-
ward the parental generation, relative license with persons of the same generation and, perhaps, with grandparents), or broad kinship categories (avoidance of all in-laws). Degree of avoidance may be mild (no touching, no sex talk) or extreme (do not look at each other, do not talk to each other, do not eat together, do not mention the others name, do not sleep in the same house, converse through an intermediary, cannot be alone together, etc.). Extreme avoidance characterizes three particular kin relationships: a male Ego to his mother-in-law; to his daughter-in-law; to his sister. If the culture enjoins avoidance of one of these relatives, then Ego usually avoids other persons, who are socially similar, to

[ p9 ]

an equal or less degree: female cousins are frequently included in the brother-sister avoidance; for the mother-in-law avoidance, perhaps the mother-in-laws sister, her mother, the father-in-law; for daughter-in-law avoidance, perhaps the daughter-in-law's mother.

In a previous survey of kin avoidances, 38 tribes were scored as having at least one extreme avoidance relationship 33, 12 had mild avoidance 34, 13 apparently had none (Stephens 1962: 222-
25). This may overestimate the prevalence of kin avoidance, due to the probable tendency for "ab-
sent" cases to go unreported and hence be excluded from a cross-cultural sample. Nevertheless, the phenomenon must have been very widespread among primitive societies.

In most avoiding societies, it seems, certain relationships are characterized by avoidance, while in others the opposite code prevails—obscene joking and sexual abuse is customary. The old study turned up a positive correlation between presence of avoidance relationships and joking relationships. (See Table 1.)

In the present sample, I found one case—the Chiricahu Apache—in which extreme kin avoidance is unrelieved by sexual joking in some other relationship; 15 societies with marked kin avoidance did allow or expect considerable sexual talk and joking in some relationships 35.

The joking-avoiding pattern looks like an acting out of sexual shame: exaggerated modesty in some relationships, obscenity (the obverse side of the coin) in other relationships. In a number of the accounts, embarrassment, shyness, or shame are said to be the sentiments appropriate to avoidance.

27 Bemba, Chiricahu, Modjokuto, Nupe, Yaday.
28 Deoli, Dobu, Semang, Silwa, Taitou. For the Chenchu, Kabyle, and Tepotzlan, there is no mention of lapses of verbal modesty.
30 Bal, Bambara, Copper Eskimo, Hopi, Ireland, Kamano, Kipsigis, Mohave, Mongour, Murngin, Ojibwa, Suye Mura, Thonga. If there is a case of complete verbal freedom, it may be the Mohave Indians. The subject is treated rather fully by Devereaux (1950), with no hint of euphemism, special respect relationships, or taboo topics.
32 Baiga, Bal, Bambara, Copper Eskimo, Heiban, Lepcha, Marquesas, Mohave, Muria, Ontong Java, Ojibwa, Suye Mura, Tikopia, Trobriands, Ullithi, Yaday.
33 Score of 3 or higher on a five-point cumulative scale. Point #3 on the scale was "can't converse directly."
34 Score no higher than 2 on the scale: "can't talk about sex."
35 Score of 2 or lower on a six-point cumulative scale. Points #2 and #3 of scale were "can't talk about sex with sexual connotation."

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Husband-wife avoidance never, needless to say, reaches the extremes of mother-in-law avoidance or brother-sister avoidance, but it appears to be the most common of the special avoidance relationships. Frequently, when other persons are present, spouses may not be allowed to touch each other, to show affection toward each other or use endearing terms of address, or address each other by name. In a few societies the avoidance is more extreme than this. The husband-wife avoidance would seem particularly to be an expression of sexual shame, being as it is a sort of public disavowal of a known sex relationship. (It could be alternatively interpreted as a reaction to jealousy on the part of parents and other kin.) As a public disavowal it is odd, in the light of the limitation on privacy among so many of these peoples. Margaret Mead says of the Samoans: "A couple whose wedding night might have been spent in a room with ten other people will never the less shrink in shame from even touching hands in public." (1928: 134).

Correlates of Modesty

Table 2 presents a modesty scale. Actually it is an immodesty scale, which for purposes of final scoring is simply turned upside down. Scale points are as follows:

- Instances of public intercourse, and genitals exposed (includes penis sheath and pubic fringe), both of these scored "present."
- One of these scored "present."
- Sex talk: free before children; and much of it direct, not euphemistic—either of these scored "present." (If either is scored "absent," the case gets a minus score for this scale point.)
- Sex display in ceremonies (erotic songs, dances, costuming, or art objects associated with some ceremony; sexual joking or abuse; public coitus).
- Breasts exposed.

A case was included if it could be scored for at least three of the six categories. A "—" entry indicates that the practice was reported to be absent, an "X" means "present." A blank means either no information or no code because reports were conflicting or unclear. The highest (most immodest) point that can be scored "present" determines a case's scale score. In other words it is a crude cumulative scale, with five scale errors (Deoli, Suye Mura, Lepcha, Ojibwa, and Mohave, who cover the breasts but

Table 2. Data Sheet: Modesty Scale, Women’s Sex Restrictions, Political Development, and Religion

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36 Present sample: Deoli, Dobu, Dragaletvsy, East Bay, Samoa, Kwoma. From a previous sample gathered by interviewing ethnographers about their field work (Stephens 1963: 408-24): cant touch each other, 25 cases; may touch each other, 14 cases.
37 Present sample: Alor, Bemba ("young couple"), Deoli, Dragaletvsy, Kabyle, Kwoma, Kurtauchi, Rajputs of Khalapur, Taitou ("young couple"), Trobriands, Yagua; Semang-may flirt and display affection in public. Ethnographer-interview sample: taboo on public affection-display present, 27 cases; taboo absent, 11 cases.
38 Present sample: Alor, Baiga, Kabyle, Manus, Silwa, Eastern Timbira. Ethnographer-interview sample: personal name taboo present, 15 cases; taboo absent, 29 cases.
39 Deoli, Heiban, Kwoma, Kabyle, Manus, Taitou.
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<td>Kamano X X X X X X X</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Marquesas X X X X X X X</td>
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do something else), and of course the numerous blank entries.

Early in the study, I concluded that modesty was but one facet of a general sex-restriction syndrome or, to put it differently, that it was positively correlated with other sex-connected restrictions, part of a sex-restriction factor. This expectation was not borne out. On small samples, the modesty scale showed no significant relationship to kin avoidances, menstrual taboos, or length of the postpartum sex taboo. Modesty does go with sex restrictions of a more familiar sort: the insistence that, for women at least, sexual intercourse be confined to the marriage relationship. Turning to Table 2 again: rules against extramarital intercourse for women are represented by a three-point rating scale adapted from Murdock (1964). An entry of 3 means "strict sanctions, fairly effective"; 2, "ineffective rule against"; 1, "extramarital intercourse permitted." The trend is strongest for unmarried girls, weaker for married women (some modest tribes demand fidelity). The trend would hold for men too, I believe, but it would be weaker still; the sexual double standard is very widespread (Stephens 1963: 290).

In advance of a proper statistical sorting out, done on samples with more overlap (if this is possible), it now looks as though there are two sex-restriction factors. One of these might be termed "taboo." It would include the kin avoidances, taboos associated with menstruation and birth, and the many occasional sex taboos (Stephens 1962). Modesty, as represented by the scale, goes in the second factor, along with rules against extramarital sex. I believe that severity of sex training belongs here too, but that cannot be demonstrated at this time. This factor might be called modesty-chastity.

Modesty-chastity reached its apogee in the preindustrial civilizations. (See Table 2. Also Murdock [1964] and Cohen [1969] find sex restrictions tightening with political development.) Table 2 does not begin to do justice to the extreme prudery and generalized cross-sex avoidance recorded for many peasant groups; they go far off the modesty scale. In recent times, as the agrarian-based kingdoms have given way, the effort to keep sex (and woman) in a closet seems to be relaxing also. As to why this style of sex restriction developed with civilization, a number of partial explanations could be offered: one, the independent influence of the four great world religions, with their ascetic emphases; another, the effect on sex mores of hierarchically organized society. A previous study showed a positive correlation—unusually strong as cross-cultural correlations go—between elaboration of deference customs (wife to husband, child to father and to other older male kin, also commoner to nobleman) and historic presence of a kingdom. If formalized deference is taken as an index of patriarchy within the family—and I think this is proper, making allowance for a certain percentage of "errors"—this implies that autocratic social orders spawned autocratic family relationships. (See Stephens 1963: 326-34. Theoretically, the causal relationship could have been in another direction, but this is rather hard to imagine.) Family deference, patriarchy, hierarchy, or what have you was not scored for the present sample—the state of the data would have made the results rather unsatisfactory—so deference and modesty cannot be intercorrelated. Perhaps a future study can formally show the association between family deference or patriarchy and modesty-chastity; I am convinced that the relationship is a strong one.

At any rate, we have some basis for believing that modesty-

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43 In the previous study, after first trying to score family power relations from already-published ethnographies and concluding that the written accounts were too vague and fragmentary to support a good measure, I got the family deference material by interviewing peristiany (1966), Deoli and Khalapur (India), Yadav (Bunia), Suye Mura (Japan of the 1930s).

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44 G. Rattray Taylor's (1954) "patrist" and "matrist" syndromes, which he applies to historic trends in Europe, would seem to fit the cross-cultural data fairly well.

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45 Dragaletvsy (Bulgaria), Orasac (Serbia), County Clare (Ireland), San Pedro la Laguna (Guatemala), Valle Cana (Puerto Rico of the 1940s), Tepoztlan (Mexico), Sarakatsani (Greece) and Andalusia (Spain) both from Peristiany (1966), Deoli and Khalapur (India), Yadav (Bunia), Suye Mura (Japan of the 1930s).

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Whiting and Child's (1953) ratings of seventy of sex training. However, the Whiting and Child sample is composed almost entirely of primitive societies, with very few civilized cases.

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47 Historic and archæological records for pagan civilizations, prior to the era of the ascetic religions, hint at a style of sexual expression reminiscent of the primitive societies: fertility cults, some ceremonial dance, some body-exposure, erotic art. (Sumner 1906: 386, 444, 445; Ellis and Abarbanel 1961: 528-29; Campbell 1962, 1964; Sachs 1937: 105.)

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48 In the previous study, after first trying to score family power relations from already-published ethnographies and concluding that the written accounts were too vague and fragmentary to support a good measure, I got the family deference material by interviewing ethnographers and asking them a standard list of questions about their field work (Stephens 1963: 408-24).
countries appear to have more equitarian family relations, as well as more relaxed sex restrictions. Also, we have some indications that traditional family and sex customs may quickly disintegrate when peasants move to the city.

**Cases of Sexual Freedom**

There are six primitive societies in the sample that I would rate the most permissive of extramarital sex, of immodest behavior and sexual expressiveness, and of the sexuality of children: the Australian aborigines of the Goulburn Island region; the Kamano of the New Guinea highlands; the Polynesian natives of the Marquesas; the Mohave Indians; the Lepchas of Sikkim; and the Muria of India, more or less in that order. A number of other tribes, I am sure, would go into this group if their sex practices were described in detail; especially I suspect that the Eskimo should be here, and the Siriono of Bolivia. A short step behind, I would put the Baiga, also of India, and a number of Oceanic peoples-Trobiand Islanders, Trukese, Samoans, Tokipians. (Note the absence of African societies from this group, despite their high development of ceremonial license.)

Some of these groups have been touched by the great religions. The Baiga and Muria are Hindu-influenced, although they remained (at the time of Elwins writing) defiantly non-Hindu, even anti-Hindu, in matters of sex relations. The Lepchas have been converted to Lamaist Buddhism within the past two centuries, and the Australians, Marquesans, Mohave, Samoans, and Trukese have become Christians of a sort. They wear more clothes than they once did, but it appears that the Christian sex code has not affected them. Thus the modern-day Marquesans now recognize a formal rule against extramarital intercourse. It is not known whether they observe it, and they remain avid sexual exhibitionists.

The only group to approach peasant status are the Lepchas; but the Lepchas of whom Gorer wrote lived on a tribal preserve and paid small taxes, but were free of anything smacking of landlordism or nobleman-commoner relations. The Oceanic peoples had Polynesian-style chiefdoms, with some emphasis on rank and associated deference, which to some extent crept into family relations. In all groups, however, the status of women appears to have been relatively high, and family relations fairly equitarian. (Possible exceptions might be the Lepchas and the Kamano.)

All of these peoples observe the incest taboo. Various of them have other sex restrictions and fears, although generally these seem of a relatively mild and rudimentary nature. With the possible exception of the Samoans, they all fear menstrual blood. Some observe avoidance relationships. Some public intercourse occurs, but sex is usually in private. For the better-described cases, idiosyncratic fears are mentioned. The Baiga were shocked by queries about sexual perversions, the Marquesans by incest jokes; among the Mohave, the man must be on top during coitus; and so on. In a few tribes, sexual inter-

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46 The above, with the Irish and Japanese being possible exceptions for verbal modesty.

47 The above, plus Modjakuto (Java) and the following cases from the ethnographer-interview sample: Spain (village of Villarfranquza and Madrid aristocrats), Spanish-Americans of Atrisco in New Mexico, Brno (Czechoslovakia), Cucumatan Mam (Guatemalan Mayans), Lasco (Yugoslavia), San Juan Jiquilla and Zinacantan (Mexico).

48 From the ethnographer-interview sample: two French villages, Peyrane and Chaves, described by Laurence Wylie. Wylie was told of remnants of family deference customs which were no longer observed. Also two Italian cases: Chiaronnore (Laura Banfield) and a lower-class neighborhood in Naples (Anne Parsons). Then there is our "sexual revolution" of recent times, the "emancipation of women," which has proceeded rapidly during the last century, and a like phenomenon among "progressive" strata in other countries—for example postwar Japan.

49 For Mexico, Oscar Lewis' Zapotlcan peasants (1951, 1959, 1964), as compared with the people in Five Families, who lived in Mexico City. For Puerto Rico, the city dwellers in La Vida (Lewis 1965), as contrasted with the peasants of Valle Cana (Landy 1959).

50 This must be inferred from indirect evidence for Kamano and Goulburn Islanders.

51 Avoidance is very weakly developed among the Lepchas and Marquesans, and there is no information for Kamano and Mohave.

52 In several cases of coitus in a communal setting, as with the Muria ghotul and the Trobriand bachelors' house, it is ordinarily considered bad manners to watch.
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Copper Eskimo*


Dahomey (West Africa)

Eastern Timbira (Brazil) *

Gahuku (New Guinea)


Ganda (Uganda) *


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Lesu (New Ireland)

Lepcha (Sikkim)


Mans (Admiralty Islands)

Marquesas (Polynesia) *

Lepcha (Sikkim)

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Lesu (New Ireland)

Lepcha (Sikkim)
Ontong Java (Solomon Islands)
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Siuai (Bougainville)

Suve Mura (Japan)

Swahili (Somalia and Kenya)

[ p28 ]

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