

Appendix A

The capacity of any anthropologist to observe exactly what occurs is limited and I have made a generalization about sexual behaviour among the Minj Agamp which is not based on direct observation at all but on information just casually given by the people concerned and not even systematically solicited. The generalization is: 'Their men had to achieve dominance, not simply take it for granted, in the sexual act, and the women themselves had to fight for the right to submit to them by putting up a losing struggle'. I base this interpretation on retrospective accounts of particular experiences given the next day either directly to me or to age-mates of the speakers in my hearing. Most of these accounts of sexual adventures were boastful reminiscences by young men aged about 16 to 26, often explaining wounds plainly inflicted by partners of the previous evening biting or scratching their torsos and arms. The few accounts girls gave to their age-mates (never specifically to me) placed as much emphasis on the fierceness of the struggle before consummation as male versions did.

I have no means of judging how often girls made assignations with men. It was inconceivable for a man to refuse an invitation to 'carry leg' in public or meet a girl privately, so girls were never shamed by a rejection. It is reasonable to suppose, however, that a man's command performance in the bushes might sometimes prove disappointing when he attempted it several hours after the sexually stimulating 'carrying leg'. Two girls I know of had developed the practice of inviting their chosen lovers to 'carry leg' with them again in private as soon as they met by arrangement.

The obstacles to a man achieving satisfactory sexual expression in these encounters would seem to be formidable. The places of assignation were not notorious haunts of bush demons, but the strong folk belief in these creatures provided part of the environment in which the encounter took place. After an assignation which seemed to have been unsatisfactory, a young man expressed concern as to whether the girl he had been trying to give love to was really the girl herself or whether it had been a bush demon masquerading in her form. The sexual act seems always to have been preceded by joking, which often began playfully but soon became competitive and scathing and led to physical struggle. I heard several accounts of a man trying to slap a girl who eluded him playfully until he chased her and, catching her, threw her to the ground where she struggled against him, biting and scratching, until he overcame her. According to one girl, a youth who was particularly inexperienced responded to her invitation to meet him by pounding upon her from behind the bushes and trying to rape her. A number of girls taunted their lovers during their mutual joking in such terms as I don't think you are a man; you are another kind

of creature. I shall know you are a man when I see your penis.' Nevertheless, the young man who was supremely successful with girls and had great prestige among the other men on that account (Good was the only young man of this type in Penkup subclan) seemed to develop satisfactory relationships with the girls who summoned him.

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