The Function of Alcohol in Mohave Society

George Devereux, Ph.D.

REPRINT FROM
Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol
Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 207–251, Sept. 1948

Editorial Office: Laboratory of Applied Physiology, Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut
The Function of Alcohol in Mohave Society*

George Devereux, Ph.D.
Topeka, Kansas

INTRODUCTION

Glover's appeal (1) for anthropological contributions to the psychoanalytic study of various forms of addiction has elicited only a meager response. This may be due in part to the difficulty anthropologists have experienced in deriving a systematic theory of alcohol addiction from the maze of the alcohol literature; in spite of Horton's (2) valuable attempt to test certain general propositions in cross-cultural terms, the comparative study of alcohol addiction is still in the fact-collecting stage. The anthropologist must therefore restrict interpretations to the culture from which his own data have been drawn, and refer to existing—and by no means generally accepted—theoretical interpretations in the most tentative manner. Accordingly, the sole aim of the present study of Mohave Indian alcoholism is a systematic presentation of concrete data, with a limited and tentative interpretation thereof in terms of Mohave culture and of certain reasonably well established psychological mechanisms.

History of Use of Alcohol

The Mohave Indians had no intoxicating beverages in aboriginal times. According to Kroeber (3) the Gila River was the northwestern boundary of the area in which aboriginal intoxicating drinks were manufactured. It is characteristic of Mohave cultural ethnocentrism that, despite their passion for extensive travel, they never learned the art of preparing fermented beverages from their Apache neighbors.

The first contact of the Mohave with European alcoholic beverages occurred presumably not before the middle of the sixteenth century, and probably not later than the end of the seventeenth. There is no evidence to suggest that European or Mexican alcoholic beverages played an important role in Mohave life during the period of Spanish contacts. Alcohol began to make appreciable inroads only during the second half of the nineteenth century as a result of an influx of White Americans who used alcohol in the economic and sexual exploitation of the Mohave (4). According to Allen (5), "Those who go to the railroad

* From the Musée de l'Homme, Paris.
towns and mining camps soon become demoralized by whisky and con-
taminated by tramps."

During the last few decades the advent of law and order in Arizona
and in California has somewhat reduced the indiscriminate debauching
of Indians by disreputable Whites. Federal laws prohibiting the sale
of alcohol to Indians, as well as other forms of liquor controls, have
also decreased excessive drinking in the tribe, for the average Mohave
can rarely afford to buy the illegal, and therefore expensive, beverages.
On the other hand, the fact that the Mohave woman is unable to pur-
chase alcoholic drinks at a reasonable price has tended to revive the use
of alcohol for seduction and as an outright fee in informal and occa-
sional prostitution. This situation became somewhat acute during the
building of the Parker Dam, which necessitated the importation of
many White and Mexican workers not accompanied by their wives. At
the same time the Indians employed on the project began to earn
enough money to purchase the illegal and overpriced alcohol more
frequently.

According to recent information the current inflationary trend in
wages and in the price of agricultural products, which has appreciably
raised the purchasing power of the Mohave, has likewise caused an in-
crease in drinking.

All things considered, the Mohave cannot be described as a tribe
whose vitality and social structure have been appreciably impaired by
alcoholism. Drinking remains a marginal phenomenon in Mohave life,
and the fundamental drinking pattern is the one-night "spree" rather
than systematic excessive use of alcohol by even a small fraction of the
population. This is probably due to the basic psychological health of
the individual Mohave, which in turn is rooted in the numerous erotic
satisfactions and in the psychological security which his culture affords
him (6).

*Dealers in illegal alcohol.* Bootleggers are protected by the Mohave.
A young Mohave man, who acted as my interpreter, described
the situation as follows: "There were recently a couple of convictions
and several men were expelled from this area, but it does not put down
the trade. I think that the dealers must have emissaries who arrange
these things. You can't persuade a Mohave to tell you the names of
these dealers and emissaries, because they are accustomed to alcohol."

The Mohave know that bootleggers charge outrageous prices. But
the resentment of the Mohave is directed at the law prohibiting the
sale of alcohol to Indians, and at Whites in general, rather than at the illicit dealers as a class or as individuals. The fact is that the discriminatory law has increased, rather than decreased, the social cost of alcoholism. It is true that the average Indian cannot afford to buy illegal liquor frequently. On the other hand, the high cost of bootlegged supplies leads to the exploitation of the Indian by unscrupulous dealers. Furthermore, when the Mohave does obtain alcohol he is impelled to drink it up all at once, partly because he does not know how to handle liquor and partly because he wishes to dispose of the incriminating evidence as quickly as possible. In brief, psychological problems do not seem to yield to legislative solutions among the Mohave any more than they do among other nations. Only a systematic strengthening of the fundamental values, satisfactions and security systems of Mohave culture could counteract the spread of alcoholism. The forced acculturation and pauperization of the Mohave (4, 7) can lead only to an increase in anomy—and hence in alcoholism.

*Expectations of gifts of alcoholic beverages.* The Mohave do not expect the average White to give or sell them alcohol. Only one of my closest friends ever asked me to obtain alcohol for him (Case 12); and he was not in the least offended when I declined, since my policy of neither drinking nor procuring drinks was so well known that when a certain disreputable woman alleged that I had offered her a drink her statement was promptly challenged by several of her relatives, some of whom did not even know me personally (4).

On the whole, the Mohave do not press their White friends to procure alcohol for them, perhaps because they can freely purchase it from certain unscrupulous individuals.

The integration of alcohol with the Mohave way of life will be discussed in terms of two frames of reference: (I) the sociocultural and (II) the subjective-psychological.

I. The Sociocultural Role of Alcohol

1. Ethics

The Mohave drinking pattern is closely integrated with the pattern of compulsory generosity (6) which expresses the cardinal virtue of the Mohave system of ethics. No Mohave will think of taking a drink in public without offering the bottle to his friends. Nevertheless, the
excessive drinking of a certain individual (Case 11) caused his friends so much concern that they more or less systematically attempted to prevent him from drinking and never produced a bottle in his presence. On the other hand, they pitied rather than condemned him for being so compulsive a drinker as to enter the houses of his friends in their absence and help himself to whatever drinks he could find.

While the Mohave expect their friends to share in their drinks, habitual “drink-cadgers” are practically unknown. The Mohave pattern of generosity with drinks closely parallels their behavior with regard to cigarettes (8).

2. Social Drinking

Mohave drinking is mostly of the “social” type and does not usually culminate either in severe intoxication or in antisocial or objectionable behavior. This is due in part—according to Dr. M. A. I. Nettle and several native informants—to the Mohave tendency to “pass out” very rapidly, and in part to the fact that there is seldom enough alcohol to intoxicate an appreciable number of persons. The Mohave usually manage to obtain liquor when they go to a gathering or dance. They drink a certain amount during the evening and then either go home quietly or pass out* and “sleep it off.” Mildly intoxicated persons behave, as a rule, like ordinary people, and are easily managed. Ordinary, more or less public, parties do not end in fights or in scandals. The average Mohave dance or gathering is thus an orderly and quiet affair; those who wish to engage in sexual irregularities will generally withdraw from the party and perform the sex act in private or in small groups.

3. Attitudes

Mohave attitudes toward excessive drinking must be differentiated from their attitudes toward excessive drinkers. On the whole, the Mohave do not feel that drinking is a “manly act.” It is simply a thing which some people do and others do not. Thus, although several of my Mohave friends chided me in 1932 for not inhaling my cigarettes “like

* The term “pass out” usually indicates a state of deep intoxication. In the case of the Mohave, however, it merely describes the behavior of falling asleep. The ease with which Mohave drinkers “pass out” after relatively small amounts of liquor suggests a strong tendency to respond to alcohol intake with this behavior. The subject is discussed below (see pp. 226–7).
a man" (8), none of them ever bothered to comment on the fact that I did not drink. A moderate amount of "social drinking," especially if it does not lead to a sexual orgy or to aggressive behavior, is thought of as a normal and pleasurable form of relaxation. Excessive drinking is, however, freely criticized. One day, in the course of an inquiry into the Mohave conception of human status, I asked my octogenarian informant Mrs. Tcate to express an opinion about the old adage, "The more I know people, the better I like dogs." She replied: "The things I saw in my youth, when I was old enough to remember what I saw, were better than . . . what one sees nowadays. People behaved differently. Take for example these constant rumors of incest . . . they would have been unthinkable in the old days. In my youth the Mohave did not even know what alcoholic intoxication meant." This comment reveals a severely condemnatory attitude toward alcoholic excesses, since Tcate paired them with incest—the greatest crime in Mohave society (9), especially because it is frequently associated with witchcraft (10). (The psychological significance of this "accidental" grouping together of incest with witchcraft and intoxication will be discussed below.) The Mohave therefore attempt to interfere with the propensities of the more severe alcohol addicts (Case 11) and are not offended when nondrinkers refuse a drink.

The Mohave Indian’s condemnation of drunkenness is tempered by his regard for the human being who is unfortunate enough to be a drunkard. Yet none of my informants ever defended inebriates by propounding the traditional plea of temperamental determinism (i.e., "it is his nature; he cannot help it") which, in Mohave society, serves to mitigate and to explain the offensive or antisocial conduct of some individuals (6). On the whole the intoxicated person is treated like an ordinary person, and the habitual drunkard is pitied rather than blamed. Thus, even though my interpreter abhorred drunkenness, she freely admitted that two alcoholic brothers were fundamentally kind and good people (Case 11).

Occasional drunkenness is not penalized and elicits relatively little gossip. Drunken misbehavior tends to be laughed and gossiped about, but is condemned less severely than the disorderly behavior of sober persons. In this respect the Mohave pattern resembles the American attitude (rather than the French), which condemns drunkenness more severely than the disorderly acts committed in a state of intoxication.

Intoxicated persons are seldom if ever abused. The "serial rape" of
intoxicated women is to be construed not as a conscious aggressive act but simply as a form of the sexual "humor" (11) to which the Mohave are addicted. The retaliatory aggression of two women who, while intoxicated, had their pubic hair burned off by two drunken men, was likewise more or less in the nature of a practical joke (11). I know of no instance in which an intoxicated person was intentionally and cold-bloodedly manhandled or robbed. (Incident b of Case 12 cannot be construed as theft, since the highly acculturated D. W. merely took advantage of his knowledge of American mores to obtain a certain position.)

Summing up, the Mohave attitude toward inebriates is rooted in their basic creed that every human being deserves respect and that no person is to be denied a chance to regain the esteem of his fellow men, regardless of how drunken and dissolute that man or woman may have been in the past.

II. Alcoholic Behavior

1. Sexual Utilization of Alcohol

Drinking in connection with sex activities must be sharply differentiated from the hospitality pattern. Whenever an unattached or adventurous man, attending a gathering or a dance, has some alcohol in his possession, it is more or less taken for granted that he will share his drinks with a woman with whom he wishes to have sexual relations, or with a group of men and women who happen to be "footloose and fancy free." A woman who accepts several drinks from a man thereby implicitly indicates her consent to the probable sexual consequences of this action.

An overt or tacit invitation to join in an alcoholic spree must be differentiated, however, from a systematic and underhanded attempt to intoxicate a woman in order to seduce her. I know of only one instance in which a man deliberately plied with drink a woman whose reputation and behavior did not justify him in assuming that she would consider these drinks as a tacit invitation to sexual intercourse (11).

The invitation to go on a spree must, furthermore, not be confused with offers of liquor tendered as advance payment for sexual favors. Only one of the women whom an informant labeled as promiscuous (kamalo:yi) was known to require alcohol as a payment for her favors. The rest of these women were known to be merely less discriminating in the choice of lovers when drunk than when sober (4).
FUNCTION OF ALCOHOL IN MOHAVE SOCIETY

It should be added that apparently only the real kamalo:y ever accept alcohol from Whites, Negroes or Chinese, since women know that such offers are advance payments for sexual favors.

The function of alcohol in the sexual life of the Mohave is thus not identical with its function in American society, since the Mohave do not consider sexual relations to be either vile or antisocial and, hence, need not dissolve the superego in alcohol in order to gratify the sex drive (11).

I have pointed out elsewhere (11) that the main sexual stimulus in Mohave society is opportunity, pure and simple. The role of alcohol in Mohave sexuality fits this pattern perfectly. The possession of a bottle of liquor almost irresistibly tempts a man to invite a woman to go on an alcoholic (and, implicitly, sexual) spree with him. It is, however, important to realize in this context that the woman thus invited need not necessarily be a paramour but may actually be the man’s own wife. In the latter instance, marital relations are often performed in some strikingly novel or droll manner.

The Mohave conception of intoxication as one of the forms of sexual opportunity is also exemplified in their treatment of women discovered drunk. Any woman who becomes severely intoxicated knows that her escorts, among whom may be her own husband, or one or more men who happen to find her in that condition, may decide to “take turns on her.” I have reported several instances of this kind in another context (11). Intercourse with intoxicated women is frequently performed a tergo in the prone position.

Some habitually drunken women are not deterred, however, by the risk of being serially raped. A pretty Walapai girl who lived among the Mohave, as well as some others, continued to drink to excess despite the fact that groups of men had abused them on previous occasions. Incidents of this kind are not taken too seriously, and public opinion blames the woman who became drunk rather than the men who took advantage of her condition. Even husbands have been known to remark, “I don’t mind it. She had it coming to her” (11).

This—to us paradoxical—reaction of the husband stands in need of some comment. While few Mohave are indulgent about letting others cohabit with their wives, it is generally felt that drunkenness mitigates the offense of adultery. I have reported elsewhere (11) the case of a drunken woman whose husband, joining the group in raping her, objected only when his companions attempted to have anal connections.
with her. Eventually he rescued her and the two staggered home hand in hand.

The woman who has been serially raped has no recourse, for “she knew what would happen to her if she got drunk.” (The Mohave made it quite clear that the girls mentioned in Case 12 did not avenge the fact that they were serially abused but merely retaliated for the burning of their pubic hair; to the Mohave this was by far the more grievous offense.) Since psychoanalytic experience indicates that the seducer or rapist may always count upon some cooperation from the woman, whose masochistic unconscious craves rape, it is plausible to assume that—as in our own culture—some women get drunk “accidentally on purpose” in order to gratify unconscious rape fantasies without being “responsible” for the event. It is furthermore important to realize in this context that some women who drink to excess are “phallic” kamalo:y (4), whose recurrent intoxication may perhaps be interpreted as the masochistic challenge of women—in satiable, presumably, because they are relatively frigid (4, 12)—who attempt to appease their penis-envy by inviting many men to provide them with penes and with fully satisfying sex relations. These expectations are seldom satisfied, however, for three reasons: (a) The orgastic potency of women is decreased by the ingestion of large amounts of alcohol; (b) alcoholic excesses tend to inhibit masculine potency; and (c) intoxicated men sometimes engage in rather crude practical jokes. Since an incident of the latter type has been described in full elsewhere, it will be merely summarized in the present study (Case 12).

It seems possible that these serial rapes satisfy the masochistic cravings of alcoholic women precisely by frustrating their phallic and orgastic ambitions. Since the particularly obnoxious kamalo:y is subjected to punitive mass rape, followed by clitoridectomy and sometimes even by a laceration of the vulva (4), it is plausible to infer that alcoholic women of this type are caught in a vicious circle in which the satisfaction of one wish automatically involves the frustration of another. In the case of ordinary women the vicious circle is often broken by marriage, whereas in the case of the kamalo:y this is accomplished only by mass rape and genital mutilation. In both instances the vicious circle is apparently broken by the acceptance of the feminine role, which, in some cases, was temporarily repudiated as the result of a divorce or of the loss of a lover. This inference is supported by the fact that many women who are deserted by their husbands or separated from them drink to
excess. I have reported elsewhere (11) the case of a woman who was deliberately plied with liquor by the man whom she had asked to reconcile her with her husband, the man falsely asserting that his mission had failed. I have also reported (4) the case of a woman who allegedly abetted her husband in killing a witch (believed to have been her adulterous lover) and, after her husband’s imprisonment, began to drink to excess. This woman’s half-sister, O:otec, an attractive though crippled woman, who suffered a confusional episode following an accidental miscarriage, also drank to excess when she separated from her first husband, and ceased to drink only when she found a good husband.

2. Maudlin Sentimentality

This behavior, defined here as a form of mawkish affectivity which contrasts with the individual's usual affective behavior, appears to be lacking among the Mohave. My interpreter, in describing the affectation behavior of her somewhat intoxicated husband, specifically remarked that he was "as nice and sweet as he always is" (Case 9). This remark is significant, since the interpreter likes to affect a certain gruffness of manner and definitely dislikes mawkishness.

The above comment gives emphasis to an outstanding characteristic of the Mohave drinking pattern. The intoxicated person acts as he always does, and is what he always is—"only more so." The change is quantitative rather than qualitative. Intoxication merely exaggerates the individual’s most obvious character traits, without suppressing his minor characteristics. The drunken Mohave either becomes "bigger than life-size" or passes out. The continuity of behavior and affect throughout the transition from sobriety to intoxication is probably due partly to the slightness of the depth and intensity of Mohave repressions, which is connected with the general patchiness and nonpervasiveness of their superego (13), and partly also to the high degree of continuity in cultural conditioning which is characteristic of many primitive societies (14).

Some observers of human character believe that mawkish people have no genuine and deep feelings but merely develop reaction-formations against their intense sadomasochistic impulses. Since the Mohave are capable of giving and receiving love (6), and express their feelings rather freely (6, 15, 16), they do not have to get drunk in order to be themselves.

The Mohave is not prone to indulge in wanton outbursts of sadism.
Mohave courage, which is second to none, is of the steadfast (16) rather than of the spectacularly foolhardy (bravado) variety. It lacks the dramatic, rhetorical, larmoyant and distinctly sadomasochistic background of the Plains Indian valor (17) which is an almost classical instance of a type of moral masochism brilliantly characterized by Berliner (18). In Veblenian terms (19), Mohave gallantry seems almost like drudgery when contrasted with Crow Indian exploits, for example. The Mohave, hence, does not feel that he has to purchase courage and social approval through self-inflicted suffering in an essentially hostile universe.

Summing up, the apparent absence of mawkishness in the behavior of the intoxicated Mohave is due to his seeming lack of the basic psychological requisites for maudlin sentimentality.

An instance of genuinely affectionate behavior in an intoxicated person is recorded further below (Case 9).

3. Aggressive Behavior

The average intoxicated Mohave is not aggressive, and drunken brawls are rare. It seems significant that of the few drunken brawls known to me, two were initiated by intoxicated men attempting to protect drunken women against some slightly sadistic practical joke. Thus, the shaman Hivsu: Tupoma tried to interfere with men who wished to singe off the pubic hair of two intoxicated girls, while T. attempted to prevent a group of men who, with his approval, had had sex-relations with his drunken wife, from abusing her anally (11). (Anal coitus is thought of as a sexual “joke.”) Similarly, although Hivsu: Tupoma seemed slightly wild-eyed while confessing to me that he had committed witchcraft and incest, his behavior toward me was as cordial as always (Case 12). Dr. Nettle’s impression that “The drunken Mohave do not fight—they merely pass out,” was confirmed independently by every reliable informant.

The relative absence of drunken aggressiveness among the Mohave, and their apparent lack of any psychic need to seek Dutch courage in the bottle, require some comment. The stoic courage (16) of these huge men (15, 20), which has enabled them on occasion to accomplish dazzling feats of valor in the face of overwhelming odds (16, 21), is still a living force among them. Since courage is taken for granted, no man is compelled to validate his claims to bravery by constant displays
of valor. In simplest terms, the Mohave despise the bully because their ideal is the man who combines gentleness with stoic courage (22). This ideal pattern explains why Hivsu: Tupo:ma, a huge man weighing nearly 250 pounds, gave up his attempt to protect two drunken girls rather than start a fight (Case 12).

It goes without saying that all Mohave do not live up to this ideal of the brave and gentle man.

Case 1.—In 1937, or thereabouts, an elderly woman, Nyortc Huhual (reputed to have been ya tcahaetk, i.e. "boy-crazy," in her youth and adulthood), was soberly walking home from a party, when a thickset youth pulled a sack over her head, took her money and raped her. The man in question, though never positively identified, was believed to be a relative of the old woman, and to have been intoxicated at the time. No one is certain, however, whether the man in question was actually drunk or whether intoxication was merely imputed to him in order to explain his conspicuously deviant behavior, the most atypical aspect of which was not the incest but the robbery—an almost unheard-of thing in Mohave society. [This incident has been reported in full elsewhere (9).]

A systematic discussion of the motivation of drunken aggressiveness must emphasize primarily divergences between Mohave and White opinions on what constitutes "adequate provocation" justifying aggression.

(a) The following extract from a case history (to be published in full in another context) illustrates a type of drunken aggressiveness which Mohave and White opinion alike would describe as "unprovoked brutality."

Case 2.—O:otc, whose half-sister allegedly helped her husband kill a witch (4), was faithful to her husband and behaved the way a good wife should. Eventually she left him because he drank to excess and abused her and her small son. While separated from her husband she too began to drink to excess, but denied having had affairs during that period. Eventually she married a sober and kindly man and is at present a very moderate "social drinker."

(b) The question whether provocation, in the case history about to be cited, was adequate to elicit extreme physical violence will be answered in one way by the Mohave, in another way by a member of our own society. The White moralist, as well as the White psychologist, will hold that provocation was more than adequate, since their frame of reference is based on the axiom that premeditated sexual infidelity, especially when "insult is added to injury," automatically elicits aggression. The Mohave, on the other hand, feel that only a drunken or
an unreasonable person would degrade himself to the extent of fight-
ing over a mere matter of infidelity, even though they too would be
unanimous in characterizing the wife’s behavior as objectionable.*

*It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the merits of the Mohave point of
view regarding jealousy. Yet one cannot help being amazed by the tenacity with
which modern psychologists—including Wilhelm Reich—cling to the view that
jealousy is a natural and innate sentiment, in the face of contradictory evidence fur-
nished not merely by anthropologists and historians but even by students of primate
zoology (23). Homines id quod volunt credunt!
one, although even they felt that Mukoh's violence was altogether excessive. Yet, since the continuity of the tribe (6, 15) and of the family (9) are among the basic values of Mohave culture, they did not seem surprised that the rivalry of two men over which of them had fathered a certain infant eventually led to murder. It should be pointed out, however, that the aggressor's wrath may have had some other sources as well. The Mohave is not only not permitted to fight when his wife deserts him, but once the wife has settled down with another man he is expected to show a great deal of indifference and self-restraint. It is therefore tempting to infer that Mukoh was glad to be able to claim—perhaps even to persuade himself—that his resentment toward his wife's new husband was due exclusively to his culturally justifiable indignation over the latter's insistence that he, rather than Mukoh, was the legal father of an infant conceived by Mukoh's wife. This interpretation is more plausible since some men are known to have arbitrarily repudiated the paternity of a child whose mother they had deserted (24).

Case 4.—In about 1900 the pregnant wife of Mukoh, a resident of Needles, left him and married Vahamunyu:. The latter, in conformity with Mohave beliefs concerning the possibility of changing the paternity of an unborn child (25), claimed Mukoh's infant as his own. Mukoh, as the procreator, also had a culturally acceptable claim to the paternity of the child, and did not cease to assert that it was his. Relations between Mukoh and Vahamunyu: were extremely strained, and over a period of 4 years the two men engaged in several drunken fights. One day, when both of them happened to be drunk, Mukoh went to Vahamunyu:':s house and declared that he would kill the latter. "Come on then and kill me," Vahamunyu: replied. Thereupon Mukoh picked up an iron rod and hit his rival on the side of the head. The blow was so severe that Vahamunyu:;"brains came out." "You said you would kill me, and now I am as good as dead!" Vahamunyu: exclaimed as he fell. Mukoh was immediately arrested. When Vahamunyu: died the next day, his stepfather went to the jail and requested that Mukoh be released so that the Mohave could even up the score by killing him. The authorities, however, transferred Mukoh to the San Bernardino jail. After serving a term in prison, Mukoh settled down among the kindred Yuma Indians, not daring to return to the Mohave Reservation. Nonetheless he did visit Parker several times, and in 1930 even came to Needles, where the murder had taken place. He was, however, still afraid that someone might wish to avenge Vahamunyu:; death, although most of the victim's relatives had died in the meantime.

Vahamunyu:; almost provocatively passive attitude in the face of death is of considerable interest, since it closely approximates the behavior of witches who are about to be killed (10). It seems likely that
this passivity was a manifestation of relatively intense guilt feelings. This observation does not explain fully, however, why Vahamunyu: should have chosen to imitate, out of context, a pattern of behavior which is characteristic of another segment of culture; for only witches, and to a lesser extent the k"anami:yhe heroes (15, 22), are expected to accept death stoically. Nor can the notorious self-aggrandizement of inebriates explain Vahamunyu:’s pseudo-heroic pose, unless alcoholic intoxication were in some way unconsciously related to witchcraft. The question of a nexus between alcoholism and witchcraft is discussed in another section of the present study.

Aggressive actions fall into several categories:

1. **Overt Aggression.**
   
   (a) Minor releases of aggression due to intoxication pure and simple are exemplified by drunken scuffles. (b) Aggression motivated entirely by threats to the individual’s subjective security-system is exemplified by P.’s assault upon his adulterous wife (Case 3). (c) Aggression allegedly motivated entirely by a threat to a basic value of Mohave culture, but actually motivated in part by factors which Mohave society does not consider a legitimate cause for aggression, is exemplified by the slaying of Vahamunyu: (Case 4). (d) Atypical aggressions by maladjusted persons whose alcoholism is symptomatic are exemplified in the abuse of O:otec by her first husband (Case 2).

2. **Disguised Aggression.**
   
   (a) “Jocose” aggression against other men participating in the serial rape of women is typified by the pushing of a drunken man’s face against the woman’s genitalia. (b) “Jocose” aggression against women subjected to serial rape is exemplified in the burning of the pubic hair of two women (Case 12). (c) Incestuous impulses masking aggressive ones are usually expressed in the form of witchcraft.

3. **Aggression Against the Self.**
   
   (a) Self-destruction due to aggressive impulses originally directed at other persons is exemplified in suicide (Case 8). (b) Self-destructiveness due to guilt-feelings caused by previous acts of witchcraft usually takes the form of a confession (Cases 12, 13). (c) Self-destructiveness in individuals preoccupied with thoughts about lost love-objects is exemplified in Cases 10 and 11.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the aggressive behavior of the intoxicated Mohave is the almost total absence of aggressions directed at individuals who do not belong to the Mohave tribe. This observation cannot be understood without a brief analysis of the history of Mohave aggressiveness.
FUNCTION OF ALCOHOL IN MOHAVE SOCIETY

In aboriginal times the Mohave Indian had ample opportunities to manifest his aggressions in making war on his neighbors. Warfare, undertaken in an almost sportive and yet doggedly obstinate frame of mind (16, 21), was then an integral part of Mohave life (15, 22). This outlet for aggressive impulses enabled these warriors to behave in a conspicuously peaceful manner within the tribe. Despite the belief in witchcraft, therefore, Mohave society was not steeped in the oppressive atmosphere of hag-ridden terror so characteristic of the allegedly Apollonian Pueblo Indians (26). These stubborn, individualistic and temperamental warriors did not have to press a lid of pseudo-peaceful unassertiveness on a boiling witches’ cauldron of hate, suspicion and fear. Two men might, now and then, come to blows; families contending for the ownership of a piece of land might sometimes engage in highly formalized and rather harmless “battles”; a particularly obnoxious witch might be killed (10); a conspicuously offensive and dissolute kamalo:y might be raped and clitoridectomized (4). But on the whole, life within the tribe was singularly peaceful and devoid of violence or suspiciousness. White occupation brought in its train a radical modification in Mohave patterns of aggression.

The first decades of Reservation life were characterized by a crisis in the management of aggressions, brought about by the forcible suppression of intertribal warfare. Since aggression no longer found an outlet through traditional channels, the Mohave had to cast about for new outlets. The crisis was marked by a temporary flare-up of internece killings which, on close investigation, appear to have been substitutes for aggression against the unconquerable Whites. Thus, the Mohave murdered a Yuma Indian, although the Yuma were their traditional allies and close kin. Another Yuma, acting as an emissary for the U. S. Army in negotiations for the release of a White girl, was allegedly threatened with death (27). Shamans were killed for starting strange (i.e., presumably, imported) epidemics (10). Some half-caste infants were buried at birth (24). Each of these incidents was complicated by the problem of escaping the punishment of the White authorities. Yet neither private strife with the Yuma, nor witch-killings, nor infanticide, ever reached epidemic proportions, probably because the Mohave are not particularly prone to deflect aggression from the strong to the weak.

The availability of large quantities of alcoholic beverages likewise failed to open up adequate new avenues for the manifestation of aggressions, perhaps because the warrior ideal was too deeply ingrained
in the Mohave group—ideal to enable them to accept the drunken bully as an adequate substitute for, and as a "reasonable facsimile" of, the k'ahahimiyhe hero.

Since the Mohave were traditionally unwilling to borrow the ideology of other groups, they had to grope for a solution compatible with the basic themes of their own culture.

In concrete terms, the disappearance of traditional outlets for aggression and the multiplication of new frustrations appear to have been compensated for by a diminution of certain native frustrations and by a relaxing of certain aboriginal controls. In this manner the overall amount of frustration was maintained at a constant level. The frustrated warrior was permitted to assuage his thwarted ambitions through unlimited sexual conquests.

This reaction to externally imposed pressures can be analyzed in cultural as well as in psychological terms.

A cultural analysis of this reaction to White pressure must attempt to discover why the relaxing of almost all sexual controls did not turn the Mohave into an American equivalent of the de-tribalized, slum-dwelling African native (28, 29) whose behavior is asocial both in African and in European terms, and why Mohave culture did not disintegrate as a result of the effective removal of almost all sexual inhibitions (11).

It is of some importance to find a correct answer to the questions raised in the preceding paragraph, since, according to psychoanalytic theory, instinctual frustration is a fundamental prerequisite of socialization and of educability. This thesis is apparently supported by the observation that many societies, originally ritualistic and more or less puritanical, actually disintegrated as a result of excessive sexual indulgence.

In Mohave society, however, sexual indulgence was always a major interest and a culturally approved pattern of behavior (11). Hence the almost complete relaxing of the few existing social controls did not constitute a radical modification of the basic themes of Mohave culture. It merely broadened the scope and exaggerated the value of a theme which was already an important component of the traditional Mohave way of life. Had sexual indulgence been alien to the Mohave way of life, its sudden efflorescence would perhaps have brought about a complete breakdown of the traditional ways. But since the Mohave were always free in their sexual behavior, an increase in promiscuousness
merely meant a relatively minor quantitative shift in basic interests, and not a qualitative innovation in the tribal way of life. It involved a moderate readjustment of the hierarchy of existing values rather than an incorporation of new values. In other words, the promiscuous Mohave was in the position of being able to be promiscuous in the traditional way.

Summing up, when the Mohave were definitely inhibited by external pressure in the pursuit of aggressive goals, they provided ample opportunities to cultivate another set of socially determined ambitions. Hence they did not become marginal men, or "promiscuous bums," lacking ties either with Mohave culture or with American society. They became, instead, Mohave sex-specialists, i.e., persons consistently engaged in the pursuit of a culturally accepted "alternate" behaviour pattern. This did not mean, however, a discarding of the warrior ideal—witness the Mohave unwillingness to think of the drunken bully as a hero, and the eagerness with which the Mohave have served in both World Wars (Case 10).

Psychological reactions to the suppression of intertribal warfare were somewhat complex, although they too can be suitably analyzed in terms of a shift in the goal-structure of Mohave culture.

The first reaction was a somewhat chaotic one, and consisted of witch-killings and infanticide. These aggressions differed from war-like activities in being relatively private undertakings. As such, they lacked the framework and moral support of an organized tribal activity, so important to the Mohave who are highly conscious of their tribal unity and identity (6, 15). These aggressions appear to have been abandoned because they did not provide the basic psychological satisfactions of organized warfare, which had deflected aggressions in a morale-building manner from members of the in-group to members of the out-group. They constituted, furthermore, a pattern of behavior which provoked additional White intervention in Mohave affairs and hence were contrary to tribal interests.

The second reaction was the development of an attitude of contempt for the White man and his ways (8). This reaction—on the whole a healthy defense mechanism—still persists and serves to perpetuate many important values of Mohave life, with special emphasis on those patterns which contrast with White practices. In other words, the defensive persistence of many Mohave values is due not so much to mere inertia as to "antagonistic acculturation" (31).
The third reaction is, psychologically, a rather complex one. Since genital sexuality was substituted for the gratification of (pregenital) aggressiveness, genital behavior became contaminated by certain aggressive impulses. The fact that the invasion of genitality by pregenital impulses is incompatible with tribal ideals is highlighted by a remark of one of my informants. On being asked about the occurrence of sadomasochistic behavior, he said, “Only Whites do such things. We are not sufficiently civilized for that.” He added that amorous biting was believed to be a sign of undesirable jealousy (32). Hence, whenever aggressiveness appears in a genital context, it tends to be masked either as humor or as “legitimate” indignation, thus allowing it to escape the censorship of the superego.

The fourth reaction is a socially constructive one. External pressures have compelled the Mohave to avoid organized aggression. Contacts with modern life, in schools and in hospitals, have tended to interfere so much with the persistence of the ancient tribal interest in “supernatural” (shamanistic) dreaming that, according to Wallace (33), hardly any member of the younger generation has had such dreams in recent decades. On the other hand, the Mohave have systematically rejected both the internecine hostilities and the property-centered goals of White civilization. The final outcome of this process was a further increase in the compensatory cathecting of such values as individualism, broad sociability and indiscriminate amorousness. The Mohave Indian’s extraordinary decency toward his fellow man appears, thus, to be functionally connected with his promiscuousness and uninhibited amorousness.*

While the above comments elucidate many of the chief factors accounting for the limited aggressiveness in Mohave behavior; and also suggest that suppressed rage is relatively rare among the Mohave, due consideration must be given to three additional facts: The absence of aggressions against Whites, the occurrence of self-destructive behavior in intoxicated persons, and the dynamics of the Mohave pattern of “passing-out.” The first of these problems can be discussed briefly in the present section; the latter two will be analyzed under separate headings.

The absence of aggressions against Whites by intoxicated Mohave

* This relationship appears to be more than a mere coincidence, since internecine peace and decency toward one’s fellows frequently characterize tribes with few sexual inhibitions and a highly genital personality make-up. The interrelationship of anality, sadism, warfare and the pursuit of wealth has been cogently discussed by Jones (34).
Indians is probably connected with the suppression of extratribal warfare by American Government authorities. The actual dynamics involved in this process were the subject of discussion with Mr. C. E. Prince, Jr., and as a result of this discussion we tentatively formulated these dynamics in the following terms: When the Whites suppressed Mohave warfare, they provided the Mohave Indian with only one new outlet for his aggressions—alcohol. At the same time the Whites became the representatives of the superego. Hence the Mohave was constantly torn between the need to express aggression in the traditional manner and his fear of White intervention. Eventually the Mohave reached a compromise solution which permitted a partial expression of aggressive impulses. This solution—the use of alcohol—was essentially a symptom-formation; and like all symptoms it proved to be an inadequate solution of the basic conflict.

Further analysis has suggested, however, that whereas there could be little doubt of the symptomatic nature of Mohave alcoholism, an alternate and perhaps more satisfactory interpretation, which adhered more closely to the traditional conception of the superego as a psychic instance whose content is subjectively evaluated as “good” and “right,” should be given preference over the interpretation first formulated.

In reformulating the dynamics of the process under study, one had to take into account the fact that the White man and his ideology are despised by the Mohave. Their contempt for White ways seems to be more than a mere reaction-formation; for these ways are distinctly incompatible with Mohave ideology and are composed essentially of elements which the Mohave apprehend as ego-alien. If the Mohave spoke in psychoanalytic terms they would probably affirm that the White man’s ideology has its roots in and supports pregenital urges. The Mohave technique of handling Whites is almost identical with that of handling pregenital impulses: They despise and ignore them as best they can, and consider them unworthy even of open hostility. They are quite aware of pregenital impulses (32), just as they are aware of Whites, but repudiate both as being unworthy of notice by adults. When infants display behavior which is pregenital (i.e., if they are “stingy,” “envious,” etc.), the Mohave attempt to persuade them to behave like decent adults, but do not punish them. When adults behave in an objectionable manner, the Mohave tend to encourage decent behavior, and if they fail, ignore the offender and the offense as long as
possible. As for Whites, "Their behavior is beneath contempt, and hence beneath notice."

Summing up, Whites and their ideology are apprehended by the Mohave as part of the id, rather than as part of the superego. Since the Mohave do not expect anything good of the Whites, they are seldom disappointed, and hence feel no strong urge to punish Whites for ill behavior. On the other hand they definitely expect some decency from their fellow Mohave, and even from enemy Indians—witness their contempt for the Maricopa, who refused to "play fair" and made an alliance with mounted Pima Indians armed with rifles (16). Thus the Mohave do not behave aggressively toward Whites any more than toward dogs or mud, none of these being capable of decent conduct. Should a White show himself to be a decent person, however, the Mohave will accept him as a human being, and will expect him to conform to Mohave standards of decency (8). The highest praise a Mohave can bestow on a White is still the assertion that "He is really a Mohave and not a White man at all."

Both the first scheme and the more complete second one interpret alcohol addiction as a symptom. The similarity ends there, however. The initial scheme attempted to explain primarily the marginal and rare phenomenon of aggression, whereas the scheme proposed here aims to interpret primarily the problem of the conspicuous lack of drunken aggression. In the initial scheme the compromise ended with a partial gratification of id impulses, in the form of intoxication and aggression, whereas in the present scheme the compromise results in a victory of the superego, which seems incomplete only when, instead of engaging in a sexual orgy, or instead of passing out, the Mohave actually displays some aggression. This point is important enough to be discussed under a separate heading.

4. Passing Out

We know that the "accidental" pairing of two ideas is never an "accident" but reveals an unconsciously perceived nexus between two factors. It is thus of the utmost significance that Dr. Nettle, as well as several Mohave informants, remarked that "Drunken Mohave do not fight—they merely pass out." This formulation clearly reveals the nexus between aggression and passing out, although it does not disclose the nature of the relationship. The next task, therefore, is to investigate the nature of this connection.
In accordance with the fundamental principle of psychic determinism, we shall start with the assumption that “passing out” fulfills a wish and is a means to an end. This assumption is particularly convincing in the case of the Mohave for several reasons:

(a) The average Mohave passes out after imbibing relatively small quantities of alcohol.

(b) I know of no male Mohave who passed out before or during a sexual orgy.

(c) Women frequently pass out before sexual orgies. It has been shown above that the psychodynamics of the drunken woman’s unconscious consent to serial rape must be formulated in terms of aggressive frigidity and phallic pretensions (4).

(d) An exceptionally gentle Mohave passed out after a very mild altercation with his wife (Case 9).

It is my thesis that “passing out” is a defense against the eruption of ego-dystonic impulses, or against some unwelcome task, especially when the subject has imbibed relatively moderate amounts of alcohol.*

The point of the above remark is a relatively simple one. Passing out performs a clear-cut function in Mohave drunkenness. When, due to drinking and the concomitant relaxing of inhibitions, the individual is in danger of performing some ego-dystonic action, the superego, and ego-forces as well, fall back upon their last line of defense and bring about the phenomenon known as “passing out.” In terms of this frame of reference, passing out is viewed here as a hysterical reaction, akin to fainting or hysterical blindness or paralysis. Similar flights from anxiety or tension into unconsciousness or sleep have been observed among other primitive tribes (35).

Since practically the only wholly ego-dystonic force that intoxication releases in the Mohave is aggression, it seems plausible that passing out is primarily a defense against aggression. This is substantiated by the fact that Mohave individuals do not seem to pass out when aggression is disguised as humor (Case 12), or is bolstered by a “legitimate” cause (Case 3), or, finally, when the drunken aggression is a soberly premeditated one (Case 4). It is important to point out in this context that aggression against Whites would not fit into any of these categories, since Whites “don’t know any better” and hence cannot provide “legitimate” provocation.

* The following personal observation is pertinent: A somewhat intoxicated White habitual drinker looked at his watch, realized that he would have to perform an unpleasant task in exactly 90 seconds, and promptly passed out “cold.”
Although the above comments constitute, to a certain extent, a new approach to one aspect of alcoholism, they are wholly compatible with classic and time-tested psychoanalytic theories.

5. Characteristics of Mohave Drinking Behavior

In the preceding sections it has been consistently emphasized that the conduct of the average intoxicated Mohave does not differ appreciably from his normal behavior. Unfortunately it is almost impossible to illustrate normal and average patterns of behavior with case histories sufficiently striking to overshadow those which describe unique, marginal and sensational forms of misconduct. It is therefore to be feared that accounts of spectacular murders or orgies will divert attention from the simple fact that the overwhelming majority of intoxicated Mohave Indians behave in a quiet and reasonable manner.

The unique and the spectacular constitute an ever present temptation to emphasize the marginal rather than the average, and to focus attention on climactic rather than on routine patterns of behavior. Even anthropologists have occasionally succumbed to the "fallacy of misplaced emphasis"—which has led Röheim (36) to exclaim that the only "savage" in primitive society is the visiting anthropologist. The strange notion—so popular with armchair anthropologists—that the "primitive" devotes most of his time to "magico-animistic" pursuits, has been severely criticized by Kroeber (37), who rightly stressed the fact that the "primitive" behaves most of the time in a perfectly rational and matter-of-fact manner, and acts alogically only in situations involving stress.

Difficulties created by the existence of unusual and impressive phenomena are not limited to anthropology, however. Hence it is not sufficient merely to point them out and to describe them as brute obstacles to interpretation. Like all difficulties arising in the course of scientific work, the problem under study is at once an obstacle and a challenge, a hindrance to glib discourse as well as a signpost pointing toward an important new insight. It is therefore incumbent upon us to give further consideration to problems arising in connection with the scientific utilization of routine as well as climactic events.

Anthropologists and psychoanalysts alike have been bedeviled by the lure of the unusual and by the fallacy of misplaced emphasis. Just as the anthropologists have gradually abandoned their former exclusive preoccupations with ritual and belief, and have increasingly em-
phasized routine modes of behavior, so psychoanalysts have gradually developed a psychology of the ego after a long period of intensive and almost exclusive preoccupation with the more striking aspects of the unconscious. At the same time the psychoanalysts have shifted their attention from id psychology to ego psychology, and from symptom neuroses to character neuroses. The similarity between these two developments, which is not fortuitous, has a direct bearing on the problem of Mohave alcoholism.

Broadly speaking, the average behavior of the intoxicated Mohave Indian reveals important aspects of Mohave ego-psychology, whereas deviant and sensational forms of drunken conduct, or misconduct, tend to disclose unconscious factors in Mohave alcoholism. It is therefore important to emphasize the unspectacular character of the behavior of the average intoxicated Mohave, by means of an appropriately unimpressive and detailed narrative, before undertaking an analysis of the more or less unconscious mechanisms involved in excessive drinking.

*Case 5.*—I returned to Parker, Arizona, in the summer of 1935. I reached the town in the evening and registered at the local hotel. On emerging from the hotel, on my way to the restaurant, the first person I met was a young Mohave man with whom I happened to be well acquainted. Since I had not informed my Mohave friends that I had returned from Asia, most of them believed me to be either in Indo-China or in France, and, indeed, had never expected to see me again. My friend was therefore surprised to see me and freely expressed his delight at my return. After an exchange of the usual amenities, he spontaneously mentioned that he was rather intoxicated, and impressed upon me the fact that he was distinctly pleased with his condition. After reminding him of our friendship I took the liberty of gently rebuking him for drinking to excess and urged him to go home before he could become involved in some trouble. He brushed my objections aside, however, and assured me that he would not get into any trouble. I then made some disparaging remarks about White bootleggers and asked him the name of the person who had provided him with liquor. Although he did not resent my question he pretended that he did not know the bootlegger’s name and added that there were plenty of Whites willing to make some “easy money” by peddling liquor to the Indians. “The law against selling us liquor merely means that we have to pay more for our drinks than the Whites do. This gives White people a chance to exploit us.” We then conversed for a while about my experiences in Indo-China and about the doings of our mutual friends. Throughout the conversation my Mohave friend behaved in a cordial and courteous manner, and even though he was obviously delighted by my unexpected return he did not become either maudlin or overenthusiastic. After a while we bade each other good night and separated. I understand that he returned to his home unescorted and did not run into any difficulties.
It cannot be sufficiently stressed that this kind of amiable and quiet intoxication, rather than spectacular orgies and murders, is the characteristic behavior of the intoxicated Mohave. If this fact is disregarded it is impossible to understand a major component of Mohave personality structure, and many significant aspects of Mohave ego-psychology will necessarily escape attention.

III. Unconscious Factors in Mohave Alcoholism

Psychoanalytic conceptions of the dynamics of alcohol addiction are derived from the study of individuals belonging to a culture in which alcoholic beverages play a significant role. An attempt to test the applicability of these theories to our Mohave data would be a meaningless exercise of mental agility unless it could be shown also that alcohol is well integrated with contemporary Mohave life, both on the social and on the intrapsychic level.

1. It has been shown above that drinking is fully integrated with Mohave social life, and that the alcoholic excesses of Mohave Indians must be thought of in terms of what Linton (30) has called culturally standardized "patterns of misconduct" rather than in terms of the purely marginal and idiosyncratic deviation of an atypical individual from the social norm.

2. A rigorous proof that alcohol and drinking are fully integrated with the psychic life of the Mohave Indian must satisfy several criteria. Specifically, it must be shown:

(a) That alcohol and drinking occur in the dreams of drinkers and nondrinkers alike, as part of the stuff of which the manifest content of dreams is made.

(b) That alcohol and drinking are susceptible of being utilized both in the primary and in the secondary process. In particular they must be susceptible of being utilized as symbols on a par with, and as fully equivalent substitutes for, standard aboriginal symbols.

(c) That alcohol and drinking are coordinated with existing symbolic equations. In other words, they must be susceptible of being added, as new terms, to existing symbolic equations.

(d) That alcohol and drinking are, in turn, susceptible of being symbolized by aboriginal symbols—i.e., they must sometimes be part of the latent content of dreams. (I have no data to prove this point.)

(e) That alcohol and drinking serve as symbols in dreams expressing both aboriginal types of conflicts and conflicts resulting from acculturation.
231 FUNCTION OF ALCOHOL IN MOHAVE SOCIETY

(f) That dreams about alcohol and drinking, as well as alcoholic hallucinations, are consciously treated as the equivalents of dreams whose manifest content is composed entirely of aboriginal culture elements.

Case 6.—This dream was dreamed around 1910 by a 10-year-old non-drinking girl. It was reported in 1932 by the dreamer herself, who at that time disapproved of alcoholic excesses. "I dreamed that I held a bottle of whisky in my hands, and was walking along happily, when an elderly man, whom I did not know, came up to me and tried to take it away from me. I jumped into the Colorado River and swam to the opposite shore. Then I woke up."

This dream satisfies several of our criteria. It is the dream of a non-drinker (criterion a). The whisky bottle is a phallic symbol, and the attempted theft is a threat of castration (criterion b). Whisky is coordinated with the symbolic equations milk-saliva-semen (criterion c). It is used to express both an aboriginal conflict—phallic aspirations—and a conflict arising from acculturation: the girl in question had a harsh childhood, because of her mixed blood, and grew up to be a very positive, "phallic" sort of person (criterion e). This dream, like other important dreams, was remembered for more than 20 years (criterion f).

Case 7.—The following incident was related by a young adult who had frequent anxiety dreams and hallucinatory experiences. "I was drunk one day and was walking homeward through the brush, when I saw something that looked like a white snake. I almost collapsed from fright. People believed that this vision was an ominous one, and was in some way connected with someone's death." (This man's younger sibling died in utero when his mother died in labor. This trauma is reflected in several of his dreams.) The informant, as well as his friends, treated this alcoholic hallucination on a par with other dreams and hallucinations (criterion f).

The dream (Case 6) and hallucinatory experience (Case 7) above reported satisfy all criteria except (d). In view of the fact that the material satisfies five of the six criteria, it seems reasonable to assume that a more extensive collection of Mohave dreams would contain also items in which alcohol and drinking would be part of the latent dream-content (criterion d). This is all the more likely since Wallace's recent study (33) reveals an appreciable degree of acculturation both in the manifest content of the dreams of Mohave Indians and in the attitude of the Mohave toward dreams.

The preceding considerations justify the affirmation that alcohol and drinking are sufficiently integrated with the social and psychic life of the Mohave to warrant an investigation of the unconscious mecha-
nisms of drinking in terms of certain psychoanalytic theories pertaining to alcohol addiction. (The name "Whiskymouth," which is that of a nondrinker who disapproves of drinking, shows that alcohol is fitted even into the Mohave naming pattern.)

We shall now investigate some major factors in the motivational structure of Mohave alcoholism.

1. **Preoccupation with the Dead**

The behavior of Mohave Indians when drunk shows a significant tendency toward preoccupation with the dead. Intoxicated witches speak of their victims (Cases 12, 13) in terms of intense longing, while lay individuals consciously think of their dead relatives (Cases 10, 11). Intoxication appears to counteract the tribal taboo on mentioning the names of the dead (15, 38). Conversely, obsessive thoughts and anxieties connected with the beloved dead are apparently conducive to alcoholic excesses (Cases 10, 11). The fact that a loss of realistic object-cathexes plays a role in intoxication is underscored by the observation that deserted and divorced women are especially prone to drink to excess.

It is important to realize in this context that Mohave culture has certain clearly formulated rules concerning the manifestation of emotions on the occasion of the severing of affective bonds. Women in particular are permitted to manifest considerable emotionalism immediately after the severing of such bonds through death (39) or through separation (40, 41). Within limits the same liberty is also granted to men, although there is some tendency to ridicule their emotional outbursts (41). On the other hand the subsequent emotional behavior of the bereaved or deserted individual is supposed to be stoical and dignified.

Furthermore, it is specifically believed that obsessive preoccupation with dead or lost love-objects causes certain ailments (38), that the dead attempt to lure the living to the land of the dead (38), and that witches seek to be killed in order to join the ghosts of their beloved victims (10, 15).

These facts and beliefs suggest that the rule prescribing dignified self-restraint and the taboo on the names of the dead constitute a culturally standardized attempt to suppress intense preoccupation with lost love-objects in order to reduce anxiety and feelings of guilt to a minimum.
Intoxicated persons, however, frequently violate these rules and taboos. It is tempting to dispose of the entire problem in the traditional manner, explaining these violations of taboos by the theory that “alcohol dissolves the superego.” But inasmuch as the “dissolving of the superego” is supposed to abolish anxiety, the traditional explanation appears to be inadequate; for in this instance the purpose of the rules and taboos in question is precisely the reduction of anxiety.

The actual dynamics of the situation are somewhat different. Paradoxically, intoxication can bring about noncompliance with these beneficial taboos only because it substitutes itself for the latter and achieves the goal of reducing anxiety by idiosyncratic rather than by culturally standardized means. In fact, it must be suspected that certain individuals are impelled to substitute drunkenness for compliance with tribal taboos precisely because, in their case, the taboos fail to reduce anxiety to a tolerable level. The tribal taboos in question attempt to cope with anxiety by bringing about a conscious and deliberate suppression of all thoughts about lost love-objects. Alcohol, on the other hand, in providing compensatory infantile gratifications, tends to diminish the over-all level of anxiety, and thus renders tolerable the reemergence of these thoughts into the field of consciousness.* In fact, intoxication seems to have certain advantages over the process of suppression: by permitting the reemergence of the tabooed thoughts, it may enable the individual to “work through” (durcharbeiten) his problem. This interpretation seems to be supported by the observation that many individuals are relatively successful in their attempts to cope with the trauma of losing a love-object by resort to intoxication—witness the fact that indulgence in alcoholic episodes is usually abandoned spontaneously when the deserted woman finds a new spouse (Case 2).

On the other hand, when the picture is complicated by incest, witchcraft or an appreciable amount of latent homosexuality—and perhaps by certain other factors as well—the individual’s attempt to “work through” his problem while in a state of anesthetic intoxication fails, and a vicious circle is established. In such cases the intoxicated person deliberately courts disaster, i.e., by making damaging confessions (Cases 12, 13). Figuratively speaking, his attempt to cope with the problem fails and his “working through” degenerates into mere “acting out.” Nonetheless the above observations clearly indicate that in some instances it is justified—within limits—to think of alcohol addic-

* Benzedrine is reported to have somewhat similar effects (42).
tion as a spontaneous and unconscious attempt at psychological self-medication.

This view is entirely compatible with Gross' thesis (43) that toxic and toxoid substances simply accelerate or slow down psychic processes.

Whatever the correct interpretation of these phenomena may be, the case histories reported here clearly indicate that intoxication may be used by the drinker as a means of fleeing obsessive thoughts about the dead, or of thinking of the dead without undue anxiety, or both (Case 10). The fact that the second aim is sometimes not achieved is shown by the self-destructive intoxicated behavior of those whose relationship with the lost love-object was complicated by homosexual, incestuous and aggressive (witchcraft) elements (Cases 11, 12, 13).

The following case histories reveal with great clarity the significance of the dead in alcoholic behavior.

Case 8.—The informant and her half-brother were raised by a very "bossy" aunt, whom both of them disliked exceedingly. One day the young man borrowed his aunt's car, became intoxicated, and wrecked it, whereupon his aunt nagged him so much that he shot and killed himself. It is interesting that the informant complained about her aunt mostly when she was riding in a car. The accidental wrecking of the aunt's car was perhaps not entirely fortuitous, in terms of the logic of the unconscious, since the young man in question intensely disliked his aggressive and "phallic" aunt.

This incident explains the informant's fear of automobile accidents—significant in the next incident, in which her husband became intoxicated and almost drove into a ditch a car which had been purchased with money loaned by the same aunt.

Case 9.—"My husband is a very kindly person. He seldom drinks, and when he does drink, he simply passes out. He was angry with me only once. One day he got drunk somewhere, and it was quite late before we managed to drive home. Since he drove in a zigzag line, I became afraid that he would have an accident, and asked him to let me drive the car. He refused to listen to me, however, and seemed to be somewhat annoyed because I was afraid of his driving. Yet he drove so badly that every other minute I had to grab the steering wheel in order to prevent him from driving us into a ditch. Finally he fell asleep at the wheel, which enabled me to take his place in the driver's seat. While I was driving the car he sat by my side, leaned his head against my shoulder, and kept mumbling, 'Don't be angry, sweetheart, I do love you so!' He was just like a little baby—as nice and sweet as he always is. When we reached our house, I put him to bed and we went to sleep. That is about as angry as my husband will ever get. He is a good man."

The intoxicated behavior just described is precisely what one would
Function of Alcohol in Mohave Society

expect from someone as gentle, kindly and affectionate as the man in question. His accidental death in 1944 was so traumatic for his stepson that the youth temporarily resorted to alcoholism (Case 10).

**Case 10.**—L. is an almost fullblood Indian of complicated tribal antecedents. His father was a Hopi. His mother is probably half Mohave, three-eighths White, and one-eighth Maricopa (see Cases 8, 9). His first given name is that of his mother's younger uterine half-brother—the older brother of Taparevily, who killed himself around 1924 (Case 8).

Culturally, L. is entirely Mohave. His Hopi paternity is due to a relationship entered into by his mother while she was separated from her Navaho husband. L. was brought up on a Mohave Reservation by his mother and her subsequent husband, J., a fullblood Mohave, of a kindliness, gentleness and patience unusual even in that tribe.

Like all persons of mixed blood, who are looked down on by the Mohave, L. was rather aggressive and slightly maladjusted in his childhood. At the same time he was a very intelligent, amusing and, on the whole, nice and helpful boy. Unlike most Mohave children, he received corporal punishment. This was administered only by his mother, who was quite consciously influenced by her experiences in White schools as a student and as a teacher. At any rate the boy was naughty enough to arouse some speculation concerning the possibility that he might become a shaman in later life.

The boy literally idolized his stepfather, who could not have been kinder to him if he had been his real father. For example, when L., then about 8 years of age, began to pummel his stepfather with his fists, J. reacted to the mother's admonition to "smack him" with the remark: "Why should I fight him? He is too small to hurt me."

The boy also exhibited some latent but well-controlled hostility toward his mother. During my visit in 1938, L., then less than 14 years old, acted as my interpreter whenever I was working with children, proving himself to be skillful, cooperative, and capable of high-grade initiative. At that time he was also selling, on behalf of a mail-order company, miscellaneous small items, with the understanding that, after he had sold a specified number, he would obtain a premium. I bought from him some tooth paste and tooth brushes, and thus enabled him to complete the minimum list of sales qualifying him for a premium. One of the premiums he received at that time was a small cigarette case, which he presented to me the next evening when I visited his family. His mother was delighted with his gesture. She proudly pointed out to me that she herself had asked her son for the cigarette case, and that he had refused to give it to her, without explaining that he intended to give it to me. His mother was delighted to discover that the present had been meant for me, and praised her son for his courtesy toward a friend, apparently unaware of the element of aggression and of the father transference involved in her son's gesture.

In 1944, on my return from Naval service overseas, I began to receive letters from L. He was then an enlisted man in the U.S.N.R., and I had considerable difficulty in persuading him to stop addressing me as Lieutenant and to continue calling me by my first name, as he had done in the past. He re-
peatedly expressed surprise and pleasure at being permitted to be friends with an officer, which intimated to me that he might not have been too well adjusted to life in the Naval shore station to which he was assigned at the time.

Early in 1945, after my return to civilian life, I received a letter from his mother in which she related that her husband had been killed while breaking in a newly caught horse. She also stated that, as a result of this death, her son, then still in the Navy, had begun to drink very heavily, and had ceased to correspond with her and with other Mohave friends and relatives. She asked me to use my influence to persuade her son to stop drinking and to write to her. I wrote a long letter to her son, talking to him, as in the past, as to a young relative, and begged him to write to his family and to stop drinking. I received a reply (see below) almost by return mail, in which L. stated that my letter had cheered him up so much that he wrote 16 letters within the next day to all members of his family and to several friends as well. He also promised subsequently that he would stop drinking. Shortly afterward his mother wrote me again; she made no further reference to her son's alcoholism and confirmed that he had written letters both to her and to various other Mohave Indians.

February 18, 1945

Dear George:

Received your letter today and I sure am glad to hear from you once more. Well as far as drinking goes, I don't care much about it, but when I go to bed at nights I keep dreaming of J. I keep seeing him and try to reach him but as soon as I get my hands on him he disappears and I wake up crying. If he had died of sickness I guess it wouldn't hurt me as much as it does now. But I keep thinking of him lying out there suffering and nobody to help him. That's when I get drunk, just to forget about that. I've been losing weight and lots of sleep.

I haven't been writing letters to anyone since I've been back and when I received your letter it made me feel a lot better so I wrote 16 letters today besides this letter. I haven't been writing to mother either. I know she gets worried but I just can't sit down and write to her without thinking of J.

About mess cooking. I think it's the best deal in the Navy. The $5.00 extra and liberty sure comes in handy. At first I didn't think much of it but now I'd rather mess-cook than anything else. The only thing I don't like is you don't learn anything. I mean a trade. I may strike for a cook soon. I sure like to cook. I always had to prepare my own meals when I was home alone and I get a lot of fun out of it.

We have 1200 men in our outfit now and I'm pretty sure we will be going across soon.

Our skipper offered me a discharge and I turned it down. I got a 25-day leave to go home and sell out our cows. I would have taken it but J. asked me to stay in no matter what happened. When he said that, it didn't mean much to me, but now I know what he meant by that.

Well I hope to hear from you soon and will close here until I have more time to write a longer letter.

A friend,

L.
Interpretation. This case of self-destructive behavior is an almost classical illustration of Freud's theories on "Mourning and Melancholia" (44) as well as of the elaborations of that thesis by Menninger (45). Several dynamic factors were responsible for L.'s self-destructive behavior:

1. The juvenile maladjustment of a "Mohave" child of mixed blood.

2. The acquisition of an extremely gentle and satisfactory stepfather to replace an illegitimate father who never functioned in any paternal role.

3. The fact that his mother (unusually well educated for a Mohave woman, and even for a White woman of the same locality) was quite businesslike, efficient and assertive, and used corporal punishment while clinging at the same time to all standards of Mohave ethics.

That a mere letter could have accomplished what appears to have been a permanent recovery from a reactive depression complicated by alcoholism is understandable only in terms of transference:

1. An intimate and friendly association between the writer and L.'s family had lasted for more than 12 years. L. was fully aware of the fact that his parents treated me like a favorite brother and that his mother frequently dreamed about me. Hence, just as throughout his childhood he had found the stage set for thinking of me as an uncle, so, especially while in the Navy, it was quite easy for him to think of me as a stepfather substitute.

2. The writer had had a direct and highly satisfactory relationship with L. ever since the latter was 6 years of age.

3. The writer was known to be free from the White man's prejudice toward Indians as well as from the Mohave prejudice toward half-breeds.

4. The writer was in such close agreement with Mohave standards of ethics, and conformed to them so spontaneously, that the Mohave often spoke of him as being not really a White man but a Mohave. (This is a typically Mohave form of praise, mentioned already in connection with the travels of the eighteenth-century Spanish Franciscan missionary, Garcès.)

5. During L.'s childhood the writer firmly supported various older Mohave Indians, as well as L.'s own stepfather, who objected whenever L. was threatened with corporal punishment.

6. L., although unhappy in the Navy, refused to accept a discharge,
because his late stepfather had asked him to stay in until the end of the war, as a good Mohave warrior should. The writer, who as a former Naval officer had seen overseas service, was therefore particularly well qualified to function as a father-figure in the psychic economy of a young enlisted man. This identification was further facilitated by two additional factors: (a) The writer’s conception of the functions of an officer is that he must act in loco parentis toward his subordinates. The writer discussed this point with L. in several letters, in 1944, in connection with his insistence that L. keep on calling him “George.” (b) In the “therapeutic” letter of 1945, the writer deliberately emphasized his qualifications to act as a substitute for L.’s stepfather, whose friendship for the writer was well known to L.

7. The fact that the officer–enlisted-man relationship proved to be psychologically meaningful, and tended to facilitate a therapeutically effective transference, is indicative of the degree of acculturation of this young man, as well as of the apparent effectiveness of Naval indoctrination even when the person indoctrinated is a member of a non-Euro-American culture.

All of these factors obviously overdetermined the apparent therapeutic success of a mere letter, which made nonintegrative and self-destructive behavior connected with mourning—conspicuously exemplified in Mohave funeral suicide (39)—both unnecessary and inoperative. L.’s further history tends to support the view that the reported alleviation of his reactive depression was due to a temporary father-transference.

Although L.’s real father was a Hopi Indian, L. himself had lived among the Mohave, did not speak a word of Hopi, and, to the best of my knowledge, had never visited the Hopi Reservation previous to his stepfather’s death. Shortly after his honorable discharge from the Navy L. appears to have established contact with the Hopi and even married a girl of that tribe. This is remarkable in several respects: The national character of the Hopi is almost the opposite of that of the Mohave, and the relationship between the two tribes does not seem to have been a friendly one in aboriginal times. The Mohave tend to consider L. as one of their tribe, and hence cannot be presumed to have looked with favor upon his marrying an “alien” woman; especially since, due to his mother’s efficiency and due also to his late stepfather’s universal popularity, L.’s family is at present a highly respected one. It seems plausible, therefore, to view L.’s marriage (the first and only
Mohave–Hopi marriage that I know of) as symptomatic of a further quest for a stepfather substitute.

Case 11.—It is convenient to describe the *dramatis personae* in this case history before presenting the narration proper.

(a) Humar Tuđhu:lye (hidden baby, i.e. "concealed pregnancy," or else "child hidden from the Agency so that it would not be taken away to go to school"). Gens, Nyoltc. Race, fullblood Mohave. Sex, male. Age at time of events, about 36 “but looking only about 26 years old.” Marital status, married, then divorced. Children, none. Education, unknown. Occupation, probably a farmer. Heavy drinker. Younger brother of (b); husband of (f); younger uterine half-brother of (c); half-uncle of (d); younger uterine brother of (e).

(b) Amatyevume. Gens, Nyoltc. Race, fullblood Mohave. Sex, male. Age at death, about 40. Marital status, married to the former wife of (a). Children, one daughter. Education, unknown. Occupation, probably farmer. Date of death, 1931 or 1932. Cause of death, run over by a car. Heavy drinker. Older brother of (a); second husband of (f); younger uterine half-brother of (c); half-uncle of (d); younger uterine brother of (e).

(c) E. Gens, Po:ta. Race, fullblood Mohave. Sex, male. Father of (d); brother of (e); older uterine brother of (a) and (b), both of whom assumed his English family name.

(d) S. Gens, Po:ta. Race, fullblood Mohave. Sex, male. Age at time of events, 17. Son of (c); third husband of (f); nephew of (d); half-nephew of (a) and (b).

(e) Po:ta. Gens, Po:ta. Race, fullblood Mohave. Sex, female. Sister of (c); aunt of (d); older uterine half-sister of (a) and (b).

(f) Cu:ly. Gens, Cu:ly. Race, fullblood Mohave. Sex, female. Age of events, about 26. Marital status, married in succession to (a), (b), (d) and (g). Children, one daughter by (b) and one by (g).


Cu:ly (f) was married to Humar Tuđhu:lye (a) for quite some time—perhaps as long as 2 or 3 years. She ran away from him several times, allegedly because he was a very heavy drinker, but always returned to him. One day, however, she left him permanently and married his brother Amatyevume (b). She was married to the latter for about a year and a half, and bore him a daughter. Since Amatyevume (b) too was a heavy drinker, informants suspect that she deserted Humar Tuđhu:lye (a) not so much because he drank as because she wished to marry his brother. This did not interfere in the least with the extremely warm and friendly relationship between the two brothers.

One day, when his daughter was about 3 or 4 months old, Amatyevume (b), while very drunk, was run over in the early hours of the day by a car on the highway which passes through the Colorado River Indian Reservation near Parker, Arizona. It was assumed that the car belonged to a tourist, since its driver was never caught. Amatyevume (b) was severely injured. His legs and ribs were smashed, and “there was only mush inside his body.” He was found lying on the highway by a White tourist who promptly reported the accident
to the Agency. Amatyevume was thereupon taken to the Agency Hospital by the White constable of Parker, the half-breed Indian Reservation policeman, the colored Agency truck driver, and by my interpreter's husband. At the hospital my interpreter tried to question the dying man about his accident but could not obtain an answer. Amatyevume (b) did, however, recognize my interpreter's husband and asked him to take him home. The interpreter dispatched her husband to the Reservation to inform Po:ta (e), the victim's half-sister, of the accident. Amatyevume (b) had been found so early in the morning that no one knew about the accident. Consequently, although he did not die until about 10 A.M., Po:ta was at that time still on her way to the hospital.

Cu:ly (f), now a widow, lived alone for some time, and then married S. (d), half-nephew of her two former husbands. "She sure must have liked that family," my interpreter commented. "When a person marries two members of the same family in succession, they say that she will eventually run through the rest of the family as well." Eventually she bore a daughter also to her third husband. He, however, deserted her after a time. Some time later she married Hilkayam Aa:u (g).

Amatyevume's (b) death greatly affected his family as well as his friends. My interpreter, although she loathes drunkards and is not related to this family in any way, stated, "Neither I, nor your informant, who is not related to this family either, ever got over Amatyevume's (b) death. Those two brothers are very good people—especially Amatyevume."

His brother, Humar Tudhu:lye (a) was especially deeply affected by Amatyevume's (b) death. Although the two brothers did not live together—Humar Tudhu:lye stayed at the house of his older uterine brother, E. (c)—they were so fond of each other that even my Mohave informants (who tend to take brotherly love for granted) made a point of stressing the intensity of their mutual devotion. Humar Tudhu:lye (a) kept on thinking of his brother's death. Although he had always drunk a lot, he became such a drunkard after his brother's death that even the Mohave try to keep him from getting drunk. This is quite unusual, since the Mohave like to share their drinks. Humar Tudhu:lye's (a) craving for alcohol is so great that he will even walk into the houses of his friends in their absence and drink up their supply of liquor. When drunk he often talks about his dead brother: "I keep on thinking of my brother. I don't care if the same thing happens to me too. I too want to die. I don't care." It has been ascertained that thoughts of death did not preoccupy Humar Tudhu:lye (a) prior to his brother's death.

2. The Nexus Between Thoughts about the Dead and Orality

The case histories cited above reveal a strong tendency to identify with the dead. The same tendency is evident in certain other atypical modes of behavior in Mohave society. Two men may kill themselves over the same woman; or several persons connected with each other may commit suicide in succession. A brother or a father may imitate the suicide of a member of the family (39). Shamanism and witchcraft
FUNCTION OF ALCOHOL IN MOHAVE SOCIETY

are said to “run in the family” (10). Finally, if a person marries in succession two members of a family, it is said that, in the course of subsequent marital ventures, that person will “run through the whole family.”

Since identification is the prototype of object-relationships obtaining during the oral stage (46), a few words may be said about oral components in the clusters referred to in the preceding paragraph. In the case histories reported above the oral element is represented chiefly by alcohol. Other oral factors are also apparent in these incidents. The oral element in jealousy has been described elsewhere (32). Saliva or sucking or both play an important role in shamanistic therapy as well as in the technique of witchcraft (10, 36). On the other hand the oral component is less evident in the suicide of relatives and in the tendency to marry repeatedly into the same family.

These findings should be correlated at this juncture with the statements of Federn (47) and Friedlander (48) that the suicide longs for something lost, while the addict wishes for something he cannot obtain.

It would be injudicious to discard this sound distinction, as useless for the interpretation of Mohave data, on the grounds that Mohave alcoholics tend to imitate the self-destructive behavior of the dead. This theoretical distinction can be applied to Mohave data if it is explained why the Mohave manage to combine longing for a lost love-object with the wish for something unobtainable. And this, in turn, makes it necessary first to discover whether Mohave beliefs indicate the presence of a tendency to introject, or even to incorporate, the lost love-objects. The Mohave believe that dreams about the adult dead induce in the living a desire to join them in the land of the ghosts (38). These dreams cause the dreamer to contract a dreaded gastrointestinal ailment known as weylak nyevedhi: (anus-pain ghostly). Dreams about dead infants, on the other hand, cause pseudocyesis, which is likewise called weylak nyevedhi:. The terminological identification of pseudocyesis with gastrointestinal ailments (both of which the Mohave believe to be “venereal diseases”) need not surprise us, partly because the most dreaded dreams about dead relatives are incestuous ones, and partly because the Mohave have strong fantasies of oral impregnation (4, 32). It may therefore be considered as proven that the Mohave tend to incorporate the dead love-objects, thus satisfying their longing for something lost. The guilt feelings resulting from this incorporation are probably responsible for the subsequent illness or self-destructive behavior of the bereaved.
At the same time the above beliefs also reflect a longing for something unattainable, i.e., for reunion with the lost love-object. The Mohave satisfy this wish through the belief that it is possible to become temporarily or permanently reunited with the dead. Thus Kunyo-or, of Needles, is said to be able to lead the souls of the living to the land of the dead so that they may visit their defunct relatives, and then lead them back again to the land of the living. On the other hand, if the living desire to be permanently reunited with the dead, they must hasten their own death, since dead souls, after going through several metamorphoses, cease to exist altogether. According to the Mohave this belief is responsible for funeral suicides (39), for the vicarious suicide of witches (10), and for the fact that some people who dream of their dead relatives die shortly after the death of the lost love-object.

The manifest death wishes of certain alcoholics (Case 11), the self-destructive behavior of other heavy drinkers (Case 10), and the damaging confessions of intoxicated witches (Cases 12, 13), alike suggest that in a state of intoxication the Mohave manage to blend the wish for something lost with the wish for something unattainable; they do so through identifying the lost love-object with its ghost and, by means of incorporation, identifying themselves with both.

Since the Mohave are not, as a rule, oral-dependent personalities but genital givers who tend to repress and to sublimate their oral desires (32) and to translate them into genital terms, it is easy to understand why incestuous dreams about the dead should be especially dangerous to the living and especially likely to induce an intense longing for the dead. The tendency to express the oral component genitally is made evident by the fact that the Mohave equate gastrointestinal disorders with pseudocyesis and consider both ailments to be a kind of "venereal disease." This tendency to "genitalize" oral elements may be partly responsible for the tendency to blend the wish for the lost love-object with the wish for the unattainable (incestuous) love-object.

The above considerations form a connecting link between obsessive preoccupations with the dead and the oral component in Mohave alcohol addiction.

3. Oral Sadism, Witchcraft and Incest

The relationship between oral conflicts and alcohol addiction was suggested first by Freud (49). This nexus is reasonably obvious in the
FUNCTION OF ALCOHOL IN MOHAVE SOCIETY

case of the Mohave, whose orality has been described elsewhere in some detail (32). It was found that the Mohave:

(a) Are aware of the existence of an oral-sadistic stage, and credit future shamans and witches with a tendency to bite the nipple.

(b) Believe in an intense sibling rivalry for the maternal breast.

(c) Are conscious of the traumatic effects of weaning.

(d) Tend to equate milk with saliva and with semen.

(e) Prohibit the oral stimulation of the woman’s breast during sexual intimacies, because it reminds them of incest.

(f) Practice fellatio, which they seem to equate unconsciously with nursing the “bad” mother, but refrain from cunnilingus.

(g) Assign an important role to saliva both in shamanistic therapy and in witchcraft.

(h) Assert that witches are prone to commit incest and tend to bewitch principally their own relatives.

(i) Implicitly believe that witches experience severe guilt feelings. The Mohave are convinced that all witches wish to be killed, for if they should die a natural death they would lose their hold on the ghosts of their victims. K’anāmīyhe heroes (22), who are also professional witchkillers (10) even though they themselves are sometimes incestuous witches (9), likewise prefer to die a violent death (15).

In view of these facts, it is well worth while to attempt to discover whether the behavior of Mohave witches addicted to alcohol shows significant oral mechanisms occurring in combination with self-destructive actions.

Case 12.—The shaman Hivsu: Tupo:ma was an exceptionally voracious eater, even for a man of his enormous bulk. He specialized, among other things, in the treatment of the weaning trauma (which is believed to be the outcome of rivalry with an unborn sibling, whose impending birth brings about a cessation of the flow of milk). This is highly significant especially since one of his victims was his elder uterine half-brother, who was his mother’s favorite and whose daughter was one of the women with whom he had incestuous relations. Six incidents of his life serve to illustrate certain self-destructive mechanisms in the drinking history of an older Mohave shaman.

(a) On the occasion of a trip to Los Angeles, a group of Mohave shinney-players had intercourse serially with the two intoxicated concubines who had accompanied them. Eventually some wags decided to set fire to the pubic hair of these women. Hivsu: Tupo:ma attempted to defend the girls. Even though his pleas and a moderate show of force did not deter the group from perpetrating this practical joke, it caused them at least to protect the girls from burns, which
they did by rubbing wet sand into their pubic hair.* After their return to Needles the girls found an opportunity to avenge the outrage when they discovered two of the culprits in a state of intoxication. They bared and painted the glans of their penes and left them exposed in this humiliating condition. A detailed account of this incident is reported elsewhere (11).

(b) In the 1920's Hivsu: Tupo:ma was the policeman and ditch rider of the Colorado River Indian Agency. Although he knew that D. W. coveted his job, he became intoxicated one day and fell asleep in a ditch. D. W., who happened (?) to find him in this condition, took his gun to the Agency and managed to have himself appointed Reservation policeman. This incident is reported in detail elsewhere (24).

(c) In 1933 a White friend, who stopped to talk to me while I was working with Hivsu: Tupo:ma, offered him a drink from a pint bottle containing ethyl alcohol sweetened with apricot-flavored syrup. Hivsu: Tupo:ma drank about 2 ounces, returned the bottle to our friend, and thanked him. Although the latter did not depart immediately, Hivsu: Tupo:ma did not ask for a second drink.

(d) In 1936 Hivsu: Tupo:ma asked me to get him some liquor, but did not resent my refusal to comply.

(e) On Thanksgiving Eve, 1936, Hivsu: Tupo:ma told me that he would not be able to work with me the following afternoon. I was therefore in my hotel room when, toward the middle of the afternoon, Hivsu: Tupo:ma unexpectedly visited me. He was in an advanced state of intoxication, and spontaneously admitted having bewitched two persons: his older uterine half-brother (reputed to have been a witch) who had been his mother's favorite, and a young female relative of his with whom he had had an affair which, by Mohave standards, was an incestuous one. He added that he continued to have dream-intercourse with the ghost of his victim. He denied, however, having been responsible for the death of Sudhu:r, who was the only person ever to accuse him of witchcraft (9). This confession came as a great surprise to me, since Hivsu: Tupo:ma was believed to be the prototype of a benevolent shaman. Throughout the interview Hivsu: Tupo:ma's manner toward me was a friendly one, despite the facts that his usually smiling face was distorted into a fierce scowl and that he seemed to be somewhat confused and uncertain in his movements. It is also noteworthy that, even though he usually insisted on an interpreter, he revealed on this occasion that he spoke fair English. At the end of the interview he asked for his pay and departed. It should be added that at that time we were working on the problem of witchcraft and on the vicarious suicide of witches (10). The next day he confirmed his confession in every detail and readily provided data concerning the age and gentle affiliation of the persons mentioned in his story, but asked me not to repeat his story to anyone lest he should be killed for practicing witchcraft.

(f) In the winter of 1937 my interpreter informed me by mail that Hivsu: Tupo:ma had become intoxicated, spent the night sleeping outdoors, and died of pneumonia resulting from exposure.

* LaBarre cites a limerick about a young man from St. James who set fire to his sweetheart's pubic hair (50).
Self-destructive mechanisms are obvious in incidents (b), (e) and (f). Incident (e) closely resembles the suicidal confession of the lesbian witch Sahaykwisa, which caused her lovers to drown her. Incident (f) is obviously the culmination of a long quest for death, which nowadays is seldom meted out to shamans engaging in witchcraft (10, 15). The self-destructive use of alcohol by an incestuous witch throws into sharp relief the psychological significance of Mrs. Tcatac's "accidental" pairing of incest and drunkenness in her condemnation of the present generation.

Incidents (a), (b) and (d) illustrate, on the other hand, the fundamentally kindly and courteous disposition of my old friend Hivsu: Tupo:ma, as well as certain aspects of Mohave ethics and etiquette.

Similar mechanisms are also apparent in the case of the ex-lesbian witch Sahaykwisa (Case 13).

In brief, it may be stated tentatively that the oral-sadistic element in shamanism (and especially in witchcraft), the psychodynamics of the fellatio pattern in Mohave society, and the self-destructive confessions of witches, as well as the close nexus between oral eroticism, witchcraft and incest, tend to support Freud's interpretations of the oral-erotic aspect of alcohol addiction. Within certain limits Bergler's (51, 52) analysis of the role of the "oral triad" in alcohol addiction is also supported by some of our Mohave data.

A more detailed inquiry into the nexus between orality and witchcraft is obviously beyond the scope of the present study. The above considerations do reveal, however, certain important implications of the alcoholism complex. It is apparent, first of all, that alcohol tends to be equated with milk, which, in turn, is equated with saliva and semen (32). Thus alcohol appears to be unconsciously endowed with some of the properties of these "magic" substances. It is therefore interesting to mention in this context that, according to Mohave belief, magic substances are highly dangerous to the uninitiated—and even to the initiated, since they eventually get "out of hand" and injure or destroy their owner. The same is true of shamanistic powers, which often "go wrong" (15) and cause the shaman to become a witch—who, in the end, seeks to destroy himself in order to remain the leader and owner of his beloved victims. Since it has been shown above that there are good reasons for assuming that the beloved dead tend to be introjected, and even incorporated, it may be assumed, at least tentatively, that in some remote and probably unconscious manner alcohol also is
equated with the dead. This last interpretation, however, is to be labeled quite explicitly as a highly tentative hypothesis, the verification of which must remain in abeyance until further data can be obtained.

4. Homosexuality

Mohave data tend to substantiate also the theory that latent or repressed homosexuality plays a certain role in alcohol addiction.

Case 13.—The case of the notorious lesbian transvestite and heterosexual prostitute Sahaykwisa has been reported in detail elsewhere (40). She spontaneously accepted noncommercial heterosexuality after she was punitively raped by a man whose wife she had attempted to seduce. [The phallic kamalo:y (4) are likewise "feminized" by collective rapes.] Her conversion to heterosexuality appears to have been a conflict-laden and traumatic event, however. First she "fell in love" with an oldish man (father imago?), whom she bewitched when he spurned her advances. Next she had an (unconsciously incestuous?) affair with this man's son, and with a friend of the latter as well. While drunk, she confessed to her two lovers that she had bewitched the father of one of them, whereupon they drowned her.

An analysis of the Oedipal fixations of the Mohave kamalo:y and of Mohave lesbians (4) suggests that Sahaykwisa's self-destructive intoxicated behavior may have been a manifestation of Oedipal guilt feelings reactivated by her conversion to heterosexuality.

If the theory is accepted that men who deliberately share a woman sexually are frequently motivated by unconscious homosexuality, then homosexual factors may also be suspected in certain other episodes:

(a) A man participated in the serial sexual abuse of his wife and only protested when his friends attempted to have anal intercourse with her (11).

(b) A jealous husband discovered his wife in flagrante delicto with another man. After complaining of his wife's misbehavior to his mother-in-law, he took a drink and shot himself. Several elements of this incident suggest the presence of homosexual factors. Suicide by shooting is often thought to be motivated by passive homosexual impulses. A husband, dissatisfied with his dissolute young wife, frequently marries either his hard-working mother-in-law or a male homosexual who takes pride in being a good "wife" (40). Drinking before committing suicide is illustrated also by the behavior of the shaman Tama:rahue who, unjustly accused of witchcraft, drank a decoction of datura meteloides before drowning himself in the Colorado River (10). Last, but not least, since jealousy is not an approved form
of Mohave behavior, and since intense jealousy is often rooted in homosexual impulses (53), the suicide of the jealous husband suggests the possibility of a homosexual panic.

The most striking aspect of the above incidents is that, even under the influence of alcohol, the Mohave do not appear to engage in overt homosexual acts. On the other hand, intoxicated individuals sometimes engage in heterosexual incest, or else reveal former incestuous activities or acts of witchcraft. This observation introduces the most difficult problem confronting us in the analysis of Mohave alcoholism.

A brief preliminary review of the relevant facts will aid in this analysis:

1. Hivsu: Tupo:ma (Case 12) committed incest and killed his mistress and her father by means of witchcraft while sober, and then confessed these acts while drunk.

2. Sahaykwisa (Case 13), a former lesbian, committed witchcraft, and also what may have been unconsciously an incest-equivalent, while sober, and confessed her act of witchcraft while drunk.

3. In a number of other instances (9) incestuous acts occurred with one or both partners intoxicated, and usually involved persons engaging in witchcraft or witch-killing or both.

The occurrence of an alcohol-incest-witchcraft cluster and the absence of an alcohol-homosexuality cluster require explanation, since, at least superficially, these facts appear to contradict the theory, widely held in psychoanalytic circles, that alcoholism is intimately connected with homosexuality. In view of Lynd's (54) defense of "outrageous hypotheses," it might be worth while to consider whether or not the intoxicated Mohave might, conceivably, substitute incestuous or excessive heterosexual activities for homosexual behavior.

It is a widely accepted psychoanalytic theory that homosexuality is related to a failure to come to terms with castration anxieties elicited by the Oedipus situation. Specifically, many psychoanalysts hold that homosexuality is sometimes evolved as a defense against the incestuous and aggressive wishes, and the fear of castration, which arise in connection with the Oedipus situation.

The occurrence of permanent transvestitism and overt homosexuality during sobriety, while casual homosexuality during intoxication does not occur, and the performance of incestuous acts by persons who are witches or intoxicated or both, suggest that alcohol may in some manner translate homosexual impulses into heterosexual-incestuous ones which originally served as a point of departure for the develop-
ment of homosexual impulses. This tentative hypothesis is compatible with the well-established fact that alcohol tends to promote regression through a "dissolving of the superego" which was originally responsible for the growth of homosexual impulses. It is quite possible that this regression may be promoted by the massive impact of oral elements in alcohol addiction, which gratifies oral wishes and hence leads the man, at least, back to a heterosexual love-object: the nursing mother. As regards women, it should be recalled in this context that the actively lesbian Sahaykwisa became acquainted with the effects of alcohol in connection with her acts of prostitution to White men, and became a consistently heavy drinker when, as a result of being raped, she was "converted" to heterosexuality. The inescapable inference appears to be that she was unable to accept heterosexuality without the regression promoted by alcohol. Since the woman's first heterosexual oral interest is the father's penis, and since Mohave mythology explicitly calls Frog's swallowing of her father's feces (anal penis) the "first act of witchcraft" (4), it may be justified to assume that female homosexuality is likewise overcome by means of the oral regression induced by alcohol.

Summing up, the regression from the homosexual line of defense to incestuous acts and wishes, usually combined with oral-sadistic witchcraft, appears to be facilitated by the ingestion of alcohol. This implies, perhaps, that the drinker regresses to the stage where Oedipal problems are still closely intertwined with oral impulses.

It cannot be sufficiently stressed that the preceding paragraphs are highly tentative in character, and that they formulate an "outrageous hypothesis" (54) rather than a theory in the traditional sense of that term. This hypothesis has been formulated merely because the construction of an outrageous—and possibly invalid—hypothesis is at least susceptible of refutation and tends to provoke better formulations, whereas the mere statement of a difficulty is simply a sterile evasion of a genuine problem.

5. The Return of the Repressed

Throughout the preceding pages it has been frequently assumed that in alcoholic intoxication there is a return of the repressed, and that climactic or unusual modes of behavior occurring in a state of intoxication should be interpreted as eruptions of repressed material. It is therefore interesting to observe that the Mohave themselves are by no means unaware of the fact that the ingestion of alcohol tends to liberate
repressed material. This fact is demonstrated in a striking, because indi­rect, manner in Tca'tc's statement, which deserves to be repeated in this context. When asked to comment on the Greek adage, "The more I see of people the better I like dogs," Tca'tc replied: "The things I saw in my youth, when I was old enough to remember what I saw, were better than, and different from, what one sees nowadays. These constant rumors of incest, for example—they would have been unthinkable in the old days. In my youth the Mohave did not even know what alcoholic intoxication meant."

The spontaneous and elaborate reference to infantile amnesia, along with the "accidental" pairing of incest and alcoholism, are too signifi­cant to be considered as merely fortuitous. Regardless, therefore, of how accurate or inaccurate the special formulations and interpretations proposed herein may be, the general thesis that the strikingly atypical acts of certain intoxicated persons are due to a return of the repressed may be thought of as reasonably well proved.

It is likewise characteristic of the Mohave that the repressed ma­terial should be aggressive and oral-incestuous rather than maturely genital, since, on the whole, the average Mohave appears to have attained a reasonably high degree of genital maturity.

SUMMARY

The historical, sociocultural, ego-psychological and unconscious as­pects of Mohave alcoholism have been described and discussed. It was found that drinking is today integrated with Mohave culture and with Mohave psychology as well. The absence of a high level of anxiety and the preservation of certain basic cultural attitudes probably explain why, on the whole, the intoxicated Mohave is not aggressively anti­social, and why Mohave society has fairly successfully withstood the ravages of alcoholism observed in many other American Indian tribes.*

REFERENCES


*I am indebted to Mr. C. E. Prince, Jr., a graduate student in the Institute of Psychological Medicine, The Menninger Foundation, for his help in culling from my voluminous Mohave field-notes all passages dealing with drinking behavior; for abstracts of and cogent comments on the literature pertaining to the dynamics of alcohol addiction; and for discussing with me various possible interpretations of the function of alcohol among the Mohave.


27. Stratton, R. B. Captivity of the Oatman Girls, New York; Carlton & Porter, 1858.

42. Acoston, T. Experimental administration of benzedrine sulfate and other central stimulants in psychoanalyses and psychotherapies. Psychoanal. Rev. 31:438–52, 1944.