

Status Substitute Sought

► THE WHITE MAN'S old stereotype of the drunken Indian has been a real prophecy for a small community of Forest Potawatomi Indians. But drinking has played a part in reducing tensions between the races.

These North American Indians from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan accept "the status of inferiority associated with their frequent intoxication," reported Dr. John H. Hamer, assistant professor, department of sociology and anthropology, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio, in the Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol.

However, although the Potawatomi represent the "extreme and chiefly negative consequences of drinking as a way of life," he said, the heavy consumption of alcohol is recognized by the people as outweighing the social costs.

This group of Indians has turned to almost perpetual intoxication as an outlet for aggression and a substitute for status and kinship provided by many of the tribal customs and rituals that have disappeared over the past 150 years.

Today, drinking provides the Potawatomi with "one of the few, stable predictable activities in which they may invoke the pity of others" Dr. Hamer pointed out.

Their consumption of alcohol, he reported, progresses through three stages—an initial period of relaxed euphoria followed

by aggressive activity and ending in complete passivity.

Relaxation was anticipated by the Indians interviewed by Dr. Hamer because of the opportunities for friendly social contact. During the aggressive stage of drinking, the Potawatomis could ignore their inhibitions, and by the time the third stage of complete passivity arrived, it was possible for them to escape from all social problems.

Besides, intoxication has become a "means of fantasy" for regaining the high status Potawatomi men had before the white man.

Because the white people associate the poverty of many Indians with excessive alcoholism, they assume that the Indians are inherently irresponsible, Dr. Hamer noted.

However, despite this belief, "there are many in the white community who secretly confess an admiration for what they mistakenly believe to be an idyllic life of drinking and leisure."

Therefore, some white men become frequent participants in mixed drinking parties. "As a consequence, the minimum of friendly contact, arising out of the mutual pleasures of imbibing alcohol, has the function of reducing tension between the two communities by reinforcing the positive image of the Potawatomi as a kind of bacchanalian ne'er-do-well," the Wesleyan professor said.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Couples Must Bargain

► THE KEY to successful marriage may rest in a couple's ability to bargain unconsciously with each other, a California psychiatrist reported.

To make their marriage work, many U.S. middle-class couples will collaborate by unconsciously following the dictum "something for something," better known as "tit for tat."

This agreement to give and take which often has little to do with commonly recognized sex roles, can play a crucial role in the often-present problem of "getting along," says Dr. Don D. Jackson, director of the Mental Research Institute, Palo Alto, Calif.

One of the most common husband-wife arrangements implies a fairly clear division of labor.

"The husband is, broadly, an instrumental type who deals with matters logically and intellectually, and is considered the practical, realistic one; his wife is the more sensitive, affective or 'feeling' sort of person who understands people better than things," Dr. Jackson pointed out.

A "time-bound" relationship, another of the "something for something" agreements, progresses in a series of successive events, he reported in the Archives of General Psychiatry, June 1965.

"The husband may suggest to his wife that they go to a movie; she says yes, and then she has the right to say, we can have a beer afterwards. Similarly, the wife may

take certain rights which the husband will grant because he knows he will have a turn in the near future."

In some marriages as well as in politics, one party may treat an agreement as if it were "time-bound" when it really is not.

When this occurs, a wife may agree to go fishing with her husband, expecting that someday soon she will ask him to do something with her. However, he keeps asking and she keeps going, still expecting eventually to take her turn.

The more the wife lets herself be "conned," the more she has at stake, and the less freedom she has to "try another game," since she has already suggested so much.

This vicious cycle, often indicative of pathological relationships, builds up frustration and may lead a marriage partner to depression or even suicide, the California psychiatrist noted.

He emphasizes that the rules for each of these "something for something" bargains may have "enormous predictive potential." If an accurate formulation of a couple's relationship can be made, he said, "we can forecast the likelihood of success or failure and even the fate of children in the family system."

As to his own bargaining preference—Dr. Jackson believes that being flexible in a time-bound give-and-take arrangement may be "most workable."

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