

CULTURE AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY: THE CASE OF THE ARMENIAN VILLAGE OF ANJAR¹

HERANT KATCHADOURIAN

herantk33@gmail.com

A NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

The research project that is the basis of this paper was carried out between 1963 and 1966 in the Armenian village of Anjar, in the Beqa'a valley of Lebanon. The conception of and impetus for this project did not originate with me, and the project that was carried out only partially fulfilled its original aims. These permutations were an example of the vicissitudes of conducting psychiatric research in the 1960s in Lebanon.

At the completion of my residency training in psychiatry at the University of Rochester, NY, I spent a year as a visiting scientist at the Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, MD, and then I returned to Lebanon to join the faculty of the American University of Beirut. Dr. Lyman Wynne, the Chief of Adult Psychiatry at the NIH, whom I worked with, became interested in having me conduct cross-cultural applications of some aspects of his work, one of which was in the area of culture and psychopathology. To that end, he helped me to obtain a NIH grant and recruited an anthropologist to work with me.

The plan was to carry out a comparative study of the Armenian/Christian village of Anjar and the Arab/Muslim village of Majd-el-Anjar, a few miles further east on the Beirut-Damascus highway. We were able to complete the study of Anjar, but my collaborators failed to carry out the project in Majd-el-Anjar. This resulted in the loss of the comparative framework of the project. One example of how this fell through involved the study of value orientations

¹ This is the sixth chapter of a survey study. The other chapters are entitled: "[From] Musa Dagh to Anjar" (Ch. 1), "Setting and Economy" (Ch. 2), "Kinship and Social Structure" (Ch. 3), "Psychiatric Disorders in Anjar" (Ch. 4), "The Field Survey" (Ch. 5).

The research was supported in main part by "Public Health Service Research Grant MH 06810 from the National Institute of Mental Health, US Public Health Service, Bethesda, Maryland. It was carried out at the American University of Beirut. The data analysis and writing was done while the author (H. Katchadourian) was a University Fellow at Stanford University. Additional support was provided...by the Hufty Foundation".

E.N.: A complete version of the Study is deposited in the Derian Armenological Library of Haigazian University.

based on the theory and questionnaire developed by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck.²

This work was completed in Anjar and ostensibly in Majd-el-Anjar. However, the data from the latter made no sense. It turned out that one of the better educated men from the village that we had hired to administer the questionnaires had done it all himself by randomly checking the various choices!

The problems did not end there. After we wrote the book on Anjar itself, I sent it for review by a husband and wife team of sociologists at Columbia.

They happened to be conducting a somewhat similar study in another country and proposed that we combine the two studies thus creating a new comparative framework. Consequently, even though the Anjar manuscript had been accepted for publication, I withdrew it in light of this new prospect. However, two months later, the wife died suddenly, her husband became dysfunctional, and that was the end of that. The publisher was no longer interested, and the Anjar book never got published.

Another significant concern is that this material is now fifty years old. When the study was done, Anjar was a large village, and now it is a substantial town with a much improved infrastructure and buildings. Most of the original settlers are no longer alive, and a new generation now lives there. The community now faces new challenges due to the changed political circumstances in the region. Consequently, it is impossible to say if the findings of the study, particularly the statistical data, would still be valid today. That may seem to largely invalidate the findings of this paper. But not entirely. The findings in themselves have historical value, particularly since psychiatric research of this kind in Lebanon remains scarce and no other studies have been carried out in Anjar. Just as anthropological studies of long lost tribes still provide cultural insights, so does the study of Anjar deepen our understanding of Armenian culture and character. Moreover, the identity and personality of the people of Anjar still persist even though the links of the younger generations to their cultural heritage are becoming more tenuous, despite attempts to sustain them. This is also true of the generalizations that apply to Armenians more generally. Armenians do change, like everyone else, but most of them still remain Armenian.

In this chapter we will attempt to come up with a unified interpretation of mental illness and health in cultural terms and will be concerned with a number

² **E.N.:** M. D. Hills, "Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's Values Orientation Theory," *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 4(4):2002, <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1040>.

of questions: What made it possible for the people of Anjar to survive the extraordinary conditions of life imposed upon them by historical and political circumstances? What accounts for their successful adaptation to a new land in such a short period of time? What are the sources of psychological strength that these people drew from? What are the psychic costs entailed in this process, and how are these manifested in terms of mental illness?

These are admittedly very difficult questions to answer. Approached in definitive terms, their solution would require unraveling the fundamental relationship of culture and personality and resolving the riddle of mental illness. This at present is not possible. But the case of Anjar, in a modest way, can cast considerable light on these issues. Our attempt to do this may be facilitated by a brief general consideration of the relationship between culture and psychopathology.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN MENTAL ILLNESS

Psychiatrists generally have not been very specific about what they mean by the term “culture.” Nor is there general agreement among anthropologists in this regard: one well known review offers over 150 definitions of culture.³

The concept of culture most often used by psychiatrists is normative and refers to a distinctive way of life. Psychiatric concern is mainly in those aspects of culture, such as child rearing, which directly influence personality development.

Psychiatric interest in culture and psychopathology goes back to the very origins of modern psychiatry in the 19th century. Emil Kraepelin,⁴ who first classified mental disorders into a comprehensive scheme, travelled extensively to study the cross-cultural applicability of diagnostic categories. Freud had a keen professional and personal interest in the study of culture and was influenced by contemporary anthropologists such as Tyler and Frazer. His own first major statement on the evolution of culture appeared in 1913 in *Totem and Taboo*.⁵

³ A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, *Culture*, Vintage Books, New York, 1952.

⁴ **E.N.:** Emil Wilhelm Georg Magnus Kraepelin (15 February 1856 – 7 October 1926) was a German psychiatrist. H. J. Eysenck's *Encyclopedia of Psychology* identifies him as the founder of modern scientific psychiatry, psychopharmacology and psychiatric genetics.

Kraepelin believed the chief origin of psychiatric disease to be biological and genetic malfunction. His theories dominated psychiatry at the start of the 20th century and, despite the later psychodynamic influence of Sigmund Freud and his disciples, enjoyed a revival at century's end (Emil Kraepelin - *Wikipedia*, accessed on July 7, 2023).

⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, Beacon Press, 1913.

Culture interacts with mental illness, at many levels. These include perceptions and categorization of illness, theories causation, definitions of sick role, forms of treatment, and so on. Of central interest to psychiatrists are the causal influences that cultural patterns might exert on mental disorders.

Alexander Leighton and Jane Murphy have summarized these influences whereby culture is conceived as:⁶

1. Determining the pattern of certain specific disorders, such as *latah* (in Malaya), *koro* (in China), and *witiko* (in the Indian cultures of Northeast America);

2. Producing basic personality types, some of which are especially vulnerable to psychiatric disorder;

3. Producing psychiatric disorders (usually considered latent for a time) through certain child-rearing practices;

4. Having a selective influence on a population's potential for psychiatric disorder as well as the pattern of disorder through types of sanctions and whether "shame" or "guilt" is engendered;

5. Precipitating disorder in an otherwise adequately functioning personality by confrontation with stressful roles;

6. Perpetuating disorder by rewarding it in prestigious roles such as holy man, witch doctor, or shaman;

7. Precipitating disorder by changing more rapidly than personality systems are able to tolerate;

8. Producing disorder through the inculcation of sentiments (beliefs and values) that produce emotional states damaging to personality, such as fears, jealousies, and unrealistic aspirations;

9. Affecting the distribution of some kinds of disorder through breeding patterns;

10. Influencing the amount and distribution of disorder through patterns of poor hygiene and nutrition.

In addition to these factors which are hypothesized to produce differences in the prevalence and types of psychiatric disorders, there is also the notion that culture, as such, is responsible for a certain amount of mental illness presumably because of the restrictions and regulations imposed on "natural" urges. In other words, some psychic distress and psychopathology are the inevitable costs of culture and civilization.

MASTERY IN SURVIVAL AND ADAPTATION

Let us set aside for the moment the issue of mental illness and take up the first question that we raised earlier: What accounts for the apparent mastery

⁶ J.M. Murphy & A.H. Leighton (eds.), *Approaches to Cross-Cultural Psychiatry*, Cornell University Press, 1965.

of the people of Anjar in coping with and adapting to one drastic change after another? Since the settlement of Anjar rather than the earlier events are more accessible to analysis, we shall concentrate on the former.

This is a matter of considerable general importance above and beyond the case of Anjar. The settlement of refugees has been one of the more constant and serious problems throughout history. As war, famine, and migrations for other reasons drive large populations into new areas, profound adjustments become necessary. The usual outcome is one of protracted misery and conflict. Only rarely does one encounter as successful an adaptation and in such a short period of time as was effected by the people of Anjar.

The factors that determine the fate of a refugee community are obviously numerous, and a comprehensive cataloguing would be a hopeless task.

Besides, no list of factors would suffice in itself since the outcome is determined not by a series of independent and unrelated variables but by a complex interaction among such variables.

It is tempting, nevertheless, to sort out circumstantial or extraneous variables from factors that are more intrinsically cultural. For example, the fact that land was provided by the state may be taken as an example of the former. Yet this fact or the broader issue of the reception of the comers by the native culture are by no means totally independent of who the people of Anjar were. But how they used their lands is clearly more revealing of their culture than the fact of their being the relatively passive beneficiaries of the land grant. The significance of the cultural factor thus clearly varies, but the differences are only a question of magnitude.

In other words, cultural characteristics are always relevant to not only what a community does actively but also in what seemingly "happens" to it.

The categorization of factors that follows is thus mainly to facilitate discussion rather than to imply clear-cut distinctions between cultural and "non-cultural" variables.

The Land Grant

If a community is to survive, it obviously needs an adequate economic base for sustenance. And in order to culturally flourish, it requires something more than a precarious level of subsistence. The spectacular transformation of Anjar from a dismal refugee camp to a prosperous town in a few decades was made possible by a number of economic factors of which perhaps foremost was the land grant.

The process of "land reform" in much of the developing world aims at a more equitable distribution of land whereby peasant and farmer are freed of the exploitation of large landlords. In most of Lebanon, the peasantry does not

suffer in abject serfdom, yet many, in fact, have to toil on rented land, which condemns them to a hand-to-mouth existence.

In Anjar the program of land distribution by the mandatory authorities bypassed this centuries old obstacle by making each and every family in Anjar an independent landowner. Furthermore, the egalitarian manner in which the distribution occurred essentially eradicated whatever economic discrepancies existed in Musa Dagh. Under such circumstances there is considerable encouragement for self-advancement through hard work and ingenuity. A person can neither legitimately claim nor hide behind the excuse that one does not have a chance in the struggle because of socio-economically pre-ordained handicaps.

The effect of emigration

With all its advantages, the land grant in its original form would hardly have insured the economic development of Anjar because the land allotments were inadequate and did not allow for the growing of cash crops.

The emigration to Armenia of almost half the population changed this by effectively doubling the holdings of most families. The land parcels now became more effective economic units.⁷

In capitalizing on these gains, the people of Anjar fulfilled more active roles than when they were the passive recipients of the original land grants. The emigrants did not make a gift of these lands to those staying behind, nor did the state redistribute it to them. Rather, an alert, tightly organized and tough community essentially expropriated these freed lands against considerable resistance. It took patient and unrelenting political pressure to eventually convince the government to legalize the deeds of ownership of the new holders of the vacated lands.

The new lands may have been lost to the people of Anjar through inaction or by the active intervention of external agencies. The state may have claimed the lands. The emigrants may have managed to hang on to them or to sell them through agents. Or the Palestinian refugees who were already living in the houses of the deported may well have pressed claims to the attached lands as well. Yet the Anjar community successfully maneuvered all of these contenders by the adroit use of force and politics.

The emigration to Armenia had another profound effect, this time in physiological terms. One of the most serious obstacles in the way of

⁷ **E.N.:** For a detailed study on the initial phase of the settlement of Armenians in Anjar, see: Michel Paboudjian, "Du Moussa Dagh à Anjar, le 'recasement' des Arméniens", in *Les Arméniens, 1917-1939, La Quête d'un Refuge*, (R. Kévorkian, L. Nordiguian, V. Tachjian eds.), St. Joseph University Press, Beirut, 2006, pp. 267-298.

reintegrating refugees in the host country is their resistance to giving up their attachment to their native land. They hoped, sometimes with good reason, more often without it, to return and regain possession of what was theirs. This natural tendency is reinforced by political leaders pressing for restitution. If the refugees become comfortably resettled, the incentive and drive to press claims is largely lost. Thus, people continue to live as transients, perpetuating their marginal existence until the passage of generations converts the visions of return to an empty dream.

The Anjar Armenians were initially no different in this regard than other refugees. In their case there was also a striking historical precedent to reinforce their hopes. After all, did they not at the onset of the First World War lose their homes, live in a tent city for five years and then regain their ancestral heritage? Why should they not expect that as the Second World War came to a felicitous end the Allies once more would put Turkey in its place and return the Armenians to Musa Dagh.

The fact that history did not repeat itself at the close of the Second World War did not discourage the Anjar Armenians. They would have waited and pressed their claims while living in Anjar without sinking in their roots. But the emigration to Armenia dramatically changed everything. In the late 1940s, the Soviet Union was perceived as a land of no return. With half the population beyond its apparently locked doors irrevocably splitting countless families, the prospect of an eventual return to Musa Dagh for the fragmented community became an untenable hope. At this point the people of Anjar turned their backs on Musa Dagh and began to view their new home in a different light. They started to plant trees because now it appeared that they would be sitting in their shade.

Characteristics of the locale

The site of Anjar provided the settlers with a number of advantages. A basically agricultural people were transplanted in the midst of another agricultural setting. This provided the Armenians with a far easier adaptation task than if they had been herded into urban slums. Other Armenian refugees who clustered outside Beirut in tin shacks and shantytowns lived in abject poverty for long periods.

Apart from its occupational advantages the rural setting also brought the Armenians into contact with other farmers to whom they could relate and feel a certain mutual affinity. The friendly reception that the Anjaris received in the Beqa'a was in part explicable on this basis. In the city they would have appeared and felt far more alien. Even urban Armenian families would have been unlikely to open their homes to them the way that their Arab neighbors did in the critical early days.

The site had additional assets. There was abundant water for irrigation. The earth was fertile, the ground flat and easily manageable. The geographical location of the village was quite advantageous. The Beirut-Damascus highway was within view. This is the main artery joining the two capitals and the starting point for the main roads to Jordan, Iraq, and the lands beyond them.

Being equidistant and only an hour's ride from Beirut and Damascus, Anjar afforded opportunities in either city to its inhabitants. Many have found it convenient to maintain a home in Anjar but have one or more members working and living in the cities. The proximity to Zahlé, the economic and political center of the Beqa'a, as well as the closeness to the resort town of Chtaura kept Anjar in touch with the outer world. Had the Armenians been settled in the more isolated regions of Lebanon, as they well might have been, the village would probably not be what it is today.

Even the nearby ancient ruins have turned out to be an asset with considerable potential for national visibility and economic advantage.

But these were all potential advantages which the people of Anjar put to use. They were farmers, but a very different sort than those of the Beqa'a. They had lived on the slopes of arid hills and used dry farming methods. They now had to teach themselves irrigation farming. They had to partition and use their water intelligently. The proximity to the cities and towns of the region has also been available to other villages in the neighborhood but these people have not made comparable use of the opportunities offered.

The Arab population of the region was tolerant of them. But such initial dispositions can vanish swiftly if the newcomers abuse their welcome. Instead the Armenians earned their respect for what they accomplished. With the notable exception of the Palestinian episode, the Anjaris have been on peaceful terms with their neighbors. One even suspects that incensed as Arabs were, the nerve and swift efficiency with which the Armenians handled that critical episode may have won some grudging admiration as well.

The Lebanese are pragmatic people, and the Anjaris have shown clearly for all to see that they can be counted on to get things done.

Characteristics of the social structure

One of the most significant factors contributing to the rapid recovery of the Anjar community was the fact that the social structure of Musa Dagh was basically preserved in Anjar. It is far easier to rebuild what is in brick and mortar than to reconstruct the delicate social fabric that takes generations to evolve. It was thus of great advantage that the refugees from Musa Dagh were kept together. And so was the partition of Anjar into six sectors corresponding to the Musa Dagh villages. Thus, while there was no pretense of recreating the

old world at the foot of the anti-Lebanon hills, this arrangement did allow the preservation of a strong sense of continuity.

The early days of settlement were hard enough, but there was no social chaos. A committee which supervised and facilitated the move to Anjar was organized at the time of the exodus. This group worked directly with the French authorities and remained in charge in Anjar until the construction of the houses, at which point it was superseded by the municipal council.

During such times of extreme stress one can imagine the potential for social disorganization in the absence of a credible and effective native leadership to assist and give hope, to check tempers and arbitrate disputes, maintain law and order so that individual interests are protected but also subordinated to the common good.

As the people of Anjar became more settled, the integrity of the social structure continued to hold the community together. The core institutions of church and school were reorganized. The task was one of adapting institutions to the new circumstances rather than having to create anew. For example, the schools now had to teach Arabic instead of Turkish, but the notion that Armenians should be educated first and foremost as Armenians did not change.

In addition to these formal institutions, there is a great deal more in society whose continuity is also vital: traditions, customs, rules of conduct, in short, all that is an integral part of a culture. Friendships, reputations, social roles take years to evolve. All this and much more were preserved in Anjar. Had the population of Musa Dagħ been dispersed, as Armenian refugees from other parts of Turkey were during the First World War, their collective identity would have been more difficult to sustain and their ability to construct their lives quite handicapped.

There is much in Anjar society that helps explain their successful adaptation. First is a general consistency. As you learn about the Anjar family, schools, and churches, their characteristics fit together - for better or worse they are basically alike. There is thus not much room for internal inconsistency and dissention. If a person deviates from the accepted norms, the aberration is rapidly apparent. One may or may not like where the social boundaries are drawn, but they are at least clearly in evidence.

Another aspect which relates to the first is the striking emphasis on order and organization. Anjar has an array of formal social groupings, which is extraordinary for that part of the world. These include a far greater share of the population in public life than one would encounter in neighboring villages.

Social organizations in Anjar are also remarkably democratic by local standards. Even in Musa Dagħ each village had its elected town council and elected officials on the public payroll. The Armenian Apostolic Church, despite similarities in other ways to the Catholic Church, is far more open, and laymen

have always played leading roles in church councils. This is not to say that every person in Anjar wields equal political power. But generally, public opinion is taken very seriously; power is shared and must be supported by the will of the people. People attain leadership positions through merit rather than family connections or wealth. And no one takes kindly to being pushed around.

Much of this is also true for family relationships. The father is the titular and effective head, but he does not rule by fiat. Women wield great influence with their husbands, and their share in shaping public opinion is enormous. There is a certain amount of generational conflict, but the relationships between young and old are generally harmonious. This is not because the youth are cowed but because they are taken seriously early and vigorously socialized.

All of these factors combine to give Anjar society a cohesiveness and collective will that channel energies into common goals rather than draining them through internal conflict or dissipating them by organizational lack of purpose.

This provided Anjar with impressive political leverage. As a community that would do the bidding of its one ruling party, it could be counted upon to deliver votes if peaceful electoral processes were functioning and use muscle if force became the order of the day. The political leadership was quite circumspect, of course, and most careful not to make the Armenians the bully boys of local contending powers.

Anjar was also helped by the fact that the ruling Dashnak party has had virtual political control of the Armenian community in Lebanon. They have consistently been on the side of the political confederations in power. This has allowed them a sympathetic hearing in government. Of incalculable help in this regard has been the fact that for many years the Armenian representative in the Lebanese Parliament was a Musa Dagh leader. This person's remarkable career has been helped by the backing of his own people, but he has in turn been a source of support and assistance to his Anjar compatriots over the critical decades of resettling and development.

Through him the people of Anjar have had direct access to the high councils of the Dashnak party as well as the Lebanese government.

National consciousness

This is a difficult concept to elaborate. But despite its ambiguities it has been and remains a most potent force in Anjar. It is simply not possible to understand the transformation of Anjar without reference to this notion. Its manifestations are discernable in several forms.

One aspect of national consciousness is a sense of history. There has been an Armenian "nation" for as long as there have been recognizable nations on the face of the earth. The boundary between myth and history may be misty

in their minds, but there is no denying their having been around for a long time. This provides a certain comfort and assurance that they will continue to be around.

The fact of existence is given further meaning by a glorious past. The glory is not primarily based on military might and conquest but on the conviction of having been a constructive and decent people which has suffered for its faith. And a people that has survived against great odds over a very long time. This tradition can be a source of much strength at times of adversity. The feeling is: our ancestors have been through this before, we have been ourselves through this before, and our children will do likewise if it comes to that. Being a “survivor” thus becomes part of the national identity.

The explanation for having survived may be based in some vague manner on divine providence. There is an element of being a special people in the eyes of God. This conviction is sorely tested during times of national suffering but reinforced in the minds of those who survive the catastrophe.

This historical sense of national consciousness is particularly strong among Anjar Armenians. In addition to the ancient history of Armenia, they have their own chronicle of Musa Dagħ days. The events of the mountain war and their seemingly miraculous escape against all odds have particularly enhanced their concept of themselves as masters in the art of survival. Compared to those times, the hardships of settling in Anjar must have seemed puny. And having done it before, these people were quite confident of being able to do it again: the challenges may be different but the fundamental process of having to prevail is the same.

National consciousness is an abstraction, but it finds more immediate expression in those ethnic values which have come to be viewed as “Armenian virtues.” These are directly relevant to the task of survival, concurrent with retaining national identity.

The conviction that man can modify, if not master, his environment and influence the course of events provides an orientation and incentive that is quite fundamental to getting anything done. This is the very opposite of the fatalistic view (somewhat excessively attributed to Moslems) whereby man has little choice but to wait and see and to acquiesce to what life has in store. The Anjar attitude is strikingly Western in this regard. It assumes that problems have solutions and that man can find the answers by using his head and working at them diligently.

Closely related are the values placed on hard work and doing a job well. Perfectionism is a heavy burden and in exaggerated form retards rather than enhances progress. But in appropriate form it greatly increases efficiency and drives people to better performance. This basic attitude has many ramifications. One is an emphasis on cleanliness. The superior hygienic

standards that emanate as a result tend to keep people, especially children, healthier and more productive. Another aspect is “moral purity” which requires that people be trustworthy and honorable. The codes of sexual behavior are highly stringent, and the integrity of the family jealously guarded.

These and related values add up to a general expectation that individuals and the community will be successful in mastering the challenges of subsistence and survival. Because these are linked to being an Armenian, individuals are left with little choice. To fail in life is not merely a personal misfortune but a dereliction of national duty. Even though many fail to live up to these expectations, the net effect of these attitudes in prompting people to exert and assert themselves is considerable.

Personality structure

At the individual level, what is an “average” person in Anjar like? The question is intriguing since it attempts to elicit a shorthand statement about personality structure which would mirror the culture of the group. Unfortunately, such questions are unanswerable. To begin with, there is currently no agreement about a general classification of personality types even though there have been serious attempts by psychologists and psychiatrists to come forth with such classifications. Even if one were to accept one or another of these theories of personality, there is insufficient evidence as to persons in some other culture. Finally, given the wide diversity in personality characteristics that exist between people, attempts to reduce these to an “average” is a hopeless task.

Notwithstanding all this, it is still worthwhile to examine members of a culture for predominant character traits. The objective is not to identify “unique” types but simply to assess the relative prevalence of personality traits in a tentative, non-dogmatic way. But the underlying assumption is still that no matter which method of classification is used, all personality types are to be found in all cultures.

In purely descriptive terms, the people of Anjar appear as outgoing and sociable people who interact with each other actively. They form numerous associations based on kinship ties, friendship, commerce, religious and political affinities, under the aegis of being fellow Armenians generally and the people of Musa Dagh/Anjar specifically. They are thus persons with strong ethnic identities.

This pattern of active interpersonal relationships and strong communal ties co-exists and sometimes conflicts with a high degree of individualism. One is expected to be self-reliant, resourceful, hardworking, and successful. There is an underlying conviction that the individual is more or less responsible for his fate and is judged by how he manages his life. In this process, while it is hoped

that the person will act with decency and trustworthiness, it is also tacitly assumed that each person will pursue his self-interest and will get away with what he can. There is thus considerable wary suspicion that colors interactions, especially where money matters are concerned. If one is exploited out of excessive and unwarranted trust, he can expect little sympathy for his troubles.

A whole set of personality traits revolves around the need for structure. Compared to others in the region, people in Anjar show much more interest and preoccupation with order. Cleanliness is highly valued. Meticulousness and perfectionism are respected. Good discipline and social conformity are considered vital for community membership. Yet, underneath there is also an undercurrent of excitability, restlessness and a tendency for impulsive action.

People in Anjar, as elsewhere in Lebanon, express emotion quite freely. Their loves and hates, affinities and aversions are quite transparent. But there is also an attempt to be "cool headed," rational, and dispassionate. The emphasis on rationality is associated with a high regard for literacy and learning. But the focus on learning is prosaic and valued mostly for its pragmatic advantages. Similarly, idealism in more remote, abstract matters is combined with a strong streak of materialism in more pervasive everyday concerns. Money and possessions are much valued, and parsimoniousness is widely admired.

The traits listed here are some of the more salient aspects of Anjar personalities. They neither constitute a comprehensive list, nor are they the fruits of systematic research into personality structure in Anjar as such. Rather, they are the impressions we have obtained from our anthropological and psychiatric observations.

We shall not try to "fit" them at this point into any of the personality theories commonly used. Yet, there are readily recognizable correspondences between these theories and the Anjar profiles drawn above. For example, in the terms of Cattell's⁸ theory of personality traits, "surface traits" in Anjar would be in line with honesty, sociability, habit-boundness, thrift, tidiness, pedantry. "Source traits" would be more on the side of affectothymia (good natured), ego strength (maturity, realism), dominance (self-assertive, boastful, aggressive), and surgency (cheerful, sociable), rather than the opposites of sizothymia, emotionality and neuroticism, submissiveness, and desurgency.

⁸ **E.N:** Raymond Cattell's theory of personality is a trait theory that identifies 6 primary factors of personality, which are measured by the degree to which someone possesses or lacks certain attributes or behaviors (R. B. Cattell, *Personality*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1950; R. B. Cattell, *The Scientific Study of Personality*, Baltimore, Maryland, Penguin Books, 1965).

In the context of Eysenck's two-dimensional theory,⁹ more people in Anjar will fit with the "extraverted" than the "introverted" type. And more of them in the former group will probably be at the "stable" rather than "unstable" end of the spectrum.

In psychoanalytic terms, a good case could be made for the prevalence of obsessive compulsive character traits in Anjar. In fact - the implications of such a correlation are sufficiently interesting in terms of "explaining" parts of Anjar culture to warrant returning to this theme in more detail further on.

THE COSTS OF SURVIVAL AND ADAPTATION

Our discussion so far has dwelt mostly on the adaptive and positive aspects of culture and personality in Anjar. But success in survival and adaptation is neither cheap nor free. We shall, thus, now turn to some of the costs entailed as well as the more maladaptive and negative aspects of Anjar.

Social Costs

Exposure to the people of Anjar leaves one with a generally positive feeling. One admires their perseverance, respects their dignity and feels comfortable with their trustworthiness. But these people are neither saints nor knights in shining armor. There are also distinctly "negative" elements to their personalities and culture.

Most striking is a certain rigidity. These people take themselves too seriously and can be quite touchy. The zeal with which they view and present themselves can be excessive. The enthusiasm with which students are indoctrinated, materials published, and speeches made often lead to much activity of little substance. The pervasive themes are repetitious, traditional, and safe. There is little room for originality, serious dissent or vigorous self-questioning. This makes the Anjar culture appear stilted.

Positive virtues that are all so apparent are, thus, somewhat marred by a certain forced quality to them. There is a famous episode that is revealing in this regard. On their way from Musa Dagħ, the people of Anjar were temporarily stationed in a camp in Syria. Their accommodations were inadequate, their sense of loss acute, the uncertainties of the unknowns ahead distressing. To top it all the weather turned bad, and they were drenched in their tents in the middle of the night. It was one of those situations when everything seems to go wrong. Suddenly the sound of the traditional reed pipe

⁹ **E.N.:** Eysenck suggests that political behavior may be analyzed in terms of two independent dimensions: the traditional left-right distinction, **and** how 'tenderminded' or 'toughminded' a person is (H.J. Eysenck & S.B.G. Eysenck, *The Eysenck Personality Inventory*, London, University of London Press, 1963).

(zourna) and drum (davoul) were heard in the camp. As people incredulously stuck their necks out of their tents, they could see a band of people dancing in the rain! Soon, almost everyone was out yelling, laughing, and joining in the "fun." The indomitability of spirit and defiance of fate underlying this act are quite clear. No doubt they have been a source of strength for these people during difficult times. But one cannot laugh in the rain as a matter of daily routine. Yet the people of Anjar seem to carry over some element of this attitude into their life.

This characteristic is one contributor to a certain sense of tension that pervades the village. One gets the impression that underneath the peaceful facade there is seething aggression. These are people one has to be careful with even when on friendly terms. The peace and calm are not so much that of a gently simmering pot but the quiet of a pressure cooker.

The relentless emphasis on propriety and good social order keeps people who care to be well thought of constantly on guard. Secrets are hard to keep. People watch each other constantly. Public opinion is powerful, and reputations that are lost or even made suspect are hard to mend. Social disgrace taints the whole family, and it does not take much to be disgraced. All of this adds up to a certain oppressively demanding social climate to live under.

This is a tough culture. Life is apparently fine if you are strong and successful. The weak and defective are pitied and not abused but inevitably pushed to the periphery. Physical infirmity greatly handicaps one's marital prospects far and beyond any reasonable realistic concerns.

The expectations placed on people are tremendous. Beginning with childhood the pressure to do well is on. Eventually you are judged by what you can show you have done, not by who you are. Women in particular have a hard time. They have the primary responsibility for childrearing and home management and partial responsibility for working in the fields and shops as well. Then, to be truly respected they should also engage in community work either formally or by helping each other out. The standards of cleanliness and order are often quite unrealistic, the number of children they are expected to produce and rear excessive. Quite frequently there is also the additional tension between a young woman and her mother-in-law. No wonder that all but the hardiest women in Anjar tend to appear prematurely aged.

Many of the sources of strength described earlier are also potential liabilities. Take, for instance, education. School is burdensome. To drop out is disgraceful, to continue often futile in terms of obtaining some practical advantage. Few manage to go on to college. And when they do their occupational prospects are hardly improved. A college degree as such means little and practically disqualifies one from working with one's hands. Those who succeed in culminating their education with professional training are inevitably

lost to the village - of the many professional people, including physicians, from Anjar, not a single one lives there. Once more, women are particularly penalized. There are few occupational opportunities for educated women and "over-education" hinders rather than enhances their matrimonial prospects in Anjar.

In making these assessments, we are not passing value judgments on the people of Anjar. Many of the above problems are inherent in the circumstances under which they have to live. And where their personality and social culture show points of vulnerability and maladaptiveness, these may be looked upon as the psychological costs that must be paid for the advantages provided by the culture.

We have so far mostly dealt with those general aspects of Anjar that appear relevant to its ability and pattern of survival as a cultural entity. We have but briefly touched upon the question of "cost." Part of this cost must be measured in terms of the distress caused by mental illness, a topic we turn to next.

Mental illness

The inclusion of mental illness in the "cost-benefit analysis" of a culture is an undertaking subject to many pitfalls. The temptation is great to reduce matters to a simple culture - stress - mental illness formula, which would not do justice to the enormous complexity of these variables. On the other hand, it is equally naive to leave out mental health as one of the key manifestations of the psychological climate under which a society lives. There is much to be gained by a critical examination of the relationship of culture and psychopathology. But this can be done meaningfully at present only if the issue is approached in fairly circumscribed ways.

Prevalence of mental illness

Do people in Anjar have less or more mental illness as a result of their cultural characteristics? Does this particular society enhance mental health or impair it? Even though definitive answers to these questions are predictably lacking, we raise them once more to highlight the problems involved in this field.

Comparison of prevalence rates from the national survey, the clinic and the field survey are not directly comparable, but they clearly show, nevertheless, the marked dependence of prevalence rates on the method of data collection.

The number of clinic patients seen indicates a higher prevalence of psychiatric disorders than was determined through the national survey. Yet the fifty cases seen at the Clinic still constitute a very small proportion of the potential patients in Anjar as revealed by the field survey. One could say with confidence that the patients who came to the Clinic were only a part of those

that could have come for help. The reasons that prevented them doing so are so many that we could hardly begin to enumerate them. First was the question of availability of services. While our coming to the village and seeing patients free of charge was an improvement over the alternative of people having to go to Beirut to see a psychiatrist, the fact still remains that we were not offering to the people of Anjar unlimited service. The ladies who were running the Clinic were aware that the work would have to be concluded during the couple of hours of Clinic time and may well have regulated the inflow of patients accordingly. The relatively erratic basis on which the Clinic was being run may itself have discouraged some patients from coming.

Undoubtedly many patients never came because of the stigma that would be associated with their having sought psychiatric help. Others may never have thought of their discomfort in psychopathological terms and thus saw no reason why they should avail themselves of such services. Then, there is the issue of the level of tolerance to psychic discomfort. The patients who did come were not the most disturbed or intensely suffering persons in the village. Many women with complaints similar to those who came probably felt that these problems were part of life or their tough luck and let it go at that. The families of these individuals also must have played a significant role in either encouraging or discouraging them from using the facilities. A casual remark by a mother-in-law may have been enough to dissuade a woman from seeking help. Or the fact that one had a marriageable daughter may have proven sufficiently inhibiting for fear that if people associated the mother's problems with mental illness, this would have adversely affected the daughter's matrimonial prospects.

In addition to the problems related to seeing a psychiatrist, additional considerations may have arisen because of the nature of the operation of this particular Clinic. Since women from the village community were managing it, people may have had concerns about confidentiality and whether their stories would not leak out. Personal antagonisms to the lady volunteers or even political disagreements with the parent organization sponsoring the Clinic would have been sufficient to keep some people away.

The field survey results, though free of many of these service-related biases, have their own problems of interpretation. These diagnostic figures tend to be inflated to the point of meaninglessness unless tempered by considerations of disability or impairment.

But even by conservative estimates, the figures that emerge from the field survey are quite impressive: ten percent of the population is moderately impaired and 2 percent severely disabled through psychiatric symptoms. One could debate the 17 percent "minimally impaired" and quibble over the 23 percent with "mild impairment." But the hard core of moderately and severely

impaired cannot be so dismissed. This means that about one in ten adults in Anjar had significant psychological problems, whether he or she recognized these as such or not.

When figures on the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in a community are reported, the question that immediately comes up is how such rates compare with findings elsewhere. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to satisfactorily compare such findings with the results of research from elsewhere because of wide differences in methodology. In a review of 55 epidemiological studies from various parts of the world, the prevalence rates of psychiatric illness reported ranged from less than 1 percent to 60 percent.¹⁰ Such enormous discrepancies could not conceivably reflect true differences in the actual prevalence of illness. Thus, it is almost impossible to say with any confidence whether or not the prevalence of psychiatric symptoms in Anjar is high when compared with the rest of the world.

Such comparisons are frustratingly difficult even within the same country between communities that have been studied as part of the same investigation. For example, one legitimate comparison would be between Anjar and other rural communities of comparable size. Such communities with populations between 1500 and 3000 individuals were labeled as “large villages” in the national survey.

There were 284 cases reported from large villages in the national survey. The comparable figure for Anjar would be 10 cases since, as explained before, the additional 22 cases reported were an artifact of our running a free clinic in the village. It would have been interesting to know how the Anjar rate compared with the rest of the large villages. But we cannot compute such rates since, unlike Anjar, there is no information on the total population of such villages in Lebanon. The lack of such demographic data in developing countries remains one of the most serious obstacles to cross-cultural epidemiologic research.

Apart from these methodological and practical problems there is a more fundamental difficulty due to the very concept of “mental illness.” Though there are historically understandable reasons for the evolution of this notion and practical considerations help perpetuate it, the concept in substantive terms is really meaningless. This is not to say that mental illness is a “myth”, as it is sometimes claimed. Various forms of mental disorder are certainly very real. The problem is in lumping together a variety of phenomena that may have nothing to do with each other. For example, one person may have a brain tumor which interferes with his mental faculties; another suffers profound depressions with no apparent cause; a third person is afraid of leaving the

¹⁰ B.P. Dowrenwend & B.S. Dowrenwend, *Social Status and Psychological Disorder*, Wiley-Interscience, New York, 1969.

house; a fourth person cannot get along with a succession of spouses. At present, all four of these cases could be classified as "mental illness" if they came under psychiatric care.

How can one reasonably deal with such a diversity of problems as if they constituted a meaningful whole? The likelihood of there being culturally relevant factors in causing brain tumors is negligible, yet the possible significance of culture to marital conflicts is very high indeed.

Phrased in such broad terms, cross-cultural comparisons of mental illness are, thus, quite futile. They make no conceptual sense and further compound the practical problems of comparison, which are overwhelming enough.

Types of Mental Illness

Psychiatry in general and cross-cultural psychiatry in particular must be currently content with small gains. We shall therefore refrain from further attempts to deal with mental illness in global terms and focus on more circumscribed issues. The question of prevalence, for instance, becomes more manageable if one singles out specific entities for comparison. Diagnostic entities vary a great deal in terms of difficulties in this regard. Generally, psychoses and brain disorders are easier to identify and compare than the less incapacitating neuroses and personality disorders. On the other hand, the relative infrequency of the more severe conditions and the actual or probable presence of organic factors make it difficult to draw culturally relevant comparisons, which is why we have not dwelt on such cases in earlier discussions.

The lack of demographic data does not interfere as severely with comparisons that involve diagnostic types as it does with the computation of prevalence rates. It is thus feasible to make internal comparisons of diagnostic distribution between Anjar and large villages in Lebanon since these do not depend on general population figures. Thus, the patient population from large villages showed the following breakdown: psychotic disorders, 43 percent; neuroses, 26 percent; brain disorders, 14 percent; mental retardation, 8 percent; personality disorders, 6 percent; psychophysiological and transient situational disorders, 1 percent each. The 10 cases from Anjar in turn consisted of 4 cases of brain syndrome, 2 cases of psychosis, 2 cases of neurosis, and 1 percent each of mental retardation and personality disorder. This pattern is basically similar to the above in that the more serious conditions are those that come for psychiatric attention.

The additional 22 cases seen at the Anjar Clinic show by contrast a preponderance of the less debilitating conditions: 11 cases (50 percent) of neurosis; 5 cases of psychosis; 2 cases each of transient situational reactions and special symptoms (somnambulism) and 1 case each of brain disorder and

mental deficiency. One can reasonably see that had there been a free clinic in the large villages, as there was in Anjar, many more of the less severe disorders would also have been seen there. The point, once again, is that data from service studies is highly dependent on the nature of the services available. This is not to say, however, that if we had comparable information from the larger villages, the frequency and types of the disorders encountered would necessarily be the same as in Anjar.

It is neither possible nor necessary for our purposes here to examine in detail each of the diagnostic entities encountered in Anjar or even those that were found in large numbers. Our aims will be better served by considering in some detail a few select features and diagnostic entities that hold promise of elucidating the relationship of culture and psychopathology.

One noteworthy finding is the apparent preponderance of neurosis among women in Anjar. The concentration of women patients in the Clinic population where cases of neuroses predominate is quite striking. But does the fact that almost 90 percent of the Clinic patients were women indicate that psychiatric disorders among the female population of Anjar are disproportionately higher than among males? While such a sex discrepancy is theoretically possible, it is exceedingly unlikely. But then, why did we have so many women in the Clinic, or why did more men not come to the Clinic? First, there is the practical consideration that during the Clinic hours the men of the village were at work either away from the village or in their shops, which they could not readily abandon. While the women of Anjar are not exactly idle, their schedules are far more flexible, and it is much easier to get a relative or neighbor to look after the house for an hour or so than manage your store or go to the fields for you.

The second consideration has to do with the differences in how men perceive psychic distress and the culturally determined standards of tolerance for such distress. Even if they had problems of similar magnitude, it would have been very difficult for many Anjar men to come to the Clinic and tell me about these issues because it would be "unmanly" and embarrassing to be caught "whining like a woman." Thus, they presumably seek relief some other way, such as acting out their psychological conflicts and discomfort through interpersonal interactions or finding solace in drink, usually without becoming an alcoholic.

While it is unreasonable to assume that 90 percent of psychiatric disorders in Anjar occur in women, it is equally unwarranted to assume that such disorders must be equally distributed between the two sexes. It is quite probable that psychiatric disorders as such, or one or another category within them, occur in different proportions among men and women. Thus, what we see reflected in the higher utilization rate of psychiatric services by women in

this case may well mean that this is in part a reflection of the higher prevalence of these conditions among women in the population at large.

The field survey results clarify some of these issues. Even when these service-related considerations are inoperative, there is a striking preponderance of neuroses among women. They account for over twice the proportion of persons among the female population than among the male population (36.6 against 15.0 percent). But this sex discrepancy is not uniform in extent across all types of neuroses. For example, among neurotic depressions women account for 59 percent of cases but for 75 percent, 78 percent, and 80 percent respectively of cases of conversion reactions, anxiety reactions, and phobic reactions.

Phobias are fears. Anxiety reactions share many manifestations with fear. Since the men of Musa Dagh are supposed to be fearless, it is quite understandable why men would shun these neurotic reactions. This is not to imply that people pick and choose their neurosis in some conscious premeditated manner. But social convention and values do figure in these choices. Illness, especially mental illness, must "make sense" in cultural terms, and this requirement helps shape its manifestations.

Conversion reactions are especially important in view of the frequency with which they occur. This means that one of the means whereby women in Anjar experience and express psychic distress is through somatic symptoms. In other words, they get "sick" without being either actually physically ill or consciously feigning physical illness.

This is a neurotic solution that provides them with a number of gains. Unconscious conflicts find expression through these symptoms; the suffering attracts sympathy and sometimes amelioration of external circumstances.

The life stresses that women face in Anjar could possibly be linked to the higher prevalence of neurotic disorders in general and the choice of conversion symptoms in particular among them. According to psychoanalytic theory, conversion reactions are the disguised expressions of unconscious conflicts, usually of a sexual nature.

While Anjar women are surely not free of repressed sexual conflict, we need not restrict ourselves to the sexual motive for the sake of ideological orthodoxy. It can be reasonably assumed that any unconscious or poorly realized conflict can be expressed through conversion reactions, and Anjar women have quite a bit to be conflicted about. Conversion reactions thus provide them a camouflaged means of expressing unconscious conflicts and an additional handle to manipulate people and events without losing face or appearing to be psychologically or socially deviant. They merely become "sick" - this is a form of behavior the culture understands and responds to, thus reinforcing it.

The preponderance of women in the neurotic group is counterbalanced by a higher ratio of males among the psychoses, psychophysiologic disorders, and personality disorders. At the risk of idle speculation, one could say that perhaps the fact that males do not develop neurotic symptoms as readily leads them to eventually develop more severe illnesses. Thus, for instance, instead of the somatic symptoms of conversion reactions, men develop the symptoms of actual psychosomatic illnesses such as ulcers.

The explanation for the higher prevalence of personality disorders among males is less strained. Personality disorders involve behavioral deviance, often with antisocial elements. Men in Anjar are relatively freer of social sanctions and thus able to go this route with somewhat more impunity.

The net effect of these sex discrepancies shows no striking difference in the balance of psychiatric disorders among the two sexes. In the field survey sample, the ratio of men with "no impairment" (50.4 percent) was only higher than the corresponding figure for women (45.5 percent). Likewise, if the severely and moderately impaired are combined, the ratios are quite similar (11.0 percent male, 13.4 percent female). The existing differences must be explained by either women being under greater stress (assuming a direct relationship between stress and psychiatric symptoms) or men having some ways of dealing with stress that are not as readily available to women and which do not make them subject to psychiatric recognition.

Finally, there is one condition that requires special consideration: Obsessive-compulsive reactions. We shall focus on this because it provides a possibly more direct insight into the relationship of culture and psycho-pathology in Anjar. But before we turn to that, we shall digress briefly to consider several conditions that are of interest because of their relative infrequency.

In assessing the mental health of a population the primary focus tends to be on those conditions that appear to be particularly prevalent. But it is equally important to note those conditions that are conspicuous by their absence or lower prevalence. In the way of illustration let us consider three types of psychiatric illness that fit the last category and attempt to link this once more to the characteristics of the culture.

First is the relative paucity of alcoholism and virtual absence of drug addiction. Neither of these can be explained by the absence of the necessary substances or the presence of controls external to the culture. Alcohol is plentiful in the village and widely consumed. The region (but not Anjar) is actually the heart of the wine making and *arak* producing industry in Lebanon. Though illegal, hashish is also cultivated extensively in the Beqa'a within easy reach of Anjar. Should the Anjaris want to, they could probably produce their own alcohol and hashish as well.

Alcohol and other drugs constitute a widely used psychological crutch in the West and are the cause of major psychiatric problems. Such use is also common in many non-industrialized countries where the poor assuage their hunger and misery by recourse to narcotics. Why not then in Anjar? Once again we should resist the temptation to seek simple single answers. But whatever else may be involved, certain aspects of Anjar culture may well be contributing factors.

Recourse to alcohol and drugs is an escapist solution. It seeks to relieve anxiety by altering one's perception of the problem rather than tackling it. This orientation runs counter to the Anjar philosophy of pragmatically facing up to issues. A man may be forgiven for drowning acute sorrow in the bottle, but the routine use of such palliation to life's problems would be viewed as plainly foolish and unproductive. As we pointed out, *arak* is used quite widely both for festive occasions and on a more routine basis. But such use is socially regulated by confining it to the home and linking it with consumption of food. The sedative effect of alcohol thus remains available, but the likelihood of its self-destructive abuse is minimized.

Substances that alter the mood and mental state create the possibility of the person acting in idiosyncratic and unpredictable ways. Judgment is impaired and responsibility diminished. In the tightly knit and rigidly organized social structure of Anjar this would be highly undesirable and threatening. People cannot be allowed this "out", to act contrary to prescribed codes of conduct.

The use of alcohol and drugs also conflicts directly with the work ethic and the striving for efficiency and excellence. One could make a dubious case for increased creativity and psychic liberation under the influence of chemicals. But even if these were true, the people of Anjar would not be interested in such inner visions and flights into elusive insights. Armenians are more concerned with mastery of the environment and keeping their neighbors off their backs.

These same considerations apply at the individual psychological level. Obsessional characters are generally averse to anything that clouds their consciousness because of the danger of the loss of self-control. The element of unpredictability is threatening to them. What puts them at ease are the opposite attributes of being wide awake, in full control and knowing what is ahead.

Also notable by their absence are problems generally associated with "acting out" behavior. The assumption underlying this concept is that psychological conflict can be expressed through two main means. In the first, the person develops neurotic or psychotic symptoms, which entail changes within himself. Alternately, one expresses unconscious conflicts through behavior that is aimed at changing the world around to one's liking. In other words, one "acts out" one's problems in this public arena. Personality disorders fit in this latter category. The concept of "acting out" is also used more generally to refer to any behavior that fulfills the above aim irrespective of the broader neurotic or

personality pattern. Even ordinarily healthy persons may occasionally act out in this manner - a child has a temper tantrum in response to some frustration unrelated to the apparent precipitating event; one may act rudely, delinquently or destructively to express some wish or conflict with no awareness of it. The hallmark of "acting out" behavior is that there is some antisocial element to it: one is trying to "get at" someone, some group, or institution. The person may stand to gain by manifesting in front of others. But also he or she usually risks losing a great deal and may be courting punishment. The notion of "acting out" is often applied to antisocial, rebellious conduct in adolescence.

A number of factors combine to check such behavior in Anjar. First, is the tight social organization and the low level of tolerance to deviant behavior: The adolescent who may be tempted to make a public spectacle of himself to shame his parents, the woman who contemplates being unfaithful to express her resentment of her husband, the man who is tempted to squander his earnings because he feels hemmed in by his family have all to think twice because the social sanctions that will be provoked by their acts are most serious.

This is impressed upon people quite early. The child soon learns that by giving vent to his resentments he incurs a great deal more to be resentful about. As he goes through school, the futility and cost of deviant behavior are physically and psychologically drummed into his head. As a result people mind their behavior unless they are pushed beyond endurance or, in a minority of cases, they develop a deviant identity and pay for their greater freedom by occupying a marginal social position.

Discipline is enforced easily in Anjar because of the internal harmony of its social institutions. The family, school, church, political party usually act in concert when the transgression is clear and serious. The person cannot usually play one against the other and is rapidly brought to bay or forced out of the village.

Equally important as an external control is the cohesiveness of Anjar society, which restrains people from acting antisocially. The justification and rules of conduct are not imposed from above. The values underlying them are widely shared. Children are inculcated with these values early, and they are repeatedly reinforced throughout their transition to adulthood. The focus is on consistency and conformity. As a result, most adults have internalized these attitudes and generally act accordingly as a matter of course.

Because the primary loyalty is ethnocentric, there is some room for acting out against outsiders, provided of course that one does not compromise the safety and standing of the community as a whole. The check on antisocial behavior is thus extended to some extent to outsiders, in part because Armenians have learned through the ages not to invite retaliation, but also

because adherence to standards of socially acceptable conduct have become incorporated into the national identity.

There are additional factors that check antisocial behavior which are not peculiar to Anjar. For example, like in other communities of comparable size, there is none of the anonymity and impersonality of urban settings. You cannot assault a stranger in Anjar or perpetrate acts of vandalism against persons unknown to you. Each destructive act is specifically directed at someone you know and by whom you are known in turn. This raises the risk of retaliation and also robs one of the relative comfort of acting out against faceless, nameless strangers on whom one may unconsciously displace hostility and aggression.

Another major social and psychiatric concern in the West, which creates far less of a problem in Anjar, involves problems of old age. We have no data about any differences in the arteriosclerotic processes which cause the organic changes of senility. But the way the culture handles old age is demonstrably different.

There are no socially imposed occupational checks in Anjar that are based on age. There is no retirement or hiring policy for or against employing the elderly. People simply go on working for as long as they can, yielding only slowly and grudgingly to the infirmities of old age. As a result, older men and women frequently can be seen engaged even in quite heavy physical labor. Whether living alone or with their close relatives, older persons thus readily earn their keep in agricultural, household and childrearing tasks.

Apart from their usefulness in practical, everyday tasks, older people in Anjar are respected and esteemed. Though they usually yield power gracefully, conflicts are not uncommon between father and son in business matters and between mother and daughter-in-law over domestic policy and practice. But whether in harmony or in conflict, the old are taken seriously and must be contended with. They are thus effectively shielded against much of the loneliness, despair, feelings of uselessness and worthlessness that mar the lives of a substantial sector of the elderly population in the United States. Despite their penchant for organization, the idea of an old-age home would be inconceivable in Anjar.

We did not see a single case suffering from the psychological ravages of old age. On the contrary, some of the most stable and contented persons we encountered were among the elderly. Suicide among the old is high in the West, but none were reported to us in Anjar. There were causes for unhappiness, no doubt, but these were usually linked to easily discernable external causes.

The present generation of the elderly in Anjar are specially privileged because they are the remnants of the heroic battle of Musa Dag and the

architects of Anjar. Their pride in having come through these hardships is, thus, well-earned and widely respected in the community.

THE OBSESSIONAL ORIENTATION

One of the most intriguing findings in Anjar is the prevalence of an obsessional orientation both in neurotic and characterologic terms. We have singled out this entity for further inquiry because of the following considerations. First, a wide range of behavioral phenomena are covered by these terms, including character traits, personality disorders and neurotic illness. Only the psychoses do not have a counterpart. Second, these characteristics can be reasonably viewed as predominantly psychological manifestations and thus more directly influenced by cultural considerations. Third, one can meaningfully extend the characteristics of these psychological components to describe societal patterns. Thus, excessive orderliness can typify compulsive individuals as well as certain societies. This allows for closer comparisons between broad cultural patterns in a group and dominant personality traits within its members.

In our presentation of Anjar patients and the field survey population, repeated references were made to the relative frequency of obsessive-compulsive traits and behaviors. We are in effect making a claim that such traits normatively and pathologically are more prevalent in Anjar than in neighboring Arab populations.

Prothro, in his study of child rearing practices in Lebanon, lists the characteristics of compulsive personalities (frugal, obstinate, orderly, tidy, punctual, meticulous, proper) and adds with some amusement, "To those who know, or who have read studies of the Lebanese, this list is startling in its inappropriateness."¹¹ True, but not for Armenians. On the contrary, this list is startling in its appropriateness so far as the people of Anjar are concerned.

Since our observations in this regard are not unequivocally documentable due to the lack of comparative quantified data from elsewhere in Lebanon, we will state our thesis as a plausible rather than definitive conclusion. This thesis is as follows. There is an obsessional orientation in Anjar which sets it apart from its Lebanese neighbors. This is manifested in personality traits among normal people and in neurotic form among the psychologically disturbed. The same tendency is characteristic of the Anjar culture, as shown by the pattern of social organization.

Why are some cultures more "obsessional" than others? What adaptive purpose do such orientations serve at the societal level?

¹¹ E. T. Prothro, *Child Rearing in the Lebanon*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1961, p. 92.

Using Anjar as a case in point, let us attempt to tie together what we have observed at the level of personality patterns, social organization, and historical background. The obsessive aspects of the Anjar personality need not be belabored further. As to the nature of social organization, the ethnographic material presented earlier speaks for itself. This is a community that is more organized, regulated, and intellectually preoccupied than any comparable group in the area. It is inconceivable that an Arab village of any size could have more than a dozen formal community groups as they exist in Anjar. Similar statements could be made about the way women run their households, teachers run their classes, and people their businesses.

The links between culture and personality seem quite apparent in this regard. Through child rearing practices (including toilet training) and educational indoctrination, the group aspires to an ideology which requires control of the environment, control of society, control of the individual. This ideology is given meaning and continuity by the historical and mythological past and rational aspirations for the future (unrealistic as these may be).

Is this aspect of the Anjar culture understandable through its past history? It would seem that a plausible case could be made that it is, if we accept the premise that obsessive behavior in a collective sense can also be a defense against aggression. Hemmed in between more populous and powerful neighbors, Armenians have been pressed and persecuted for over twenty centuries. They have had a number of limited choices. They could have resorted to sustained frontal assault and gotten wiped out. They could have given up and become absorbed. Both of these choices were taken up at various times in limited ways. But their predominant mode of coping with external as well as internal aggression seems to have evolved over time into a cultural style that permitted survival without loss of ethnic identity.

Many of the typical features of the Anjar culture may thus be seen partly as sublimation and partly as defense against aggression. Hard work, perseverance, emphasis on order and organization, and intellectualism, among other values, combine to check and rechannel such impulses. Armenians take pride in the fact that they are a peaceful and constructive people, and their devotion to the national church further enhances this image. To be an Armenian has never been easy and is not easy now in countries where Armenians retain an ethnic identity.

As a foreigner wherever he is, the Armenian servant must be more honest and efficient, the artisan more skillful, the merchant shrewder, the professional better qualified in order to survive and effectively compete. When these traits and aspirations appear exaggerated, one wonders if, to some extent, these are not reaction-formations against repressed hostility. This is not to say such qualities are not admirable.

What happens when there is a crack in the defensive armor?

An important part of the study of personality patterns involves observations of what happens when defensive systems fail.

Even at best, neurotic solutions never fully work. That is why they are maladaptive. The repressed conflicts continuously threaten to break through and periodically leak into consciousness, causing anxiety. Or the psychological work of “keeping the lid on” may become so costly that the solution turns out to be worse than the problem. All these hazards are merely augmented when, due to a variety of circumstances, the personality and neurotic patterns begin to falter.

In this regard, the high number of “irritability reactions” and complaints about being quick tempered are quite remarkable. On first hearing these complaints, one is baffled. In a village as peaceful and relatively prosperous as Anjar, why should so many people be on edge all the time? Closer scrutiny shows that these irritable people may be those in whom the standard solutions to check aggression are failing to work.

This is such a transparent response that one hardly needs to couch it in psychopathological terms. Simply stated, a significant number of people find it difficult to maintain their calm in the context of their everyday lives. In other words, the culture creates conditions and expectations which they cannot fulfill except at considerable cost. Unable or unwilling to rebel openly, they displace their hostilities and give partial vent to the aggression elicited by these circumstances.

In collective terms, it has also been instructive to note what happens when there is a crack in the defensive armor. When pushed to the wall, these people have shown they can fight with remarkable ferocity. The Palestinian incident shows they can be less than altruistic to others. The summary confiscation of the lands of the emigrants to Armenia shows they can be just as ruthless to each other. The tight rule and intolerance to opposition by the dominant political party is backed by the will and ability to use force if necessary.¹²

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In closing this case study, it may be worthwhile to once again point out the pitfalls in the approach we have taken here as well as comment on the promise it holds for a better understanding of culture and psychopathology.

¹² Beyond Anjar, in the Armenian community at large, there is ample evidence of passions seething below the surface. When Armenian political parties were more evenly matched in Lebanon, the violence of internecine conflict amazed even the Lebanese Arabs, who are themselves not exactly paragons of brotherly love. Even the Armenian Apostolic Church is split into two camps in the entire Diaspora.

The first and most fundamental problem is conceptual and definitional: What is culture? What is psychopathology? Our efforts at elucidating the relationship of one to the other will be muddled unless we attain sufficient clarity about what these concepts mean. On one hand, we cannot wait until there is general agreement about these terms. On the other, we cannot rush headlong investigating these matters without some prior understanding of their underlying assumptions.

Second is the necessity to isolate a specific, manageable problem for inquiry without losing sight of the larger issues. We have attempted to do this in connection with the obsessional orientation in Anjar.

Third is the need for quantified data to back the observational claims. This is necessary for both the study population and an appropriate control group. Our data on Anjar pass the first test readily, but our basis for control comparison is weak. We have relied on our general observations in other rural areas of Lebanon in connection with other research. But we have no comparable field survey data from a control community to document the prevalence of obsessional orientation in Anjar relative to elsewhere.

Fourth, there is a danger that psychological analyses of the sort presented here become viewed as aspersions cast on the character of people or pejorative judgments of cultures. Kindness is explained away as a reaction to hostility. One is clean because he basically wants to be dirty. People are orderly, civic minded, resourcefully organized and interested in intellectual matters, all because they are fighting off aggressive impulses. This is, of course, far from the case. Psychological explanations do not negate the value or usefulness of a given pattern of behavior or culture. Nothing detracts from the spectacular accomplishments of the people of Anjar, who in several decades built up a community that should be the envy of the region. If each refugee group in the world solved its problems half as successfully as those of Musa Dagh, the world would be far ahead. The same goes for the ideal personality model held up in Anjar of a hardworking, honest, and resourceful person.

Finally, there is the temptation to emphasize certain aspects of a situation at the expense of others when one sets out to demonstrate a point. Thus, the image of Anjar that may have emerged through our presentation could be misleading if it tended to focus on what is unique about Anjar. In fact, there is a great deal about Anjar that is similar to villages around it or other comparable communities elsewhere in the world. It is the task of anthropology and psychiatry to fathom the particulars about people without losing sight of the fundamental universality of man.

All of these shortcomings notwithstanding, we feel there is considerable merit in the approach taken here. The central purpose of this approach is to try to "make sense" out of a culture using as broad a perspective as possible

whereby personality structure and social structure are seen as inextricably linked together. By the same token, social stress and psychic distress are likewise seen as part of the larger adaptation scheme rather than as peculiar or mysterious aberrations beyond the pale of the mainstream of life.

Historically based cultural explanations of psychopathology do not make its expressions less burdensome to the individual sufferer, but when viewed in this manner, these apparently maladaptive patterns become more meaningful and perhaps socially more tolerable as the inevitable costs for survival and civilization.

**ՄՇԱԿՈՅԹ ԵՒ ՀՈԳԵԱՆՏԱԲԱՆՈՒԹԻՒՆ.
ԱՅՆՃԱՐ ՀԱՅԱՒԱՆԻՆ ՊԱՐԱԳԱՆ
(Ամփոփում)**

ՀՐԱՆԴ ԽԱՉԱՏՈՒՐԵԱՆ
herantk33@gmail.com

Այս ուսումնասիրությունը մէկ գլուխն է 1963-66 շրջանին Այնճարի մէջ կատարուած ծաւալուն հարցախոյզի մը հիմամբ յառաջացած անտիպ հատորի մը: Հետազոտութիւնը կը նպատակադրէր կատարել Այնճարի եւ անոր դրացի Մեծտ էլ Այնճարի բնակչութեանց բաղդատական ուսումնասիրութիւնը՝ հանրային առողջապահութեան ծիրին մէջ:

Դժբախտաբար, բաղդատական ուսումնասիրութիւնը երբեք ալ իր ասարտին հասած չէ, որովհետեւ երկու ամսաներուն արժէհամակարգերու մեծ տարբերութիւնները պատճառ դարձած են, որ հարցախոյզին հանդէպ մօտեցումներն ու վերաբերումը տարբեր ըլլան, ինչը նպաստած չէ հետազոտութեան գիտականութեան եւ ան չէ հրատարակուեցած:

Այսօր այս հետազոտութիւնը շուրջ 55 տարեկան է. փոխուած են Այնճարն ու անոր բնակիչները, որոնք նորատեսակ մարտահրաւերներ կը դիմագրաւեն: Հետեւաբար դժուար թէ, այս հետազոտութեան տուեալները համապատասխանեն այսօրուան իրականութեան: Այդուհանդերձ, ուսումնասիրութիւնը ունի պատմական արժէք, մանաւանդ որ հազուագիւտ են նման հոգեբանական ուսումնասիրութիւնները Լիբանանի մէջ եւ ի մասնաւորի Այնճարի մասին: Ուստի, հրատարակելով այդ ուսումնասիրութեան տուեալ բաժինը, կրնանք անելի խորունկ հասկացողութիւն ունենալ այնճարահայ ենթօճախին մշակոյթին եւ նկարագրին մասին:

Այս գլուխին մէջ փորձ կը կատարուի մտային առողջութեան բացատրութիւններ գտնել՝ մշակութաբանական ելակէտէ: Առանցքային-հարցումներն են.- ա) Ի՞նչը կարելի դարձուց որ այնճարահայութիւնը վերապրի պատմաքաղաքական պայմաններով իրեն պարտադրուած արտակարգ պայմաններուն մէջ, բ) Ի՞նչ գործօններ նպաստեցին որ ան յաջողապէս պատշաճի նոր բնակավայրին՝ կարճ ժամանակի մը ընթացքին, գ) Հոգեբանական ի՞նչ գործօններով հզօրացան այնճարահայերը՝ վերապրելու իրենց պայքարին մէջ, դ) Հոգեբանական ի՞նչ գին վճարեցին այնճարահայերը այս պատշաճեցումին համար եւ ինչպէ՞ս ազդեց այն անոնց մտային առողջութեան վրայ: