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## INSTITUTIONALIZED HOMOSEXUALITY OF THE MOHAVE INDIANS

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HE present body of data has been obtained during three visits to the Mohave Indians, who live at present at Parker, Arizona and Needles, California. Both towns are part of their former habitat.

In view of the fact that equivalent data are largely absent, even from the Yuma who are the next of kin of the Mohave, the present paper will be limited to a discussion of Mohave data.

Mohave sex-life is entirely untrammelled by social restraint and no phase of sex, with the exception of procreation and the introduction to the status of an acknowledged homosexual, has been surrounded with any appreciable amount of observances.

Homosexuality among the Mohave has been reported by the earliest travellers in that region.<sup>1</sup> Although there is little or no objection to homosexuality among the Mohave at present there is no avowed homosexual living on the reservation. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the Mohave at present number less than 500, according to information obtained from the Superintendent of the Colorado River Indian Agency. Nevertheless gossip will have it that certain persons indulge in secret homosexuality. Three men, two of whom are uterine brothers, are at present accused of active and passive homosexuality. One of the two half-brothers is said to be highly intelligent. His adolescence appears to have been somewhat peculiar. At the age of seventeen or eighteen he acted "funny, like a woman." They even accuse him of active sex-relations with a white man, while he was at a certain Indian School outside of the reservation.

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<sup>1</sup> FORDE, C. DARYLL. *Ethnography of the Yuma Indians. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Vol. 28, page 96 (quoting the old Spanish traveller FONT), 1931.

His uterine brother lives in the same house with another man suspected of homosexuality. They are usually referred to as each other's wives and are said to indulge in rectal intercourse.

All the above-mentioned men are in their early thirties. None of them however has officially submitted to the transvestite initiation ceremony.

Casual homosexual relations in early childhood were frequent in the past and, according to my informants, seem to be on the increase at the present time. "Nowadays the kids at school don't get a chance to play with the opposite sex and therefore they go off into the bushes and copulate with other boys or other girls." But even in the past mutual masturbation, urinating competitions, measurements of phalli, etc., have been quite frequent. Complete nudity and lack of any kind of supervision, especially of boys, who remained naked until they reached puberty, combined with incessant sexual talk on the part of adults, must have furthered the desire for sex-experience. Water-games were especially favorable for sexual intimacy, which, however, seldom if ever led to actual sex-relations in the water because the Mohave believe that intercourse in the water causes a certain disease in women.

Children banded off in mixed groups composed of boys as well as girls. They exhibited their genitalia, poked fun at each other's conformation and referred to each other by sobriquets derived from the size or conformation of their respective genitalia, such as "sharp, crooked, blunt or stubby penis". Not seldom older boys got hold of one of their comrades, pulled back his foreskin and smeared mud on the exposed gland. Mutual masturbation was not absent but rather uncommon. Older boys, however, often performed forced rectal intercourse on their younger playmates. Fellatio was rare, but not entirely absent.

Masturbating and urinating competitions were frequent. In masturbating competitions both the shortness of the time required to cause ejaculation and the distance at which the sperma was projected was taken into consideration. Urinating competitions consisted of urinating figures and letters on the ground.

Adults seldom had sexual intercourse with children of their own sex, although betrothal of young girls to old men or seduction of very young boys by adult women was not rare.

A Walapai Indian of about twenty-five years of age went to hunt with a twelve year old Walapai boy. He was an inveterate homosexual and had intercourse with the boy in a wash. When they returned to the settlement the boy had such pains in his rectum that he could not sit down. His parents menaced him with a whipping if he did not sit down. They also refused to give him food until then, thinking he was being naughty. At last the boy broke down and confessed the events of the hunting expedition. The parents prosecuted the offender, who ran away into the Mohave territory, because the Walapai speak a similar language and are really of our own kind. They held a trial at Kingman. The Mohave policeman from Parker went to arrest the man. He found him at Topock and brought him back handcuffed. He was sent to prison.

No similar Mohave case has been reported, and the Walapai Indian's actions were severely condemned.

Homosexual activities of children were not considered to be truly homosexual, but dismissed as mere infantile naughtiness. Nor was the man in the case-history about to be reported considered a homosexual.

Kwiskwinay had been sentenced to a term in prison, for burying alive the newborn child of his sister, partly because that was the customary way of killing half-breeds, and partly because his sister's Mexican husband deserted her and denied the paternity of the child. In prison Kwiskwinay had anal intercourse with a white prisoner. "First the white man 'bent over', then I did", he has been reported as saying. Upon his release he often complained of diarrhoea, explaining that the great phallus of the white man hurt him. A niece of Kwiskwinay describes him as a "kind man, but d - - n impulsive". (It may be noted here that according to information obtained from the Mohave, as well as from the late Anna Israel-Nettle M. D., the genitalia of the Mohave male are small in size when compared to the genitalia of the average Caucasian or to the size of the vagina of Mohave women.)

Another example of what is not considered homosexuality by the Mohave will be drawn from the early life-history of future shamans. Such boys are very unruly and not seldom "pull back their penis between their legs and then display themselves to women, saying 'I too am a woman, I am just like you are'".

#### TYPES OF HOMOSEXUALS

The Mohave recognize only two definite types of homosexuals. Male transvestites, taking the rôle of the woman in sexual intercourse, are known as *alyha*. Female homosexuals, assuming the rôle of the male, are known as *hwame*.<sup>2</sup> Their partners are not considered homosexuals,

<sup>2</sup> KROEBER, A. L. Handbook of the Indians of California. *Bureau of American Ethnology*, Bulletin No. 78, p. 748, 1925.

and from the evidence of our case-histories appear to have been invariably persons of bisexual tendencies, who did not go through any formal initiation and were not designated by any special name.

While there exists no mention of any transvestite Mohave culture-hero comparable to the culture-hero of the kindred Kamia,<sup>3</sup> homosexuality and the initiation-ceremonies thereto pertaining are mentioned in the creation-myth—the only other section dealing with things sexual being concerned with procreation and the intimately related puberty ceremonies.

The following account was obtained from the late Ñahwera, an almost senile singer, said to be the last person to know the transvestite initiation songs. It has been further expanded by several other informants. Neither the above-mentioned singer nor the informants in question were homosexuals.

"From the very beginning of the world it was meant that there should be homosexuals, just as it was instituted that there should be shamans. They were intended for that purpose. While their mothers are pregnant, they will have the usual dreams forecasting the anatomic sex of their child. Thus the mothers of alyha' dream of arrow-feathers and other male appurtenances, while the mothers of hwame' dream of feminine regalia such as beads, etc." (This is curious in view of the fact that beginning with the sixth (lunar) month of elapsed pregnancy the foeti are said to be conscious and dream of their future destinies, sharing to a certain extent their dreams with their mothers, and vice versa.) "At the same time the dreams of their mothers will also contain certain hints of the future homosexual proclivities of the child about to be born." (No data as to the nature of these "hints" could be obtained.) "For several years following birth these homosexual tendencies will remain hidden. They will come to the fore, however, previous to puberty: that is, the time when young persons become initiated into the functions of their sex, such as hunting or cooking, respectively. None but young people will become berdaches as a rule. Their tendencies will become apparent early enough to cause them to be tattooed in accordance with the tattooing pattern pertaining to their adopted sex. Once a young person started off 'right' there is no danger of his or her becoming homosexual (alyha' or hwame') even if occasional unions with homosexuals should occur. They will feel toward their possible transvestite mate as they would feel toward a true woman, respectively man."

This point is crucial. The transvestite must attempt to duplicate the behavior-pattern of his adopted sex and make "normal" individuals

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<sup>3</sup>GIFFORD, E. W. The Kamia of Imperial Valley. *Bureau of American Ethnology*, Bulletin No. 97, p. 12, 1931.

of his anatomic sex feel toward him as though he truly belonged to his adopted sex. Forde<sup>4</sup> describes this situation very accurately. "When he (i.e. the transvestite) came out of the dream, he put his hand to his mouth and laughed four times. He laughed with a woman's voice and his mind was changed from male into female. Other young people noticed this and began to feel toward him as to a woman."

Any person who dreamt about becoming a transvestite while in the maternal womb may turn into one. They then attend to the occupation-pattern of their adopted sex, except that female transvestites may not be tribal or war-leaders. Social status however seemed to play a certain rôle. One female informant, herself a member of a chiefly family, stated that only persons classified as ipa tahana (person really, i.e. member of a prominent family) became transvestites, as a rule. Conversely it was said that only "normal" persons possessing special powers, especially shamans specializing in the cure of venereal diseases and credited with special luck in love, may secure transvestite spouses.

#### OTHER DETERMINANTS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Beyond the factor of predestination, other factors also influenced the decision of certain persons to become transvestites.

"The chief may hold gatherings and people became transvestites through his (spiritual) power." This statement has never been explained. "In recent times a certain youth at Needles became a homosexual through listening to the alyha songs of Ñahwera, who sang his songs at feasts and funerals." (Any song may be sung on those occasions.) "That youth was a relative of my husband. Eventually he got sores about his rectum and died. Now Ñahwera does not like to sing his songs any more."

"A boy may begin to act strangely just as he is about to reach puberty. At that time other boys try to act like grown-ups and imitate their elders. They handle bows and arrows, ride horses and hunt, and make love to little girls. These boys, however, will shun such tasks. They pick up dolls and toy with metates just as girls do. They refuse to play with the toys of their own sex. Nor will they wear a breech-clout. They ask for skirts instead. They will watch a woman's gambling game which we call the Utah-game—as though they were under a spell. This game will fascinate them. They will try to participate in this game whenever they see it." (This game consists in throwing four dice, one of which is called "male" because it is painted black, and another "female", because it is painted red. The fall of these dice is accompanied by much obscene comment. When the red die falls on top of the black one comments like "this woman is actively copulating with her mate" are made.)

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<sup>4</sup>FORDE, C. DARYLL. *Op. cit.*, p. 157.

"Girls will act just the opposite. They like to chum with boys and adopt boys' ways. They throw away their dolls and metates, and refuse to shred bark or perform other feminine tasks. They turn away from the skirt and long for the breech-clout."

"Their parents will eventually notice this strange behavior and comment upon it. 'Well, he may be a boy, but he seems to be more interested in the ways of women'. Corresponding comments are made about boyish girls. Parents and relatives will sometimes try to bully them into normal behavior—especially the girls, but they soon realize that nothing can be done about it. 'If our child wishes to go that way, the only thing we can do is make it adopt the status of a transvestite.' They are not proud of having a transvestite in the family, because transvestites are considered somewhat crazy."

After the above information had been obtained a trip was taken to Needles by the present writer, his interpreter and his chief informant, to obtain the four *alyha* songs from *Nahwera*. The following is his account. The songs themselves are in a very old-fashioned Mohave, almost unintelligible to the younger generation and consisting of mere catchwords, in accordance with the customary Mohave style of singing.

Ever since the world began at the magic mountain *Avi-kwame* it was said that there would be transvestites. In the beginning, if they were to become transvestites, the process started during their intra-uterine life. When they grew up they were given toys according to their sex. They did not like these toys however. At the beginning, the God *Matavilye* died at *Avi-kwame*, not because he had to die, but because he wanted to set mankind an example. There is the house. He is on his death-bed and people are all around him. He tells them that their lives would be different, and some among them would turn into transvestites. Then *Matavilye* died. All the people went their own way but *Matavilye* loved mankind so much that, although he was already on his way to heaven, he returned to be cremated in our fashion. Had he not returned to us, we would have been just like the Whites: evil, cruel and grasping. He cared for us so much that he returned to be cremated on earth. If a ghost comes to visit the earth he does it because he likes the earth very much. If from underneath the cremation pit a whirlwind rises, it means a soul went in there, because it thought so much of the earth. Then all things begin in that death-house. When there is a desire in a child's heart to become a transvestite that child will act different. It will let people become aware of that desire. They may insist on giving the child the toys and garments of its true sex, but the child will throw them away and do this every time there is a big gathering. Then people prepare a skirt of shredded bark for the boy or a breech-clout for the girl. If they give them the garments worn by other members of their sex they will turn away from them. They do all they can to dissuade girls who show such inclinations. But if they fail to convince her they will realize that it cannot be helped. She will be chumming with men and be one of them. Then all those who have tried to change her conduct will gather and agree that they had done all that could be done and that the only thing for them to do was to give her the status of a transvestite.

These female transvestites (hwame') are like lewd women who also throw away their house-keeping implements, and run wild. These songs are called *alyha' kwayum* or *alyha' kupama* and are for boys. The singer refers to himself as *Pameas* and describes their actions in these songs.

These are the four songs.

(1) *Akueña / ahvayatco / kwetokoñe / kanava / avera / tovara / ku-añaye / huyayatkohav / touama / iðauav / vovaa / iðau / kanava / avakwiðau / avavono / kaviya / epatcomitcam / tcoom / kwaava / eekanava / veevaua /*

(1') To twist / make dress / front part / tell of it / finished / wants it / light (bright) / take up the skirt and tie it in front / around / take / (describing immediate action) / take / tell of it / all listening / now all hear / then / people gathered there / all / hear / tell of it / standing.

(1'') This song describes how to put on a skirt and tie the string around the waist and how not to tie it on the side. Now all are here to see and hear and if you cannot help acting that way, then act that way, so that all may see what you are.

(Interpreter comments: "This transvestite fellow is now as happy as a bug, because he got a skirt.")

(2) *Pamekwa / ñiha / lakuye / ñivatce / iðoma / ñivatce / nalye / ava / hiðaua / mataramkutcac / hatciñe / kopama / kwi-yahve / tcinvakwa / ava / hevatce / nalya / .*

(2') People / by being looked at / proud / traipse or waddle / turning to / that side / they / all hear / a flat stretch of ground which is still damp / unmenstruated girl / dancing back and forth / dances stooping / even if girl (unmenstruated) / feels / she dances / that side / .

(2'') This describes the *hwame'* (?) who, proud of being stared at, traipses and dances back and forth in a stooped posture over a flat stretch of damp land. That is how she acts if she is to be a true *hwame'* (?).

(3) *ñikatño / memkwiya / ñikacivas / viya / ñikatco / ðoraviya / ivamavi / ivaua / iðaua voova / iðaua / ñikatcolok / isto / ivatce / nalya / ðauave / veðeye / kaanava / toomtcoya-toomtcoðome / amayamtcuya / kaanava / hatciñima / kopama / itcavono / ihatim / añoorá / ñorávo-vonova / ñoravova / hatci-ñekwo / ava / hañorám / vono / kawimaava /*

(3') Advances / stalking / advances / furtively / advances / sneakingly / reaches / there / stands and takes it / takes it / furtively cuts in pieces / gathers / backing / away / takes it / comes back / tells of it. / Divides them (dice) / tosses up / tells of it / girl / stoops (dances) / gathers / will split / paints / in the act of painting / ready to paint / girl (unmenstruated) / hear / in the act of painting / can't make "her" (male transvestite is meant) do otherwise / .



(3") (This song refers to the attraction of the split-stick dice-game for the future male transvestite.) "He advances stealthily toward the willow, he stands there and cuts the branches and gathers them up. He tells about it. He divides them up, he tosses them up and tells the girls about it. He stoops, gathers the pieces, splits them, paints them and the girls hear of it. He cannot do otherwise".

(Interpreter's comment: "If he were a man he would be painting arrows, not dice.")

(4) Hatom / askilye askilyem / kaanavam / kunovum / awi / askilaskil / vonokowi /

(4') Spit / marks / zig-zags / tells of it / tells of it / ? / marks / doing it.

(4") This song describes the patterns painted on the dice.

The nature of the present songs is perhaps doubtful. They were said to describe the ceremony of initiation, and indeed the songs quoted by Kroeber<sup>5</sup> are somewhat different. However Kroeber also mentions songs to which the transvestite dances. Whether these are the songs in question is open to debate. The remark "anyone is free to learn these songs and the ceremony" leads the present writer to believe that these songs are sung during the initiation. The question is one on which he would not care to dogmatize. Nahwera was senile and toothless. The presence of the main informant was necessary, because he had heard the songs before and could pronounce the words clearly after hearing them. However, the fact that the latter was a shaman and believed to be a witch so excited Nahwera that ever since he avoided the three of us to the great amusement of the reservation.

The ceremony in question appears to have been a sanctioning of the inevitable, which is typical of almost any human society.

The scene at the initiation is vividly described in these songs. The future transvestite is the centre of interest. Just what rôle the chance of "showing off" at any price may play in the psychology of a child entering upon this momentous decision, need not be discussed here.

#### CEREMONY OF INITIATION

We possess three accounts of the ceremony in question. The general patterns of all accounts are similar, but the differences are by no means negligible. It is suggested tentatively that Mohave ritualism is extremely

<sup>5</sup> KROEBER, A. L. *Op cit.*, p. 748.

loose, and that in the case of a comparatively rarely performed semi-private ceremony considerable variations were likely to occur. Furthermore the time element must be taken into consideration. The ceremony in question has not been performed for several decades. It has been thought best to quote all available versions.

The following account has been published by Kroeber.<sup>6</sup>

Four men who have dreamed about the ceremony are sent for, and spend the night in the house, twisting cords and gathering shredded bark for the skirt the prospective *alyha* will thereafter wear. The youth himself lies, with two women sitting by him. As they twist the cords, the men sing:

*ihatnya vudhi*.....roll it this way.  
*ihatnya va'ama*.....roll it that way.

When the petticoat nears completion:

*istum*.....I hold it.  
*icham*..... I place it.  
*hilyuvik*..... it is done.  
*havirk*.....it is finished.  
*ka'avek*.....hear!  
*kidhawk*.....listen!

These songs the singers dreamed when they were with the god Mastamho, and during the night they tell and sing of how they saw him ordering the first performance of this ceremony.

In the morning the two women lift the youth and take him outdoors. One of the singers puts on the skirt and dances to the river in four steps, the youth following and imitating. Then all bathe. Thereupon the two women give the youth the front and back pieces of his new dress and paint his face white. After four days he is painted again and then is an *alyha*. Such persons speak, laugh, smile, sit, and act like women. They are lucky at gambling, say the Mohave, but die young. It is significant that a variety of venereal sickness which they treat is also called *alyha*.

Sometimes, but more rarely, a girl took on man's estate, among both Yuma and Mohave, and was then known as *hwami*, and might marry women. There was no ceremony to mark her new status.

The next two accounts were obtained by the present writer.

The first was obtained from an old woman of about eighty, who was not herself a *hwame*. She stated that she had heard of this ceremony from a woman who in her youth used to be on friendly terms with an *alyha*. "She always thought that this *alyha* was really a woman, until the transvestite lifted something one day and as the fibers of the bark-

<sup>6</sup> KROEBER, A. L. *Op. cit.*, pp. 748-749.

skirt parted his penis became visible. My friend was aghast when she noticed that her *girl-friend* had a penis and testes. This transvestite told her about the ceremony, and she told me about it." (It is to be suspected that the "astonishment" was a mere flower of speech, in view of the fact that sex and transvestites are regularly discussed.)

"The ceremony was held on a flat stretch of land. The crowd foregathered on both sides of the terrain. On one side were the women with the skirt and on the other the boy with the singer. The singer sang and the boy danced. When this part of the ceremony was over, the singer explained to the boy every part of the feminine wearing apparel. Since not all women know how to make a dress, the singer had chosen beforehand some capable woman to make the initiate's dress. The *alyha* was then taken to the river where he bathed. He kept his old name. He did not assume the gentile name which is borne by the females in every lineage. I don't know whether or not they held ceremonies for the *hwame*. I knew a *hwame* once. She was dressed like a woman but she was married to other women. I have never seen the ceremony myself. They don't hold it any more."

This informant also stated that the *hwame* did not change their name for a name of the male type, which is obviously a mistake, as is apparent from the name of the *hwame* *Sahaykwisa* (contraction of *masahay*: childless girl or woman; and *matwisa*: soul or shadow, i.e. girl's shadow, which is a typically male name.)

It is true however that no male transvestite adopted a gentile name. Tampering with gentile affiliations and with the quasi-sanctity of the perpetuation of the lineages and of the tribe, by dragging it into the humoristically viewed homosexual cluster, would have been repulsive to the Mohave.

In ancient times the *hwame* wore male garments.

The next account was obtained from a "normal" male shaman, an unusually well informed and willing informant. He derived most of his knowledge on this subject from a long friendship with the late Kuwal, who had married several *alyha*. Kuwal's history will be reported at the end of the present paper.

"The boys who became *alyha* were initiated fairly early. They did not have their noses pierced, because they did not go through the male puberty ritual." (This would place the transvestite initiation as early as the tenth or eleventh year of age.) A subsidiary informant also claimed that if a man was found to have submitted to rectal intercourse he was

compelled to undergo the initiation, but this statement has been unanimously discredited. (Curiously enough, it was said that some women became hwame after having borne a child.)

"When the child was about ten years old his relatives would begin discussing his strange ways. Some of them disliked it, but the more intelligent began envisaging an initiation ceremony. They prepared in secret the female wearing apparel. There was no singing, lest the boy should discover what was going on. Then they asked a singer to perform the ceremony on a certain day. They did not want the boy to know of it ahead of time. The ceremony was meant to take him by surprise. It was considered both an initiation and an ultimate test of his true inclinations. If he submitted to it he was considered a genuine homosexual. Word was sent to various settlements, inviting people to attend the ceremony. They wanted them to see it and become accustomed to seeing the boy in a woman's dress." (Such "accustoming" feasts were also held when someone lost an eye.) "The time and place were set by mutual accord of the boy's family and relatives. There was no feasting, only a gathering which was held early in the morning. If the boy acted in the expected fashion during the ceremony he was considered an initiated homosexual, if not, the gathering scattered, much to the relief of the boy's family."

"The singer drew a circle in the centre of the track with a pointed stick. The boy was led by two women, usually his mother and maternal grandmother, since women have more to do with children than the males, into the centre of the circle. If the boy showed willingness to remain standing in the circle, exposed to the public eye, it was almost certain that he would go through with the ceremony. The singer, hidden behind the crowd, began singing the songs. As soon as the sound reached the boy he began to dance as women do. Gradually the singer approached the dancer. The dance-steps do not change, except insofar as the boy plays a pantomime in accordance with the text of the songs. Were the boy unwilling to become a homosexual officially, he would refuse to dance. As it is, the song goes right to his heart and he will dance with much intensity. He cannot help it. After the fourth song he is proclaimed a homosexual. The same women who led him into the circle, accompanied by other women, take him down to the Colorado River. After a bath he receives his skirt. He is then led back to the dance-ground, dressed as a woman and the crowd scatters. The same ceremony is enacted for the hwame who then dons the breech-clout."

As may be seen from the three versions presented they are complementary rather than divergent, except for minor details.

The effects of the ceremony were permanent. Just how far the chance of making a display of himself in front of a crowd of adults may have swayed a boy with some bisexual tendencies, is not easy to decide.

The initiated transvestites then assumed a name befitting a person of the opposite sex. They resented afterwards being called by their former names. The Mohave change their names fairly often and resent being called by their discarded names. "They get tired of their old names." A curious feature of Mohave name-giving may be mentioned here. Persons often assume names which are a slur on or a reference to the opposite sex, or an uncomplimentary remark upon certain habits of other persons. A certain man is known by the name of *hiθpan utce* (vagina charcoal) and a woman called herself *hama utce* (testicle charcoal) in retaliation.

It is emphatically stated by the Mohave that the ceremony did not operate the change in the initiate's personal habits. It was merely a test and a public acknowledgment of the shift from one sex to the other. I pointed out elsewhere that the Mohave believe that at creation and during the early periods of the mythical era there existed sexually undifferentiated stages. Thus it was not too great an effort for them to believe in the reality of such a shift.

Nowadays homosexuals do not don the garb of the opposite sex. The woman responsible for the first version of the above ceremony made the following statement.

"Years ago I knew a man who was very effeminate. He did not go through the ceremony, because it was no longer held. He always sat down the way women do and disposed his breech-clout the way women do when they sit in the Turkish posture, or with one leg folded (or tucked) under them. He probably thought he was concealing his vulva. One of my relatives was a *hwame*. She had small breasts and wore a breech-clout." (She had stated that no *hwame* wore a breech-clout. Cf. above.)

Since the *hwame* rode and hunted, she had to wear the male garb. *Sahaykwisa* however wore a skirt and shoes, because occasionally she was prostituted to white men. She had big breasts, but never bore a child. One informant stated that *alyha*: "had red stripes painted across their bellies", red being the women's paint par excellence. *Sahaykwisa* occasionally painted herself black, like a warrior on the warpath.

No mention is made of any physiological deformity in homosexuals. The "small breasts" referred to above were bigger than those of an im-

mature girl, and were probably termed small in comparison with the big pendulous breasts of the average Mohave woman. The woman informant and others stated that the hwame' menstruated only sporadically, but were not certain about it. No hwame' ever bore a child after assuming that status. The same woman informant stated that the alyha' had no erection, which is disproved by the case history of Kuwal. There is no mention of an abnormal clitoris. The most careful and repeated inquiry over a period of several years did not elicit any suggestion of anal masturbation in the case of alyha'. Both vaginal and clitoridal masturbation was practiced by both normal and homosexual women. It was stated that the alyha' had erections during anal intercourse, whenever it was performed upon them, but resented it if their partners touched their erect penes, although letting them manipulate them in the flaccid state. Whether all alyha' had emissions of sperma during anal intercourse performed on them has never been ascertained.

#### PHYSIOLOGICAL PATTERN ASSUMED BY HOMOSEXUALS

One of the most peculiar aspects of institutionalized homosexuality is the imitation of the physiological pattern of the assumed sex by homosexuals. They resented any normal nomenclature applied to their genitalia. Alyha' insisted that their penis (moðar) be called a clitoris (havalik), their testes (hama'), labia maiora (havakwit), and their anus (hivey), vagina (hiθpan). The hwame' equally resented any reference to the fact that they had vulvae, but it was not stated that they insisted on a corresponding male terminology. It is interesting to note that according to anatomic and embryologic observations the penis and clitoris, the rectum and the vagina, the scrotum and the labia are histologically of the same origin, the rectum and the vagina being formed from the hind gut of the embryo.

Since homosexuals resented such references, they were often teased in that fashion. "Just as a man would not like to be told he had a cunnus or a woman that she had a penis, so an alyha' resented references to his penis, and a hwame' remarks upon her vagina." (A certain Mohave man, upon being asked by his wife to bring her some water, exclaimed: "Perhaps I have a cunnus and should don your skirt too. Give me your skirt and you can have my breech-clout and go hunting.") "You can tease an hwame', because she is just a woman, but if you tease an alyha', who has the strength of a man, he will run after you and beat you up. He will assault you many days later, if he could not catch you

at once." "A certain man passing by the house of an alyha· said to him in jest, 'How is your penis today?' 'Not penis, cunnus', replied the alyha· angrily. 'Well then, how big is your cunnus?' the man replied, using the word "erection" instead of "big". The alyha· picked up a club and for one or two weeks tried to assault the man whenever he saw him."

Intercourse with an alyha· is surrounded by an etiquette all of its own, to which the partner had better conform "lest one should get into all sorts of trouble."

"This is what Kuwal, who had several alyha· wives, told me," the shaman said. "Kuwal had rectal and oral intercourse with his alyha· wives, but if you copulate too often rectally with an alyha· he will get hemorrhoids, just as our women do when we have too much anal intercourse with them. You may play with the penis of your *wife* when it is flaccid. I often did it, saying, 'Your cunnus is so nice and big and your pubic hair is nice and soft to touch'. Then my alyha· wife would loll about, giggling happily like this, 'hhh'. *She* was very much pleased with herself and me. *She* liked to be told about her cunnus. When alyha· get an erection, it embarrasses them, because the penis sticks out between the loose fibers of the bark-skirt. They used to have erections when we had intercourse. Then I would put my arm about them and play with the erect penis, even though they hated it. I was careful not to laugh aloud, but I chuckled inwardly. At the pitch of intercourse the alyha· ejaculate."

"Kuwal used to tell about these things in public. When we asked him why he did not tell his alyha· wife that *she* had an erection, he used to say, 'I would not dare do it. *She* would kill me. I never dared touch the penis in erection, except during intercourse. You'd court death if you did it otherwise, because they would get violent if you play with their erect penis too much'."

It is noteworthy that in English all Mohave refer to an alyha· as *she* and to a hwame· as *he*. This becomes quite confusing to the field-worker, at times, but also proves the highly institutionalized character of this cultural complex.

When an alyha· found a husband, he would begin to imitate menstruation. He took a stick and scratched himself between the legs until blood was drawn. This he referred to as "catamenial flow" and submitted to the whole set of puberty observances, then as well as during subsequent "menstruations". According to the Mohave pattern, when



a man marries an unmenstruated girl he has to share a great deal of her puberty taboos when she menstruates for the first time. Since the alyha· claimed this to be his first menstruation, the husband had to submit *nolens volens* to the whole set of observances.

Even more curious are the pretensions of alyha· concerning their hypothetical pregnancies. When they decided to become "pregnant" they ceased faking menstruations. They observed the customary pregnancy taboos as rigidly or even more so than normal women, conforming to many obsolescent customs even, and compelling their husbands to observe their share of taboos, as befits expectant fathers. They publicly boasted of their pregnancy, even though many Mohave women deny being pregnant, even when it has become obvious to all and sundry that they were pregnant. This gave rise to never ending jests, but the alyha· paid no attention to them. In only one way did they fail to conform to the usual pregnancy pattern. Having no other means at their disposal, they continued oral and rectal intercourse with their husbands, even though the former is alleged to harm the foetus' glottis and the latter his bowels. In the absence of their husbands they stuffed rags and bark under their skirts, in increasing quantities, to make their abdomen protrude. In due time they made a decoction of mesquite beans which is said to cause severe constipation. They drank this decoction by sucking it through their teeth, which acted as a sieve and prevented the swallowing of bean-fragments.

Eventually they had severe abdominal pains for a day or two, which they dubbed labour-pains. When the faeces could no longer be withheld the alyha· went into the bushes and defecated sitting over a hole in the traditional posture of parturating women. They had no assistants, and leaned therefore against a tree, as did women who were in travail before any feminine help could be obtained. The faeces were said to be thick, dry and friable and caused a bleeding of the rectum. They then pretended that stillbirth had taken place and buried the faeces and a little log. After that they returned to the house and claimed to have given birth to a stillborn child. They had to pretend it was a stillbirth, because stillborn babies are buried whereas those dying are cremated publicly, and "such ceremonies are past joking". Yet people would hear the alyha· wailing and mourning for the imaginary child. They clipped their hair and compelled their husbands to clip their hair in the fashion befitting the mourners. Since the Mohave never made any preparations



for birth, because boys and girls had to have different cradles, no problem arose from the disposal of empty cradles.

"People used to tease me about my wives' imaginary children," Kuwal is reported as saying. "When I walked about with friends and spoke with regret of the real children I had once and of my beautiful Cocopa and Yuma wives who were real women, they used to say, 'We know all about your beautiful wives. You married those alyha· and believed them when they scratched themselves and pretended to be menstruating, or when they were pregnant with a pillow.' Or else they would kick a pile of animal dung and say, 'Those are your children'. And yet I had real children once and they died. Were they not dead they would now take care of me in my old age."

#### COURTSHIP

Alyha· were not courted like ordinary girls. The man did not go to the alyha·'s house or to the house of his parents, and sleep beside him in chastity for a night or two, before leading him away to his home. They were courted at gatherings like widows, divorcées or lewd women (*kamalo*y). Either the man or the alyha· may initiate the flirtation. It is not impossible however that for the sake of creating a comical situation, a thing paramount in the Mohave pursuit of sexual pleasure, on occasion a man went through the habitual courtship for an alyha·, because it appealed to his sense of the preposterous. Casual meetings also led to such unions. "A man went to swim. In the water an alyha· seized his penis. 'What do you want,' the man asked briskly. He was so angry that later on he went to the house of the alyha· and asked him how his penis was that day." (Cf. above for the rest of the incident.)

At dances even boys who had no intention of marrying an alyha· played around with them, as though they were flirtatious women. "In the end some of them made up their minds to become the husbands of an alyha·".

Once they were married the alyha· made exceptionally industrious wives. At every step the Mohave emphasize the lure of feminine occupations for future alyha·, a point which has hitherto been neglected in the study of precipitating causes in homosexuality. We shall come back to this point later. At any rate the certitude of a well-kept home may have induced many a Mohave to set up house with an alyha·. Having a well-kept house is not an easy problem among the Mohave who have young wives. "Girls cannot be counted upon to settle down",

a woman said. The desire for good food and a well-kept household induced many Mohave to marry older women, even their former mothers-in-law, because old women were anxious to work hard to please their young husbands and make up by good food for their aged charms.

Divorcing an alyha· was not an easy matter. "They are so strong that they might beat you up", Kuwal used to say. "Some men who had enough of it tried to get rid of them politely, alleging barrenness of the alyha·. But no alyha· would admit such a thing. They would begin to fake pregnancy."

It may be said that the Mohave indulge in so much anal intercourse with women, that being the proper way to prepare immature girls for marriage, and even later on "even though the rectum of a woman is just like a man's rectum", and also indulge in so much fellatio, that they were able to obtain as much pleasure with an alyha· wife as with a woman. (hivey añienm, anus intercourse; ya tcahaetk, fellatio).

That, combined with the incessant search for new thrills in travel, war, love and humour, induced Mohave men to set up housekeeping with alyha· wives.

However, since the husband of the alyha· had to bear the brunt of the jokes that flew right and left in his presence, such unions were not stable, even when compared to the very unstable normal marriages. They seldom teased the alyha· himself. "He was an alyha·, he could not help it." But the husband of an alyha· had no such excuse and was fair game to all and sundry.

Returning to the hwame· they had no possibility of duplicating the male physiological pattern except in a single instance. The Mohave believe that by intercourse with an already pregnant woman the paternity of the child changes. Whenever a hwame· succeeded in getting a pregnant woman, she claimed the paternity of the child and took care of it with pride and loved it very sincerely. However the tribe did not recognize the change in gentile affiliation in that case, as it did in the case when a pregnant woman left her husband for another man. As we said before, gentile continuity is past joking.<sup>7</sup>

Intercourse between the hwame· and her wife was varied in scope, ranging from digital immission and fake intercourse with the wife in supine posture and the hwame· on top, to a special posture referred to as

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<sup>7</sup> DEVEREUX, GEORG. Der Begriff der Vaterschaft bei den Mohave Indianern. *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, in press, 1937. Contains a discussion of fictitious and plural paternities where promiscuous women are involved.

hiθpan kuḁape (vaginae split). The wife was stretched out in the supine posture. The hwame· lies with her head in the opposite direction, one of her legs under the wife's body, the other on top of it. In this posture of interlocking scissors the vulvae touched. Sometimes the posture was modified and the torsoes brought close together. No cunnilinctus (hiθpan ata·uk) was ever practiced among the Mohave, although they know that it occurs among the Whites. This absence is due to the horror of the vaginal odor. Kuwal often got into trouble by exclaiming, "Phew, you women smell like fish".

The hwame· got their wives usually at dances or by visiting girls and married women during the day. They never dared to try the ordinary courtship, because of the girl's parents.

The hwame· were excellent providers and took pride in dressing up their wives. Sahaykwisa who was a shaman earned good money and went to the length of prostituting herself to Whites to be able to keep her wives in comfort. Living with an industrious hwame· may have held some lure for a woman who had some experience with flighty, lazy and spendthrift husbands. "In their free time the hwame· would attend gatherings, and speak of the genitalia of their wives and mistresses as do salacious men. But then, no one ever expected a hwame· to behave herself. She would sit among the men and describe the vulva and the pubic hair of her wife."

Naturally the hwame· did not observe their own menses, but submitted to the taboos of the husband of a menstruating or pregnant wife.

Hwame· were divorced by their wives more often than they divorced them. Divorce consists simply of leaving the spouse. Their wives were usually teased until they could not bear it any longer, and naturally a hwame· was not physically in a position to fight with strong men. However Sahaykwisa once made the pretence of going on the warpath against the abductor of her wife, and since she was at the same time a shaman capable of witchcraft, she was comparatively safer than most other hwame· who were not feared.

No alyha· is reported ever having had intercourse with a woman. Some women however turned hwame· after they had a child. It was hinted that painful childbirth may not have been foreign to this decision. Occasionally a hwame· was raped or even prostituted, as was the case with Sahaykwisa.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL PATTERNS

Transvestites were said to be lucky at gambling, and the Mohave did not share the belief of some other Yuman tribes that they died young. Transvestites were exceptionally powerful shamans, especially the hwame. Kroeber's statement that the alyha cured the venereal disease known as alyha could not be substantiated by the present writer. It would be impossible in the present article to go into the psychological reasons of this alleged superiority of power, except for two hints. Shamanism is linked with weird things and odd behavior, including pre-natal phantasies and homicidal and suicidal impulses, the latter caused by longing for permanent reunion with the ghosts of the beloved victims of their witchcraft, with whom they have intercourse in dream. This situation has been roughly outlined in an article of the present writer on Mohave Soul Concepts.<sup>8</sup> The other hint refers to the intra-uterine and birth-phantasies of shamans, described by Roheim<sup>9</sup> and Kroeber<sup>10</sup> and not unlike similar phantasies of schizophrenics, according to verbal confirmation of the present writer's impressions by Dr. Bettina Warburg.

Conversely, shamans specializing in the cure of hikupk (syphilis), were lucky in love and had no difficulty in obtaining homosexual spouses. Kuwal was a hikupk shaman.

Homosexuals, according to the belief that witches always bewitch persons they are fond of sexually and otherwise, mainly bewitched persons of their own anatomic sex, and dreamed of intercourse with the ghosts of their victims. This was not harmful as would be the case if they were not shamans, in which case they would be afflicted with the dread ghost-weylak disease. For a normal person to dream of homosexual relations also causes weylak, which is usually fatal. Our woman informant's daughter, aged about 40, died of this disease shortly after she reported the following dream to the present writer: "I dreamt women wanted to have intercourse with me. They were close relatives or friends. I knew they were women, but they acted like men. They pulled my skirt up, threw me and tried to get on top of me. I fought them off and intercourse was never performed on me. I expect to get very sick,

<sup>8</sup> DEVEREUX, GEORGE. Mohave soul concepts. *American Anthropologist*, n.s., Vol. 39, 1937.

<sup>9</sup> ROHEIM, GEZA. Psycho-Analysis of primitive cultural types. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. 13, pts. I-II, pp. 187-188, 193-194, 1932.

<sup>10</sup> KROEBER, A. L. *Op. cit.*, p. 754. Cf. also KROEBER, A. L. Earth-Tongue, a Mohave. In "American Indian Life". E. C. Parsons, Ed. Pp. 190, 201, 1925.

because the fact that they were relatives makes the dream doubly bad." (Men never allow women to get on top of them, which happens only when women abuse a dead-drunk man.)

Turning to the status of homosexuals, we shall find that it is of a somewhat complex nature. They were, so far as the *alyha* are concerned, rather peaceful persons, except when taunted. Interpreter stated, "My husband is far too kind. I always tell him that he is so stupidly kind that if anyone wished to have rectal intercourse with him, he would go down on all four and spread his buttocks." (The man in question is not a homosexual, but a person of an exceptionally kind and sunny disposition, even for a Mohave, which is a great deal to say.)

The *alyha* were said to be cowards. The word "*malyhaek*" (thou art a coward) clearly shows this belief. It may not be beside the point to recall in this connection the lure feminine pursuits are said to possess for the *alyha* and the fact that the Mohave were exceptionally warlike and adventuresome and prized bravery above many other virtues, and next to power obtained in dream. Except when retaliating for a raid they used to declare war upon their enemies—a procedure unknown among most aboriginals—and stood their ground to the last man against overwhelming forces. War was sport and the use of horses or guns was considered despicable. The last abortive raid of a few Mohave and Yuma against the united Maricopa and Pima, most of the latter armed with guns and on horseback, is strictly comparable to the last stand of the three hundred Spartans. Cowards were despised, and all men expected to participate in raids. Such demands were not made upon *alyha*. I do not suggest that this might have had something to do with the decision of some faint-hearted boy who became an *alyha*, but the possibility may be given consideration. As *alyha* they could take the position of women at the *yakkiḍaalyk*, or welcome feast for warriors returning from a raid. At that feast old women, who have lost a relative in the battle, would taunt those who did not go to war in the following manner: They prepared a penis of wood with bark wrapped around it, or merely twisted the front of their fiber-skirt into a protuberance, and walked through the crowd, poking those who had remained home between the legs, saying, "You are not a man but an *alyha*". The *alyha* themselves indulged in this practical joke, using mostly the above-mentioned stick, or an old club.

The alyha· and hwame· never went to war, although on occasion women insisted on accompanying a beloved husband or brother on the raid.

To call a person a "homosexual" when he is not, is a bad insult and is fiercely resented. The Mohave feel certain that a white woman whom they know and who is rather businesslike and intellectual is a hwame·. The expression "thou art a coward" (whose stem is alyha·) may be used however as a friendly taunt, or even as a joke.

The present writer's woman interpreter used to complain of his allegedly reckless driving and was called "malyhaek" by the author. She got even with him on one occasion, by inducing her cousin to drive the author and the main male informant, who were lying on the platform of an old truck, at top speed over impossible roads, shouting back at him "malyhaek". The male informant being equally afraid during that trip, author and informant kept on shouting at each other "thou art a coward" until we were all too hoarse from shouting and laughter to continue.

As a rule official homosexuals were not teased. The Mohave believe in temperamental compulsions and consider that "they cannot help it". The brunt of the inevitable joking was borne by their spouses who had no such excuse. "Kuwal married his alyha· wives because the transvestites are lucky at gambling and their luck extends to their spouses. He was a great gambler. But when people teased him about his alyha· wives he used to get angry." Some of them become so accustomed to having homosexual spouses that they don't care for normal spouses any more. We have already stated that alyha· perform fellatio. Yet when a woman asked Kuwal to allow her to perform fellatio upon him, he refused. "My penis got feelings", he objected. The woman became very angry and said, "You don't like me. You let other women (i.e. the alyha·) do it to you."

Yet, for reasons already described, alyha· had no difficulty in obtaining husbands. The essential adventuresomeness of the Mohave character, combined with their completely humoristic attitude toward sex, except where procreation is involved, together with the aforementioned reasons of economic comfort and convenience, induced many a man to become the spouse of an alyha· at least for a short time. After the dissolution of such union they could always find real wives.

Not so the hwame·. Even though women are more flighty and loose, according to the testimony of the Mohave, they were less willing

to live with a hwame'. This may not be entirely due to the fact that they did not derive complete satisfaction from digital manipulations. Men not seldom shunned them afterwards, especially because these hwame' were not always young and old women are supposed to have a *sui generis* odor. Even when a young man married an old woman people said to him, "Now no young woman will want you again. You will have the smell of an old woman about your person." Furthermore the physically weaker hwame' could not protect her by physical violence against the jests of the community. The lack of satisfaction from sexual relations without children, of whom the Mohave are inordinately fond, may have been an additional factor in the brittleness of this relationship.

Nor were homosexuals considered adequate spouses. "He must be awfully hard up to marry a womanly man", or, "No man must want her, so she went to live with a hwame'", were current comments upon such unions. Nor did the community set too much faith upon their sexual satisfactions. "What can be the matter with that woman? She is quite terrible. What does she think she gets from that hwame' husband of hers?" they said about women who married hwame'. As to men, who lived with alyha' people wondered if "they really thought they were having intercourse with a woman."

Perhaps because of the greater difficulty they experienced in finding a substitute, the hwame' were more devoted spouses than were the alyha'. Here again they conform to the current pattern of their adopted sex. Mohave men are more faithful than are women, and it appears from my suicide statistics<sup>11</sup> that women seldom, if ever, commit suicide over the desertion of a lover, even though they kill themselves more often—or rather try to kill themselves more often—than men do at the death of a spouse. They seem to be less ready to reconcile themselves to the inevitable.

Last of all the hwame' is not safe from being raped by a practical jester, especially when she is drunk, while drunken men are seldom raped by women.

Altogether it will become apparent from the two detailed case histories about to be quoted, that the lot of the hwame' is infinitely harder than that of the alyha'.

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<sup>11</sup> DEVEREUX, GEORGE. Mohave Suicide. Typescript report in possession of the Committee for the Study of Suicide, Inc., New York City.



## SOCIAL ASPECTS

Socially speaking Mohave civilization acted wisely perhaps in acknowledging the inevitable. This airing of the abnormal tendencies of certain individuals achieved several aims. It deprived certain modes of atypical behaviour of the glamour of secrecy and sin and of the aureola of persecution. It enabled certain persons swaying on the outskirts of homosexuality to obtain the desired experience and find their way back to the average tribal pattern without the humiliation of a moral Canossa. It created what is known as an "abscess of fixation" and localized the disorder in a small area of the body social. Last of all the very publicity given to their status did not permit homosexuals to insinuate themselves into the confidence of normal persons under false colors and profit by some temporary unhappiness of the latter to sway them. They had to compete with normal blatant sexuality not in the dark groves of Corydon and Sappho but in the open daylight, on the acknowledged playground of normal sexuality, i.e. at gatherings and feasts. This arrangement, while safeguarding homosexuals from the dangers of persecution, also made their unsuccessful courtships doubly painful because of the very publicity given to it. In creating metaphorically speaking, "reserved quarters", for permanent homosexuals and for the passing whim of bisexually inclined active male homosexuals and passive female ones, they gave the latter an opportunity to satisfy their passing longings, and left the door wide open for a return to normalcy.

As for the homosexuals, the alyha poking cowards with a bark phallus and calling him a coward, only half realising his own awkward unhappiness, serves to epitomize the whole, rather sad, picture of the status of the homosexual in almost any society.

## CASE HISTORIES

It may not be unnecessary to recall here that male homosexuals were allowed among many American Indian tribes to assume officially the status of a woman. Data are very incomplete however, and seldom include actual case histories. For that reason the following two case histories have been reported with every obtainable detail, in the hope that comparable data would be obtained from other native races.

Both case histories were obtained from the same male informant, who had known in his youth Kuwal very intimately and was also acquainted with Sahaykwisa whose adventures were common knowledge



at that time. He was one of the men who brought in her corpse after she was killed by drowning. Informant never had any homosexual experiences himself. The case histories were checked against the testimony of other informants, and all details were found to be correct.

Kuwal's picture may be seen in Kroeber's *Handbook of the Indians of California*, plate 65, (c), between pages 728-729. He was the last Mohave who wore a stick through his nasal septum.

### *The case of Kuwal*

This case was reported to the present writer by the shaman Hivsu-Tupoma, who had known Kuwal in his youth.

"If you marry an alyha' you will have a hard time when you try leaving him, because he has the strength of a man and may beat you up," Kuwal told me once. Then he told me the following story:

"After I married that alyha' I went to a dance where I met a pretty girl who wanted to marry me. I liked her and flirted with her which made my alyha' wife angry. 'You carried on with me while I was having my menses and now I am pregnant', the alyha' said to me. So I continued to live with him, but carried on with the girl secretly. At last the alyha' found out about it and got very angry with me. I told him he could not bear a child anyway and went to live with my relatives.

"I had some trouble with my relatives too. I used to say when the women came near me, 'Phew, you smell like fish'. One day my hostess became very angry with me and began throwing things at me when I said it during breakfast. 'If we smell so bad you get out of here', she said. I ran away but later came back and continued to live with them. The alyha' went on looking for me and people warned me he would beat me if he found me. One day he came to the house and beat me so hard it almost laid me out. Having thus satisfied his revengeful nature he went home. I thought that this fight had appeased him and I left my relatives and went to live with that girl. A few days after my marriage the alyha' turned up at my house and wanted to fight with my wife. He was accompanied by a number of men who wanted to enjoy the sight. I was in the house and heard the noise of a fight. My wife and the alyha' were fighting in the yard outside. The alyha' was stronger than she was, being a man, but he pretended to be a weak woman and fought like women do. He did not use all his strength. He could have beaten up my wife quite easily, but he let my wife throw him several times. The men who had accompanied him were standing around snickering and shouting. They shouted to my wife, 'Be careful, *she* is with child and you might hurt the child'. My wife got very indignant and began shouting at them: 'Ah, just as you say. *She* is with child indeed. This thing here cannot have a child. *She* got a penis and testes.'

"The mother and grandmother of my wife who were sitting near by got very angry and shouted at the men, 'You brought *her* here because you knew that my daughter was no match for *her*.' 'If you throw *her* pull off *her* penis and testes',

they told my wife. When the alyha' heard these references to his genitalia he became very angry. He picked up a log from the camp-fire and almost succeeded in setting fire to the roof. Then he picked up a stick and tried to beat my wife with it. He might have killed her had not the men who came with him have interfered. I could not have interfered myself because a man should never mix in the quarrels of women. They got hold of the alyha' and led him away, comforting him all the while. 'You will find another husband,' they told him. They teased him the way men tease amorous women. They flirted with him."

Kuwal used to get quite melancholy when he recalled his real wife. "One time I really got a real woman and had a child by her, but the child died. Had the child lived I would now be living with it." Kuwal was very proud of having had a real child. It made him angry when people teased him and told him when he was with a crowd that he never had anything but alyha' wives. Kuwal's alyha' wives were mostly Yuma and only one of them was a Mohave. The Mohave one belonged to the Mu'θ gens. (The screw-bean gens.)

Kuwal used to get very angry when people kicked the dung of animals and said it was his children and told him he had believed his alyha' wives when they were pregnant with things stuffed under their skirts.

After a while Kuwal got himself another alyha' wife. This is the story he told me about that wife of his.

"I lived with that alyha' for a while, but someone succeeded in alienating his affection. Once the alyha's mind was made up to leave me, he began finding fault with me on every occasion. 'You copulate with me all the time,' he said. 'That ought to be enough for you, but when you go to gamble—which you do all the time—you also copulate with other women. You should be satisfied with me alone'. Of course the alyha' said all this only because he had made up his mind to leave me.

"In the end we went to a dance one night and the alyha' eloped with another man. I was glad to be rid of him, but thought I would pretend to be very angry, just for the sake of fun. I painted my face black, the way men on the warpath or husbands out for revenge do. Then I said: 'I will go after my *woman* and fight for *her*'. I just said it for fun, but a lot of men came with me to see what would happen. They said it would be very funny. We went to that man's house and I said to him, 'I came to fight for my woman'. At once we began to fight. The alyha' stood there looking at us, yelling and wailing like a woman. 'Peleeley!' the alyha' was yelling. The crowd was shouting lustily 'Pey-pey-pey!' They were enjoying themselves. 'Your penis is too short', the alyha' shouted. 'It is just like a clitoris'. When the men heard this they laughed. They shouted 'Pey-pey!' even louder. But the alyha' was getting very angry. 'When you were untrue to me, I did not quarrel with you, but now that I left you for another man you come and fight. Who do you think you are, anyway,' he said. The alyha' got so angry that he picked up a stick and fell foul on me, while I was fighting with *her* husband. But the men interfered, because they were afraid the stick would hurt me. They got hold of the alyha' and patted his buttocks, the way one pats a woman's buttocks. The alyha' began to giggle. 'Why don't you behave yourself,' he told them. 'Why do you try to put your hand into my

vagina?' At last her husband and I stopped fighting and we went home, quite exhilarated with the fun we had."

I heard Kuwal tell me this story just as I told it to you. He is dead now. He was a close friend of mine and always told me stories about his alyha' wives.

### *The case of Sahaykwisa*

This case was reported by Hivsu' Tupoma, additional data having been obtained from Tcatc.

Sahaykwisa, a full blood Mohave woman of the *ñoltc* gens was born toward the middle of the last century and killed toward the end of the century apparently at the age of forty-five. She was a shaman specializing in the cure of venereal diseases, and therefore was said to be lucky in love. She began to practice witchcraft at the age of twenty-five, but was not accused of it until five years later, according to some of the informants. She was said never to have menstruated, but was feminine in appearance and had large breasts. She wore a short skirt (erroneously described by one informant "like a man") and was "rich" enough to wear shoes. At that time Mohave women wore Mother Hubbards and went barefoot. The Mohave refer to her as *he*. With regard to the statement that she never menstruated it may not be unnecessary to state that if she did menstruate she would certainly have told no one about it. One of her former wives is still alive. Her name is *ñoltc*. She could not be consulted because she resents any allusion to her homosexual venture.

It is not clear whether or not Sahaykwisa had been initiated into the status of a transvestite. Opinions differ. At any rate she is consistently referred to as a *hwame'* which would suggest that she did submit to that ceremony.

Sahaykwisa had at a certain time a very pretty wife. Other men desired the woman and tried to lure her away from the *hwame'*. "Why do you want a transvestite for your husband who has no penis and pokes you with the finger?" they said. The wife, however, remained stubborn: "That is all right for me if I want to remain with her." Eventually the suitor gave up and left her alone. Soon another man began paying attentions to her, trying to induce her to leave the transvestite. "She has no penis, she is just like you are. If you remain with her no 'other' man will want you afterwards." Eventually the wife eloped with this man, because she liked him well, although her transvestite husband provided well for her, planting and doing all the man's work. (No man does feminine work, unless he marries an unmenstruated child, who does not know how to look after the household.) When Sahaykwisa's wife ran away, the transvestite began attending dances and flirted with the girls. A man who saw her flirt with them said chaffingly, "Why don't you leave those women alone? You cannot do anything with them anyway." Behind her back people nicknamed her *Hiōpan kuōape*, which means split vulvae, and refers to one of the postures female homosexuals assume during coitus. This is a bad insult and no one dared call her that to her face.

Despite all this banter the wife who had left the transvestite was less satisfied with her male husband and eventually returned to the transvestite. The man did nothing about it.

When the transvestite attended dances with *his* wife, he used to sit with the men and boast in a manly fashion, describing the genitalia of his wife. In the meantime people profited by it to tease the girl about her relationship with the transvestite, saying that Sahaykwisa had neither a penis nor testes. "If I don't copulate with you and your husband both!" one of them exclaimed. "She got just what you got. But don't tell your husband I told you so, because your husband will be angry with me." In the end the girl grew tired of being an object of derision. She told her husband about it. The transvestite became very angry, and told the girl to go away and leave the house. "If you tell me to go, I shall go," the girl said and left forthwith.

Eventually Sahaykwisa got herself another wife. People also teased this woman. In the meantime the girl who had been Sahaykwisa's former wife got married again, but people still teased her and her male husband. "Just poke her with your finger, that is what she likes, use your finger, that is what she is accustomed to. Do not waste your penis on her," people advised the man. (The Mohave seldom practice digital intromission, because it makes the hands smell bad.) In turn Sahaykwisa's former wife teased the transvestite's present spouse. "I know very well what you are getting. She pokes her finger into your vagina. Mine still hurts because her fingernails scratched me." The transvestite's present wife complained to her husband, but all Sahaykwisa would deign to reply was, "Never mind what she tells you. She wants to come back to me, that is all". The wife insisted that that was not so, but Sahaykwisa told her that she knew better and let it go at that.

Eventually Sahaykwisa and her present wife met her former wife and the latter's husband at a dance. Again the former wife teased the present one. The latter felt that she had enough of it and wanted to fight. The men present encouraged the women who soon stopped exchanging insults and began to fight. The husband and the transvestite both remained seated in the very dignified posture befitting men when women fight over them. The crowd, however, jeered at Sahaykwisa. "The hwame' is proud now. She thinks perhaps she got a penis." At last a practical joker pushed the fighting women on top of Sahaykwisa and the three of them rolled about in the dust. Some time afterwards the transvestite's wife felt she could not bear the jesting any longer and deserted her *husband*.

Sahaykwisa was very much disappointed and grew resentful. She painted her face black, as befits a warrior on the warpath or a man about to track down the seducer of his wife. She also took her bow and her arrows and went away. She must have had another woman on her mind, for instead of going to the house of the unfaithful wife, she visited another camp where she met with a very bad reception. The woman she wanted to visit jeered at her, and addressed her as one woman addresses another woman. "She thinks maybe that bows and arrows suit her. She thinks she is a man". Sahaykwisa was unruffled. "Yes, I can shoot game for you," she said and left. She felt encouraged because the Mohave say that if a girl insults her suitor, the latter may be certain that he will win her in the end. A few days later Sahaykwisa visited that woman once more and asked her to grind corn for her, which is what young brides do as soon as they got married. Surprisingly enough the woman complied with this request. The news spread like wildfire. "I bet she will get herself another wife.

What can be the matter with these women to fall for a transvestite?" people commented. Indeed, the third time Sahaykwisa visited the woman she eloped with her, leaving her husband for the sake of the hwame'. The husband, a man of about thirty-five years of age called Haqau did nothing about it. "He could not very well fight with a transvestite," informant commented.

Sahaykwisa's ability to obtain wives did not surprise the tribe. She was, it must be remembered, a shaman curing venereal diseases, and by definition lucky in love. Apart from that magical luck she earned considerable money by her practice of "medicine" (and by prostitution to the Whites, certain informants assert). At any rate she was a good provider, worked hard and took great pleasure in bedecking her wives with beads and pretty clothes.

In the end the third wife abandoned her too and returned to her former husband. Haqau took her back, not without some hesitation, "because she had lowered herself by becoming the wife of a transvestite." In addition to that people warned Haqau that he was in danger of being bewitched by Sahaykwisa who was now a full-fledged shaman, and one frequently accused of witchcraft. "She will get even with you," people said.

Sahaykwisa lived on the southern outskirts of the town of Needles, while Haqau and his wife lived on the northern fringe of that town.

Once more Sahaykwisa picked up her bow and arrows and went to the camp of Haqau. She did not enter it however. She stood at a certain distance from it, looking at the camp. She did this several times, thinking of how she could bewitch the girl. People noticed her and realized what sort of mischief she was up to. They warned Haqau, but the man was not afraid and took it in a spirit of jest. "Let her come", he said. "Next time she comes I will show her what a real penis can do." The next time he ambushed her in the bushes, tore off her clothes and raped her. Then he left her in the bushes and returned to his camp. Sahaykwisa stood up and left without a word.

Never again did Sahaykwisa take a wife. By that time she had already bewitched several women she was in love with and segregated their ghosts at "her own place" where she had intercourse with them in her dreams, in the approved Mohave witchcraft fashion.

After her rape by Haqau she became a drunkard and began craving men. Not seldom, when she was drunk, some men dragged her to a convenient place and farmed her out to various men, including certain Whites, at so much the intercourse. By that time she was on the down grade and considered fair game, in the way lewd women (*kamaloy*) are. She fell in love with an elderly man by the name of Tcuhum, who belonged to her own gens (*ñoltc*). Tcuhum, however, refused to have intercourse with her. "You are a man," he said. Thereupon she bewitched him, because she loved him and wanted to have intercourse with his ghost in her dreams. Tcuhum died without confessing who had bewitched him—"he wanted to become her victim" people commented, referring to certain Mohave beliefs on witchcraft. Then Sahaykwisa started an affair with Tcuhum's son Suhuraye, aged about forty or forty-five. She had an affair at the same time also with a friend of Suhuraye, a certain Ilykutcemiðo', of the o'tc gens, aged fifty. The three of them took a trip together to a certain place about thirty miles north of Needles and worked there.

By that time Sahaykwisa began to long for her beloved victim's company, and like most Mohave bewitchers she began to look for a chance of being killed, for only a murdered shaman will join the ghosts of his victims in the other world. She used to get drunk, and while under the influence of alcohol she used to tell of the people she had bewitched. During that trip she became drunk again and told her lovers how she bewitched Tcuhum. She boasted of it until the two men picked her up and threw her into the Colorado river where she drowned.<sup>12</sup>

At that time Hivsu· Tupoma, the writer's informant lived at Needles. Two weeks after the killing people saw buzzards on the sandbank and, after investigating, they discovered the partly decomposed body of Sahaykwisa. Informant and a number of others brought the corpse back to the Mohave settlement and cremated it in the customary fashion. People thought for a while that she had jumped into the river while she was drunk. But even when they found out that it had been murder no one did anything about it, because witches should be killed, and witches *want* to be killed anyway.

It is said that Sahaykwisa never bewitched her next of kin, as most shamans do, but Tcuhum at least was a member of her own gens. I have pointed out elsewhere the connection between witchcraft, incest and suicide in Mohave belief.<sup>13</sup>

#### NOTES ON OTHER TRIBES

Data on other Yuman tribes are scanty or non-existent. The following divergencies from the Mohave pattern may be noted.

The Maricopa (and other tribes of the Gila River who speak Yuman languages ?) believe in a mountain inhabited by a Homosexual Supernatural. This mountain gambles with a Homosexual Mountain of their arch-foes, the Yuma, and a human male belonging to the tribe protected by the losing mountain becomes a homosexual. The Yuma and Maricopa when they drew up in battle-formation called each other women or homosexuals. One becomes a homosexual by dreaming of the Homosexual Mountain. Men approve of male transvestites, but they make women uneasy. (SPIER, LESLIE. *Yuman Tribes of the Gila River*, Chicago, 1933, pp. 6, 242-243.)

The Northeastern and Western Yavapai know only of a Tonto transvestite of whom they claim to be afraid. (GIFFORD, E. W. *The Northeastern and Western Yavapai. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, vol. 34, 1936, p. 296.)

The Cocopa female transvestites had their noses pierced. Except for their genitalia their bodies had a male appearance. They fought in battles. (GIFFORD, E. W. *The Cocopa. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, vol. 31, 1933, p. 294.)

<sup>12</sup> DEVEREUX, GEORGE. Mohave soul concepts. Cf. footnote 8.

<sup>13</sup> DEVEREUX, GEORGE. Mohave Suicide. Cf. footnote 11.

The Kamia believed in a transvestite culture-hero who taught them agriculture. (GIFFORD, E. W. The Kamia. *Bureau of American Ethnology*, Bulletin 97, 1931, p. 12.)

The Yuma female transvestites had either undeveloped or male secondary sex-characteristics. They dreamt of weapons. (FORDE, C. DARYLL. *Op. cit.* *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, vol. 28, 1931, p. 157.) Their creation myth contains an incident in which a male inserts his penis into the woman's anus, and, upon being urged to insert it into her vagina, inserts his testes into her vulva. (HARRINGTON, J. P. A Yuma account of origins. *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. 21, 1908, p. 334.)

The rest of the data corroborate our Mohave data. In every instance the attraction of the occupations of the opposite sex is stressed.

