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Active Maladaptive Strategies[1]

Turbulence

The concept of turbulence, which was introduced by Emery and Trist in 1965 (Vol.III) to characterize an emergent fourth level of causal texturing in organizational environments, has since become widely accepted, though not always accurately deployed. It relies on the proposition that the environments for personal and social action have structure--a "causal texture"--and that this structure is a determinant, or "co-producer," of behavior. In the simplest conceivable environment--for example, the placid-random environment--learning is not possible. There is no structure which affords it. Level three environments, on the other hand--the disturbed-reactive environments--support "gaming" behavior because they contain competitors, and hence the possibility of winning or losing, and afford both associative learning and problem-solving.

Environments of this third level of causal texturing were well known and had been characterized in a number of disciplines before 1965. The perception of a qualitatively new level of environmental texturing--the turbulent social field--and its conceptual definition as part of a typology of organizational environments was a very significant breakthrough in social science. In a turbulent environment

> dynamic properties arise not simply from the interaction of identifiable component systems but from the field itself (the "ground")...The turbulence results from the complexity and multiple character of the causal interconnections. Individual organizations, however large, cannot adapt successfully simply

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> through their direct interactions. (Emery and Trist, 1965:31)

The disturbed-reactive environment is exemplified in municipal commerce, oligopolistic markets or world trade before the advent of transnational corporations. The "players" are known to one another, as are the assets or rewards for which they compete. There are usually ground rules relating to the acceptable strategies for competing and coming to terms--bargaining, compromise, cooptation, coalition and so forth. In historical terms this is the social structure of industrial society, a relatively stable era that now seems to be coming to an end.

The emergent society has been variously described as the temporary society, the unprepared society, the super-industrial society, the post-civilized society and, most enduringly, the post-industrial society (Bell, 1974). Many have contributed already to mapping its emerging cultural topography and exploring organizational strategies for surviving and prospering in an environment of this sort. There is, in particular, a growing interest in network forms of organization and "organizational ecologies" and in the concept of the "learning enterprise" (Badaracco, 1991; Naisbitt, 1984; Senge, 1990; Trist, 1977, 1983).

My focus is on *failures* of adaptation in turbulent environments. It is possible that a better understanding of systemic reasons for such failures can assist planners, policy- makers and managers in the guidance and governance of our social institutions. In seeking to develop such understanding I have drawn in particular on the concept of adaptation developed by Gerd Sommerhoff (1950) and Andras Angyal's (1941) brilliant conceptualization of living systems.

Adaptation

Sommerhoff reviews a wide range of phenomena that have the "teleological" or end-oriented character of adaptive behavior and proposes

that the common element in all such examples is the concept of an "appropriate response." An appropriate response entails establishing a relationship amongst four spatio-temporally distinct elements--a goal (Gt_2) or outcome when viewed after the event; a set of initiating conditions (stimuli, triggers, etc., which may be properties of either the system itself [St_o]--hunger, feeling cold--or the environment [Et_o]--a downpour); the system's response (Rt_1) and the state of the relevant environment in which the response occurs and on which its success depends (Et_1). For an appropriate response, these elements are related as shown in Figure 1.

Sommerhoff calls this an instance of "directive correlation." The passage of time is inherent to adaptation, though the duration may vary from the very rapid, instinctual blinkings and flinchings by which an organism protects its vital centers, through the cycles of maturation and learning that are distinctive of human ontogenetic adaptation to the time frames of history on which the adaptation of institutions and societies must be assessed. The active adaptation that purposeful systems are capable of typically entails intertwined series of directive correlations in which the outcomes of earlier responses become means to further ends. A single such series might be represented as shown in Figure 2.

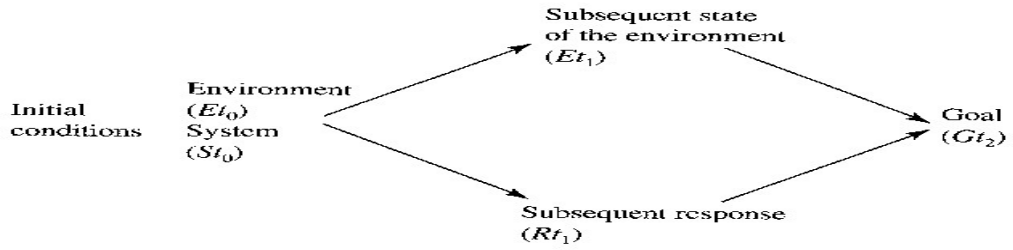

Figure 1 Sommerhoff's Model of DIRECTIVE CORRELATION

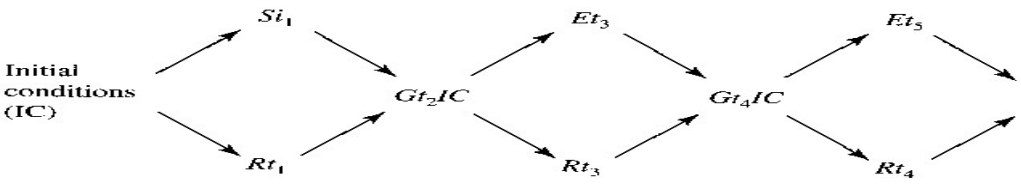

Figure 2 A Model of ACTIVE ADAPTATION

The point to emphasize here is that the environment for organisms and organizations alike has an objective structure--a causal texture--which, for long run survival and prosperity, must be perceived accurately and responded to appropriately. In Gibson's (1979) terms, adaptive behavior requires the matching of a system's *effectivities*--what it objectively can do--with the environmental *affordances*--what actions or behaviors an environment will support. We humans in the "advanced" industrial societies have until recently had a rather one-sided view of human adaptability; we have assumed that we had the power, the ability and the right to go on modifying the earth to meet our wants and needs. Now the earth is biting back. The affordances of the biosphere are increasingly perceived to be finite. We begin to comprehend that even the healthiest species can crash and be eradicated if its habitat is diminished and impoverished. We realize at last perhaps that our own species in no exception. Turbulent social fields, too, are an unanticipated and unwanted consequence of myriad autonomous decisions and actions. Turbulent environments have objective properties which mean that certain types of action are not possible or are likely to fail because the environmental supports, or affordances, that are required to co-produce certain outcomes do not exist.

Active and Passive Maladaptations

In the domain of history and the evolution of social fields the record of "the way things are done around here" is stored institutionally in the "corporate memory" of institutions, professions, organizations and communities. Values and beliefs are institutionalized in corporate cultures, for example, thereby increasing the cohesion and consistency of corporate actions. Turbulence, however, can render such institutionalized repertoires of response a handicap rather than an asset. In the face of widespread, endemic change, instability, unpredictability and complexity the adaptive potential of the social field begins to break down in two distinct directions.

I shall refer to these as *active* and *passive* maladaptations. In the former case, those used to getting their way in merely competitive environments are prone to intensify their previously successful strategies for accumulating power and the capacity to move at will as favorable opportunities appear. Other actors are more likely to retreat from the unequal struggle to make sense of the world they previously knew, to sever themselves from the mesh and be prepared to settle for less. These are the passive maladaptations.

These differing types of breakdown relate to the ubiquitous tension in social systems between the competing demands of differentiation and integration. Every further measure of differentiation increases the risk of sub-systems asserting their autonomy in ways detrimental to the whole ("give them an inch and they'll take a mile"). Every measure of integration increases the risk that sensitivity and responsiveness to the environment may be impaired (hence the bureaucracy--"designed by geniuses to be run by fools"). All complex living systems are highly differentiated and their parts are typically multi-functional. They therefore require reliable and effective "setting and shifting mechanisms" (Angyal, 1941) for configuring the differing sets of parts into the temporary systems required for specific performances. The brain is a stunning example. In the active maladaptations these setting and shifting mechanisms are reinforced in the pursuit of tighter integration and control; in the passive maladaptations, on the other hand, system parts become less responsive to such mechanisms and disintegration is threatened. The members of the orchestra start playing their own tunes or simply stop playing.

The active maladaptations are, in general, responses which may have had survival value in the disturbed-reactive environment but are not appropriate to the demands of turbulence. The initial step towards an active *adaptive* response is therefore an act of discrimination by which the qualities of the turbulent field are apprehended. Vickers (1965) calls this an act of "appreciation." The discontinuity in the transition to turbulence is somewhat disguised, however, by the fact that industrial society has for a long time

been getting increasingly complex, requiring attention to greater numbers of variables--more customers, more competitors, more government regulations, more products, more knowledge and information sources and so forth. Turbulence is *not* just a name for the upper reaches of this gradient of variety and complexity. It is qualitatively novel. Those who misperceive this fact are likely to join a hopeless pursuit for omniscience--to keep trying to "get all the facts in," control all the variables, evaluate all the possible options, optimize choices. The emblem of this quest is the Cray--the mega-computer--and its bigger projects, Star Wars and on-line management of the Chilean economy. Its every day expression in policy-making and planning is the pathology of "synoptic idealism" (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963). Such "rational-comprehensive" methodologies are pathological because it is the *qualitative* novelty of turbulence that has to be appreciated and particularly the overriding significance of heteronomous forces, including "catastrophes" and the "butterfly effect." In a turbulent environment "optimization" and blueprints for the future are lead in the saddlebags.

The passive maladaptations are essentially defense mechanisms which limit what one is prepared to respond to. They are segregations of one sort and another whereby sub-systems seek to disengage in the interests of their own survival and benefit at the cost of the larger systems of which they are part. These responses are passive because they are set off by environmental forces which they attempt to conform to rather than shape. Discussing the victims of future shock, Toffler (1970:322) identifies several "common forms of individual maladaption"--denial, specialization, obsessive reversion, intellectual faddism and withdrawal, and concludes: "all of them dangerously evade the rich complexity of reality." Contemporaneously, Schon (1971) observed:

> The most prevalent responses to the loss of the stable state are anti-responses. They do not confront the challenge directly. They seek instead to deny it, to escape it or to become oblivious to it. (p.28)

He names them *return, revolt* (reactionary radicalism) and *mindlessness*. They share "a failure to confront what it might be like to live without the stable state."

Basic Dimensions of Living Systems

Others, too, have reflected on the variety of human and social response to unstable and unpredictable times. Amongst them are Freud (1949), Fromm (1960), Merton (1957) and Reisman (1950). The distinction between active and passive maladaptations is at least implicit in a number of these analyses but they lack a wider theoretical or conceptual framework which might suggest how responses of all these differing types are interrelated. For this purpose, Andras Angyal's (1941) systems theory has been extremely valuable. He defines a system as the distribution of parts in a dimensional domain:

> Every system implies some kind of dimensional domain which makes the multiplicity of parts possible and at the same time serves as a matrix for the arrangement of parts into definite patterns. (p.264)

He then specifies the dimensional domain of living systems in terms of the three dimensions of depth, progression and breadth.

1. The *depth or vertical dimension* has as its poles the surface and the depth. In the personality system the depth is represented by the basic human trends (one is tempted to call them "deep structures") of autonomy (independence from the environment) and homonomy (integration with supra-individual units such as the group, clan, society, etc.). These are the essential or core life principles. The surface is the observable expression of these basic tendencies in actual distinct actions or behaviors; the depth has to be inferred:

> The depth of the personality is formed by the basic human trends. Going from there towards the surface we meet first axioms of behavior, that is, very general attitudes referring to the major issues of life; then follow attitudes of increasing specificity until we reach the surface which is formed by the actual manifest behavior. (p.265)

The most appropriate image for this dimension is a cone standing on its point. On the circle of its upturned base one finds the countless individual manifestations of the deeper underlying axioms located at the apex.

> The relationship between part and whole in this dimension is that the part is a concretization of the whole in some specific form...The person in his development not only acquires more effective ways of expression but may acquire also greater depths...The depth is more essential and represents what one is, while the surface is more accidental and represents only what one does. (p.266)

Integration in this dimension therefore requires that behaviors are connected to the deeper roots of the system--the basic psychic structure in the case of individuals and fundamental cultural axioms in the case of social systems. Jahoda (1958) concludes that amongst other factors, positive mental health includes accessibility of the self to consciousness, a sense of personal identity and a unifying outlook on life. In the whole and healthy personality growth continues in this vertical dimension and getting back in touch with the depth is a task of special significance in the second half of life (Jung, 1933).

2. The *dimension of progression* is the dimension along which particular actions and behaviors become linked into means-end chains, the structured sequences of more or less planned, purposeful activity which are

distinctive of human activity. Some goals can be reached "all at once," but it is characteristic of the more interesting chains of this sort that they extend over days, months or years, the end of each phase constituting the means for the subsequent phase. This then is the dimension in which time has a crucial role. Angyal (1941) goes on to interpret the course of life as a temporal gestalt--an organized process extending through time:

> The desire for self-realization, a tendency to shape one's life course into a meaningful whole, gives coherence and unity to the life history...In the dimension of progression a structure of means-end relations is built. This is the most tangible aspect of the life course. (pp.155-56)

Integration on this dimension requires motivational energy, investment in living--"an attitude of affirmative dedication to existence;" its achievement is reflected in environmental mastery (Jahoda, 1958). In Chein's (1972) view, effectiveness on this dimension of progression is precisely what it means to be human:

> The essential psychological quality is thus one of commitment to a developing and continuing set of unending, interacting, interdependent and mutually modifying long-range enterprises. The requirements of this commitment and its component commitments influence day-to-day and moment-to-moment activities...To the extent that a human organism...fails to develop such a commitment, it is not yet fully human, though it may have the potentiality of becoming so. (p.289)

3.The *breadth (or transverse) dimension* refers to the coordination of the various specific behaviors of the system whereby they become, or fail to become, mutually consistent or harmonious. At the surface level of manifested

behaviors, a person's attitudes, tendencies and dispositions are innumerable and we may too often find ourselves required to form an attitude to novel events and demands:

> As we go from the depths to the surface the tendencies of the organism become not only more specific but more numerous. The same general tendency may seek expression in a number of ways. The various specific expressions of the same deeper tendency are not subordinated or superordinated to each other but exist side by side...The organization of parts into a whole along the transverse dimension can be called synergesis, or simply co-ordination. (Chein, 1972:269)

Some dimensions of the total system process require that certain constellations of units, processes, actions, etc., achieve consonance, or act in concert, with the effect that they individually enter into a larger whole, or gestalt. The movements of the various retinal, arm and finger muscles that are required by my writing this (but not necessarily of the muscles in my feet or back) must be coordinated and each enter into the total activity of writing. The various configurations of units and part processes that need to be "set" and "shifted" from time to time for the carrying through of certain functions have to be in conformity to the structural principles of the system in order for integration of the lateral dimension to be maintained, just as the notes that are selected from a piano keyboard have to be selected according to some tonic principle if the resulting chord is to be "integrated."

Integration in this dimension is reflected in such qualities as coherence and consistency and, more positively, as Angyal puts it, synergy. A system in which development is uneven or unbalanced, or which lacks an effective central coordinating mechanism, may survive well enough, but will not achieve the economies of effort that synergy implies.

Thus, depth, breadth and progression account for the dimensional domain for the personality considered as a system-environment process. Angyal leaves open the possibility that further dimensions might be recognized but, to my knowledge, none have. The continuing viability of the system as a whole is a function of its ability to achieve a satisfactory level of integration on each of these three dimensions. Failure to do so issues in a pathology of some sort. A well-integrated personality achieves good integration along all three dimensions and disintegration (or "segregation") in one dimension is usually followed by segregation in other dimensions.

It is important to stress that these three dimensions are simply that--dimensions of a whole, the lived process of human personality. They are analytic distinctions, the test for which should be their utility in promoting interpretation and understanding of human behavior.

Because they are part of a rigorous systems theoretic approach to living systems, most of Angyal's key concepts can with value be transposed to the level of the social field and its constituent systems--individuals, families, communities, organizations, sub-cultures. The social field is the dimensional domain for the actions of individuals, groups and organizations. It is the social medium or matrix through which cooperative relationships are built up amongst human beings. According to Asch (1952):

> The decisive psychological fact about society is the capacity of individuals to comprehend and to respond to each others' experiences and actions. (p.127)

At the basis of social existence are two universal axioms--the objective character of the surroundings (the frameworks of space, time and causality) and what he calls the "basic psychological unity" amongst people (our perceptions, thoughts, motivations, purposes, etc., have the same structure and functions in us as in others). We know and act on the presumption that in the course of social interaction the events that occur are

psychologically represented in the other. The more basic elements of this psychological unity bind homo sapiens as a species; we can perceive and respond to warmth, caring, guilt, fear, curiosity, bewilderment and happiness, for example, in all other human beings with some degree of accuracy. On this common ground of our humanity, boundaries have evolved on the basis of lineage, locality, ethnicity, language, religion and so on--giving rise from time to time to more or less durable "patterns of culture." The nation state is a relatively recent invention, or experiment, in giving clear, formal political definition to such boundaries.

It is as "patterns of culture" then that we speak of societies or states as systems, with the same dimensional domains of depth, progression and breadth that Angyal identified in the personality system. As the individuality or uniqueness of the individual is expressed in his or her *personality*, so the individuality of the group or social system is expressed in its distinctive *culture*. Each of these concepts refers to the characteristic modes of organization and ways of doing things that give rise to the important differences among groups and among individuals. The individuality of the group and the course of its behavior can be understood in terms of its interdependencies within the social field in the same way that the personality is interpreted as a function of biospheric relations in Angyal's work.

Bringing together these three dimensions of system integration and the distinction between active and passive responses to turbulence, we arrive at a conceptual scheme which suggests a number of distinctive forms of mal-adaptation and some of the ways in which these may be interrelated (Table 1.)

TABLE 1 Maladaptive Responses to Turbulent Social Fields

Passive maladaptions	*Dimensions of system integration*	*Active maladaptations*
1. Superficiality *(Surface)*	*Depth*	2. Fundamentalism *(Depth)*
3. Segmentation *(Differentiation)*	*Progression*	4. Authoritarianism *(Integration)*
5. Dissociation *(Autonomy)*	*Breadth*	6. Evangelicism *(Homonomy)*

Pathologies of Integration on the Depth Dimension

Successful integration is manifested in connectedness between surface behaviors and the deeper roots of the system, cultural or psychic. This has the effect that what is chosen as the basis for action and the courses of action that are selected are in tune with the basic axioms of the system and are not chosen capriciously or according to some principle that is unrelated to the essential structure of the system. When the system responds to turbulence by a breakdown, or segregation, along the vertical dimension we speak of *superficiality*. The active form of maladaptation is rigid adherence to fundamental principles and seeking to enlarge the accepted scope of their application--*fundamentalism*.

1. Superficiality

When there is a discontinuity in the vertical dimension, according to Angyal (1941):

> ...tendencies in the depth of personality cannot express themselves in concrete surface manifestations; they remain repressed. Another aspect of the break or impairment of continuity of the vertical structure is that the surface manifestations no longer express deeper tendencies and thus become more or less empty. (p.323)

The mechanisms that account for discontinuity of this sort on the personal level are typically some form of repression that amounts to the denial of one's own psyche. On the social level, it is the denial through suppression or oppression of the deeper cultural bonds that tie people together.

Negation of these basic axioms leaves the way open for the

operation of random or idiosyncratic criteria as the basis for actions. This may mean, for example, that one reacts only to the familiar so that behavior is guided by an exaggerated deference to custom and convention, leading to the personal or institutional rigidity of conservatism, or subservience to fads and fashions which are by nature ephemeral and transient.

As a social phenomenon it manifests as rootlessness, the loss of anchorage in cultural, communal or religious precepts and ideals. Toffler (1970) attributes this to "future shock," the physical and psychological distress that results from overload. Accelerating change--an "elemental force" by which "the future invades our lives"--impacts on all aspects of our life space, producing increased transience, novelty and diversity. Relationships with people, places and ideas are truncated, compressed; in our affluent urban societies hedonism, escapism and loneliness are endemic. Superficiality is institutionalized in the video shop, fast food, the tranquilizer industry and mass tourism--fast and frictionless satisfaction, with maximum insulation from the uncertainties and challenge of seeking deeper meaning and purpose to life. Fromma (1960) describes three mechanisms of "escape from freedom"--dependency, destructiveness and automaton conformity. The latter, he says, "is of the greatest social significance":

> This particular mechanism is the solution that the majority of normal individuals find in modern society. To put it briefly, the individual ceases to be himself; he adopts entirely the kind of personality offered to him by cultural patterns; and he therefore becomes exactly as all others are and as they expect him to be. (p.160)

This is fertile ground for those who believe they have the code, the key or the discipline that can restore order and harmony.

2. Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism sees the answer to this bewilderment and rootlessness in renewal, reaffirmation and reassertion of some basic set of values, beliefs or ideals that can again operate as the matrix for all personal and social action--an orthodoxy or ideology that can underpin our search for meaning and simplify choice. According to Schon (1971):

> The ideology may be the ideology of the revolutionary, of the reactionary, of the "liberal" or of the pragmatic technocrat. Its content is less important than the manner in which it is held; namely, theory held as right, inherently and once-and-for-all...While ideologies differ enormously, they all help their adherents to handle complex situations simply. (p.228)

In this materialist age societal management has virtually become economic management and the orthodox prescription for getting economic management "back to basics" has been, until recently, economic rationalism. Deregulate, reduce the role of government, level the playing field, let the managers manage and let the market decide! Capitalism, it is held, has been suffering an identity crisis--a loss of virility--due to contamination with socialist principles and practices. Economic rationalism, in such popular forms as Thatcherism and Reaganism promised to purge these. While on any balanced assessment the critical perspective and discipline of economic rationalism has brought benefits to society, it has also revealed the weaknesses characteristic of fundamentalism. Reality is always a bit too rich for orthodoxies and the true believers are usually poor learners. The roots become pillars and can no longer be modified by the flush of rich experience. A virtue is characteristically made of this inflexibility, however.

Arguably economic rationalism is but a facet of the more pervasive ideology of scientism--the belief system that enshrines rational scientific

inquiry and explanation as the exclusive path to knowing, and therefore managing, the world. Science, of course, has some very strong claims but unless knowledge is seen to be the social product of scientific communities, with their distinctive value systems and conventions, it is likely to become fundamentalist in character.

Fundamentalism can also be found pressing its claims in schools and the community through interest groups advocating "traditional" education and firmer discipline and a return to "family values." As with other fundamentalisms, these tend toward dogmatism and intolerance of diverging views.

Pathologies of Integration on the Means-End Dimension

Integration in this dimension requires the presence and the participation of those parts or sub-systems and their activities that are necessary for the system as a whole to carry out its functions. In successful functioning part processes can become economically linked together in temporal gestalten that find closure in achievement of goals. As the environment becomes more dynamic, and richly and unpredictably joined, the work of envisaging, creating and sustaining these causal paths becomes objectively more difficult. In this circumstance, some will experience failure and give up, with the eventual result that means-end paths become *segmented*; those threatened by loss of control as such segmentation occurs will be tempted to impose order through domination--*authoritarianism.*

3. Segmentation

Segmentation refers to a breakdown along the dimension of progression--a breakdown in relations among the parts and part activities that constitute the successive phases in the realization of the wider system

outcomes. Angyal (1941) identifies two aspects of disintegration along the means-end dimension. On the one hand, action may be left unfinished: "...the activity is aborted before it can go on to completion. In such a case we may speak of frustration," and on the other, parts or sub-systems may become segregated: "Subordinate goals may become independent and lose contact with the main goal of activity. This may result in a fragmentation and disintegration of the total function." (p.324)

The segregation of parts so that they begin to pursue their own goals at the expense of the larger systems of which they are part is of special concern to the understanding of social phenomena. At the individual level the withdrawal of one's contribution from a group or communal activity or placing the value of independence and the achievement of one's personal goals above the ends pursued by the collectivity erodes the group's potential energies. The organizational equivalent is "goal-displacement"--the tendency of the differentiated parts of an organization to become preoccupied with the attainment of their own limited needs even when this no longer serves, or is threatening to, the institutional mission.

When segmentation invades the social field individuals and groups become less available as partners or cooperators in pursuit of common ends. Efforts toward such collaboration are likely to founder on apathy, procrastination and the dissipation of energies. It is hard to find, let alone agree on, worthwhile long-term objectives. Progress may be made through opportunism and expediency and then be lost in vacillation and frustration. Organizational life in the 1980s is replete with such half-baked projects of renewal and redirection--the latest wave of change drowning the tentative response to the previous one. By such steps organizations may be effectively inoculated against productive change as members pull up the drawbridges around the bit of territory, status, skill or information that they can hope to command.

In community life fragmentation is to the fore as the social field fractures into physical and psychic ghettos--middle class suburbia, the

retirement village, the gentrified inner city of the yuppies, the public welfare slums, the unemployed and the homeless. By such means the demands of others on our attention, energy and other resources can be buffered or denied; turbulence is down-graded to manageable proportions by turning inwards. As with each of the passive maladaptations it is perhaps seen most clearly at the level of the individual. In his typology of modes of individual adaptation Merton (1957) identifies ritualism and retreatism as modes which reject the dominant cultural goals. Social ritualists cope with the anxiety of the ceaseless competitive struggle by permanently lowering their level of aspiration:

> It is, in short, the mode of adaptation of individually seeking a private escape from the dangers and frustration which seem to them inherent in the competition for major cultural goals by abandoning these goals and clinging all the more closely to the safe routine and the institutional norms. (p.151)

This kind of behavior and the more widespread loss of direction and dissipation of energy that follows when segmentation becomes a prevalent means of simplifying reality is, of course, threatening to institutions and likely to elicit authoritarian responses.

4. Authoritarianism

While the passive form of maladaptation on the dimension of progression is manifest in the weakness or interruption of means-end chains, resulting in segmentation, the active form is found in the further elaboration and closer control of the means-end paths so that they converge, ideally, upon a single pinnacle--the imposed, unequivocal goal of the system. System energies are disproportionately applied to integrative processes at the expense of differentiation. The threat of chaos calls forth the strong leader

who will, if granted the necessary power, accomplish a return to harmony and order. Such is the classic dynamic of totalitarianism.

Well short of the excesses of such regimes as those of Hitler, Mussolini, Pol Pot and Pinochet, however, authoritarianism has many more routine forms of expression. One "leit motiv" is a predisposition to let the end justify the means and build a bureaucratic apparatus that can absorb all normal attempts to raise questions about either. Democracies behave this way in war-time and can hope to carry the people with them. (This was not the case over Vietnam, however.) The authoritarian instinct is not an inherently evil one for there are, in fact, situations of emergency or crisis in which an extraordinary centralization of authority for a time is the lesser of two evils. Authoritarianism is maladaptive in the long run to the extent that it imposes goals and relies on some form of coercion to unite people in their pursuit. The events in Eastern Europe over the past two years have been striking confirmation of this.

While fundamentalism seeks to draw things back together around a set of guiding principles--a credo--authoritarianism's basic tool is the wielding of organizational power. Goals must be set, commands communicated, results measured. Omniscience and omnipotence are the guiding ideals as so frighteningly portrayed in Orwell's *1984* (Emery, 1977). In the daily routine of the conservative state the need for "law and order" is enough to call forth autocratic powers when instability threatens.

The active responses, we have suggested, result from a misperception of the environmental dynamic and can never be successful in the long run. The fascist states of Hitler and Mussolini had legendary success in having the trains and buses run on time but only at the cost of a system of control and repression that was a self-defeating component of the fuller expression of the aims of the state. In this dimension it is not the power of omniscience that is most salient but political power or the power of coercion. Although there may be some physiological or psychological states of the individual that correspond to a maladaptive subordination of all parts to the

service of a single overriding function, authoritarianism in our sense seems to be better understood as a reaction of social systems.

Pathologies of Integration on the Lateral Dimension

As we have seen, the development or growth of living systems involves a capacity both for differentiation and for the reintegration of specialized parts and functions into the total system process. These processes of differentiation and integration need to be well balanced. In this dimension adaptability requires effectiveness of the available setting and shifting mechanisms. In social fields, the individual parts are themselves purposeful systems subject to the dual trends toward autonomy and homonomy. To the extent that the autonomous tendencies of the parts prevail, the system as a whole is less able to employ them in the service of its ends and is weakened. Angyal (1941) has called this condition *dissociation*. When, on the other hand, the homonomous tendencies of the parts dominate there is a shift toward the complete unification of parts. We shall call this *evangelicism*.

5. Dissociation

According to Angyal (1941), dissociation

> consists in a lack of coordination between the parts of the whole and manifests itself in a kind of dysplastic behavior. By lack of coordination is meant not only motor incoordination but also a lack of coordination between the various tendencies and attitudes of the person. (p.324)

The analogue for social systems is the reluctance or unwillingness of

individuals to identify themselves with, or participate in, common social purposes and activities. Some of the implications of this have been discussed by Emery and Trist (1972):

> Dissociation means a reduction in the average man's sense of responsibility for coordinating and regulating his behavior with respect to the potential coproducers of his desired ends. For each such fractional reduction there is a marked multiplier effect. Special and massive social regulatory institutions have to be created...to carry responsibilities formerly implicit in the web of mutual support that constituted the social field. (p.66)

As a response to turbulence in the social field it amounts to withdrawal and isolation from others or "feathering one's own nest" and "looking after number one" at the expense of any cooperative search for solutions to one's own and others' problems. The high normative value of individualism in the industrialized societies makes them more vulnerable to large-scale recourse to privatized lives; affluence, selfishness and greed can make the choice an attractive one. The true loner, however, is the retreatist. The retreatist rejects the institutionalized means as well as the dominant cultural goals, gaining the freedom that comes from abandoning the quest for security and freedom and resigning any claims to virtue or distinction.

> People who adapt (or maladapt) in this fashion are, strictly speaking, in the society but not of it...In this category fall some of the adaptive activities of psychotics, autists, pariahs, outcasts, vagabonds, tramps, chronic drunkards and drug addicts...they have none of the rewards held out by society [and] few of the frustrations attendant upon continuing to seek these rewards. (Merton, 1957:155)

6. Evangelicism

In social fields the active form of maladaptation in the lateral dimension seeks the domination of homonomic over autonomous tendencies, whereby parts become united according to some principle, enabling them to be set and shifted in unison. Such an arrangement channels individual energies and relieves people of the burdens of choice and decision but this is at the cost of their individual responsiveness and flexibility. It is a form of social cramp. Evangelicism obviously has characteristics in common with fundamentalism but its emphasis is on fellowship and bonding of people to help them to live, and change the here-and-now. The important thing is to join, not necessarily to internalize a new code or creed--to become one of the initiate. In true evangelicism one does not so much "join," as surrender oneself to the movement. Evangelicism is evocative of such notions as "all pulling together" and "entering into the brotherhood," as responses appropriate to the solution of personal bewilderment or estrangement. It is the feeling that "if only people would all be decent to one another, the world would be a far better place." Without disputing the worth of this as an ideal, so long as evangelicist responses lack a program for modulating turbulence, they are ultimately maladapted to it.

Evangelicism's obvious recruiting ground is the dissociated--and those most vulnerable to dissociation but who have not yet withdrawn or dropped out. There are some organizations of global reach and evident staying power which are essentially evangelicist but many more which arise, grow and fade away as social and economic conditions favor their cause. The most visible of these are overtly religious organizations which may have a messianic, apocalyptic or millenarian flavor. A disturbed or lonely soul is offered a "home" and a "family," sometimes in the encompassing setting of the movement's own homeland, and the identity of one who belongs.

Christian evangelicals are basically conventional protestants who hold staunchly to the authority of the Bible (the Greek word "evangelion"

means "gospel") and orthodox Christian doctrine. They believe in the "born-again" experience whereby adherents make a conscious personal commitment to Christ. In America the Evangelical Churches use corporate and show business techniques to raise vast amounts of money, create preaching super-stars and build palatial centers of worship. Critics note the prominence of self-serving conservatism, the lack of social conscience or commitment to social change. In some respects the "human potential" movement has become the secular equivalent. The self-actualization promised by a myriad of personal development techniques tends to become an end in itself rather than a means to transformation of communities and workplaces. In cultural terms they both lack depth of the sort that would put people more closely in touch not only with themselves but with the dominant social issues and challenges confronting society.

Beyond the overtly religious, one can detect evangelicist tendencies in a range of special interest and lobby groups--moral rearmament, right to life, parts of the "green" movement and, of course, nationalist movements. Nationalism, however, depending on the style of its leadership, is invariably a more complex mix of evangelicism, fundamentalism and authoritarianism. From the perspective of a host society, its principal character may be segmentation. Indeed, this may be true of evangelicism as such for it seems incapable of recruiting in big enough numbers or getting close enough to the centers of political and economic power to do more than mark its adherents as members of a special social movement.

To the extent that the depth, progression and lateral dimensions of the personality and of social systems necessarily cohere, it is to be expected that a breakdown in any of these dimensions will affect the extent of integration on the others. With regard to what we have called the passive maladaptations, Angyal (1941) says:

> In cases of good integration the connections of a given biospheric occurrence extend over a wide range of systems, while in the case

> of segregation the biospheric occurrence becomes a more or less localized affair. We make such distinctions frequently in daily life, for example, when we say that one person is doing something half-heartedly and that the other is involved "body and soul." Activities, the connection of which with other parts of the personality are severed, are feeble, unenergetic...On the other hand, activities well integrated with the rest of the personality are more forceful, because they are supported, backed up, *reinforced* by many systems of the personality. (pp. 324-25)

When the social field becomes turbulent, it becomes harder for individuals to recognize in what is going on around them the expression of basic human or cultural axioms that might provide the basis for cooperating with others. The speed, complexity, instability and unpredictability of change also make it more difficult to conceive and sustain longer-term purposive activity that relies on interdependence with others--except members of one's "in-group." The field, as such, begins to fragment so that the sense of common humanity and shared social reality becomes less compelling psychologically than "my class," "my tribe," "my gang," "my color," "my neighborhood." Shared social reality diminishes but the need for identification with others persists.

The responses of superficiality, segmentation and dissociation have the quality of coping mechanisms--passive reactions that essentially evade any shared responsibility for addressing the causes and sources of turbulence. In Western cultures the individualism that protestantism nurtured and capitalism has harnessed seems to have left us especially vulnerable to these passive maladaptations. According to Fromm (1960), our vaunted "freedoms" have been mainly freedoms *from* the earlier constrictions and constraints of traditional society. By this process we have become increasingly independent, self-reliant and critical but we have also become more isolated, afraid and alone.

Fundamentalism, authoritarianism and evangelicism may be thought

of as expressions of the organizational tendency that Schon (1971) calls "dynamic conservatism"--fighting to remain the same. Turbulence threatens the loss of control for those whose power previously gave structure to the field--the web of class, corporate, governmental, professional and institutional structures and relationships that govern the daily affairs in society and shape the available cultural goals and institutionalized means for achieving these (Merton, 1957). Unfortunately, the reinforcement of previously effective powers are no more effective in a turbulent field than trying to hold back the tide or trying to deprive people of news in a world with FAX machines and transistor radios. More information, more centralized and authoritarian control, more identification with race or creed--these are only holding actions when the ground itself has become dynamic.

The active maladaptations are commonly deployed in reinforcement of one another and may be found threaded together within the fabric of such ideologically conservative movements as the Ku Klux Klan, the Africaaner Broederbond, Zionism, neo-Nazism and the many varieties of nationalism. Religious movements premised on the fundamental equality of all and dedicated to universal brotherhood have demonstrated surprising capacities for using authoritarian structures and teachings in the pursuit of their mission and authoritarian regimes have rarely failed to invoke deep-seated moral, ethical or religious principles to justify their tyranny. The craving for omniscience may be reflected in the drive toward centralized control of authoritarianism and the elaboration of theologies and manifestos as the underpinnings of evangelicism.

There is, finally, a certain symbiosis between the active and passive maladaptations as is clearly shown in Fromm's (1960) analysis of the "fear of freedom," and the study by Adorno and his colleagues (1950) of the authoritarian personality. The alienation and anomie bred by social disruption and breakdown is fertile soil for the growth of totalitarianism. Those prone to give up on social commitments or purposes, to permanently lower their levels of aspiration, to dissociate themselves from the community they

are in but not of--these same people may find attractive the simple logics of authoritarian solutions. The authoritarian personality is fundamentally submissive and dependent, characteristics which manifest in uncritical identification with dominant sources of power and their symbols. The maladaptive responses described here are not to be thought of as necessarily psychopathological, however. They are inappropriate in that they fail to adequately apprehend the causal texture of the environment and hence what strategies and courses of action it affords. By ignoring or failing to appreciate its sources they leave turbulence itself unaffected, making it less likely that future courses of action will be any better adapted.

Note, June, 1993

Revisiting this analysis of maladaptive responses to turbulence underlines both how courageous Angyal was in propounding his concept of the "biosphere" ("the realm or sphere of life") to transcend organism-environment duality, and how difficult it is to sustain such a theoretical position against conventional perspectives on causality in human and social behavior. A full-blooded commitment to the proposition that behavior is a "biospheric occurrence" rather than the product of an "actor" in an "environment" means that the dimensions of depth, progression and breadth have to be treated as properties of the biosphere as a whole and not simply of organisms or organizations.

In transposing Angyal's conceptual framework we might postulate that the depth dimension of the social field (or "sociosphere" to adopt Boulding's [1966] term) is the dimension of its history. History embraces actors and the world that permits and shapes actions. It extends from deep-seated "origin" myths and spiritual assumptions, such as the "Dreaming" of the aboriginal people of Australia, to the distinctive character of everyday life and behavior settings that determine, for example, whether an individual feels

"at home" or a "stranger." Close to the depth one might locate "national spirit" or character--matters that fundamentally differentiate China and being Chinese from Greece and being Greek, for example.

Similarly, one might postulate that the dimension of progression refers to "productivity," in the very broadest sense. Productivity has to embrace not simply the characteristic energy and purposefulness of a nation or culture but also its creativity and capacity to nurture and support ideal-seeking.

The dimension of breadth in the sociosphere can be related to the concept of "solidarity" that both Tonnies (1955) and Durkheim (1964) deployed in interpreting the process of modernization. Tonnies' "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft" address the shift from society bound by organic ties of blood, clan and community to modern "contractual" forms of interdependence. Durkheim used the terms "mechanical solidarity" and "organic solidarity" to explore the same transition in his analysis of the division of labor in society. The dimension of breadth refers to the cultural propensity for cooperation, tolerance and harmony as opposed to competition, intolerance and conflict.

Cultures differ systemically on these dimensions and change through time. One would expect to find, therefore, that the emergence of turbulence educes correspondingly different responses. Societies in relative decline, for example, in which average aspirations for the future are truncated and pessimism pervasive, constitute an entirely different matrix for adaptation to a society pervaded by growth and optimism. "New world" societies like Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, whose history is thin but whose futures are more open, do not offer the same demands and constraints as the first world states of Europe or the ancient civilizations of the East. An exploration of the extent to which these differing "patterns of culture" tend to produce characteristic maladaptations remains to be done.

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