Chapter 17

COPING WITH TOMORROW

In the blue vastness of the South Pacific just north of New Guinea lies the island of Manus, where, as every first-year anthropology student knows, a stone age population emerged into the twentieth century within a single generation. Margaret Mead, in *New Lives for Old,* tells the story of this seeming miracle of cultural adaptation and argues that it is far more difficult for a primitive people to accept a few fragmentary crumbs of Western technological culture than it is for them to adopt a whole new way of life at once.

"Each human culture, like each language, is a whole," she writes, and if "individuals or groups of people have to change ... it is most important that they should change from one whole pattern to another."

There is sense in this, for it is clear that tensions arise from incongruities between cultural elements. To introduce cities without sewage, anti-malarial medicines without birth control, is to tear a culture apart, and to subject its members to excruciating, often insoluble problems.

Yet this is only part of the story, for there are definite limits to the amount of newness that any individual or group can absorb in a short span of time, regardless of how well integrated the whole may be. Nobody, Manus or Muscovite, can be pushed above his adaptive range without suffering disturbance and disorientation. Moreover, it is dangerous to generalize from the experience of this small South Sea population.

The success story of the Manus, told and retold like a modern folk tale, is often cited as evidence that we, in the high-technology countries, will also be able to leap to a new stage of development without undue hardship. Yet our situation, as we speed into the super-industrial era, is radically different from that of the islanders.

We are not in a position, as they were, to import wholesale an integrated, well-formed culture, matured and tested in another part of the world. We must invent super-industrialism, not import it. During the next thirty or forty years we must anticipate not a single wave of change, but a series of terrible heaves and shudders. The parts of the new society, rather than being carefully fitted, one to the other, will be strikingly incongruous filled with missing linkages and glaring contradictions. There is no "whole pattern" for us to adopt.

More important, the transience level has risen so high, the pace is now so forced, that a historically unprecedented situation has been thrust upon us. We are not asked, as the Manus were, to adapt to a new culture, but to a blinding succession of new temporary cultures. This is why we may be approaching the upper limits of the adaptive range. No previous generation has ever faced this test.

It is only now, therefore, in our lifetime, and only in the techno-societies as yet, that the potential for mass future shock has crystallized.

To say this, however, is to court grave misunderstanding. First, any author who calls attention to a social problem runs the risk of deepening the already profound pessimism that envelops the techno-societies. Self-indulgent despair is a highly salable literary commodity today. Yet despair is not merely a refuge for irresponsibility; it is unjustified. Most of the problems besieging us, including future shock, stem not from implacable natural forces but from man-made processes that are at least potentially subject to our control.

Second, there is danger that those who treasure the status quo may seize upon the concept of future shock as an excuse to argue for a moratorium on change. Not only would any such attempt to suppress change fail, triggering even bigger, bloodier and more

unmanageable changes than any we have seen, it would be moral lunacy as well. By any set of human standards, certain radical social changes are already desperately overdue. The answer to future shock is not non-change, but a different kind of change.

The only way to maintain any semblance of equilibrium during the super-industrial revolution will be to meet invention with invention—to design new personal and social change-regulators. Thus we need neither blind acceptance nor blind resistance, but an array of creative strategies for shaping, deflecting, accelerating or decelerating change selectively. The individual needs new principles for pacing and planning his life along with a dramatically new kind of education. He may also need specific new technological aids to increase his adaptivity. The society, meanwhile, needs new institutions and organizational forms, new buffers and balance wheels.

All this implies still further change, to be sure—but of a type designed from the beginning to harness the accelerative thrust, to steer it and pace it. This will not be easy to do. Moving swiftly into uncharted social territory, we have no time-tried techniques, no blueprints. We must, therefore, experiment with a wide range of change-regulating measures, inventing and discarding them as we go along. It is in this tentative spirit that the following tactics and strategies are suggested—not as sure-fire panaceas, but as examples of new approaches that need to be tested and evaluated. Some are personal, others technological and social. For the struggle to channel change must take place at all these levels simultaneously.

Given a clearer grasp of the problems and more intelligent control of certain key processes, we can turn crisis into opportunity, helping people not merely to survive, but to crest the waves of change, to grow, and to gain a new sense of mastery over their own destinies.

DIRECT COPING

We can begin our battle to prevent future shock at the most personal level. It is clear, whether we know it or not, that much of our daily behavior is, in fact, an attempt to ward off future shock. We employ a variety of tactics to lower the levels of stimulation when they threaten to drive us above our adaptive range. For the most part, however, these techniques are employed unconsciously. We can increase their effectiveness by raising them to consciousness.

We can, for example, introvert periodically to examine our own bodily and psychological reactions to change, briefly tuning out the external environment to evaluate our inner environment. This is not a matter of wallowing in subjectivity, but of coolly appraising our own performance. In the words of Hans Selye, whose work on stress opened new frontiers in biology and psychiatry, ==the individual can "consciously look for signs of being keyed up too much."==

Heart palpitations, tremors, insomnia or unexplained fatigue may well signal overstimulation, just as confusion, unusual irritability, profound lassitude and a panicky sense that things are slipping out of control are psychological indications. ==By observing ourselves, looking back over the changes in our recent past, we can determine whether we are operating comfortably within our adaptive range or pressing its outer limits. We can, in short, consciously assess our own life pace.==

==Having done this, we can also begin consciously to influence it—speeding it up or slowing it down—==first with respect to small things, the micro-environment, and then in terms of the larger, structural patterns of experience. We can learn how by scrutinizing our own unpremeditated responses to overstimulation.

We employ a de-stimulating tactic, for example, when we storm into the teen-ager's bedroom and turn off a stereo unit that has been battering our eardrums with unwanted and

interruptive sounds. We virtually sigh with relief when the noise level drops. We act to reduce sensory bombardment in other ways, too—when we pull down the blinds to darken a room, or search for silence on a deserted strip of beach. We may flip on an air conditioner not so much to lower the temperature as to mask novel and unpredictable street sounds with a steady, predictable drone.

We close doors, wear sunglasses, avoid smelly places and shy away from touching strange surfaces when we want to decrease novel sensory input. Similarly, when we choose a familiar route home from the office, instead of turning a fresh corner, we opt for sensory non-novelty. In short, we employ "sensory shielding"—a thousand subtle behavioral tricks to "turn off" sensory stimuli when they approach our upper adaptive limit.

We use similar tactics to control the level of cognitive stimulation. Even the best of students periodically gazes out the window, blocking out the teacher, shutting off the flow of new data from that source. Even voracious readers sometimes go through periods when they cannot bear to pick up a book or magazine.

Why, during a gregarious evening at a friend's house, does one person in the group refuse to learn a new card game while others urge her on? Many factors play a part: the self-esteem of the individual, the fear of seeming foolish, and so on. But one overlooked factor affecting willingness to learn may well be the general level of cognitive stimulation in the individual's life at the time. "Don't bother me with new facts!" is a phrase usually uttered in jest. But the joke often disguises a real wish to avoid being pressed too hard by new data.

This accounts in part for our specific choices of entertainment—of leisure-time reading, movies or television programs. Sometimes we seek a high novelty ratio, a rich flow of information. At other moments we actively resist cognitive stimulation and reach for "light" entertainment. The typical detective yarn, for example, provides a trace of unpredictability— who-dunnit?—within a carefully structured ritual framework, a set of non-novel, hence easily predictable relationships. In this way, we employ entertainment as a device to raise or lower stimulation, adjusting our intake rates so as not to overload our capacities.

By making more conscious use of such tactics, we can "fine-tune" our micro-environment. We can also cut down on unwanted stimulation by acting to lighten our cognitive burdens. "Trying to remember too many things is certainly one of the major sources of psychologic stress," writes Selye. "I make a conscious effort to forget immediately all that is unimportant and to jot down data of possible value ... This technique can help anyone to accomplish the greatest simplicity compatible with the degree of complexity of his intellectual life."

We also act to regulate the flow of decisioning. We postpone decisions or delegate them to others when we are suffering from decision overload. Sometimes we "freeze up" decisionally. I have seen a woman sociologist, just returned from a crowded, highly stimulating professional conference, sit down in a restaurant and absolutely refuse to make any decisions whatever about her meal. "What would you like?" her husband asked. "You decide for me," she replied. When pressed to choose between specific alternatives, she still explicitly refused, insisting angrily that she lacked the "energy" to make the decision.

Through such methods we attempt, as best we can, to regulate the flow of sensory, cognitive and decisional stimulation, perhaps also attempting in some complicated and as yet unknown way to balance them with one another. But we have stronger ways of coping with the threat of overstimulation. These involve attempts to control the rates of transience, novelty and diversity in our milieu.

PERSONAL STABILITY ZONES

The rate of turnover in our lives, for example, can be influenced by conscious decisions. We can, for example, cut down on change and stimulation by consciously maintaining longer-term relationships with the various elements of our physical environment. Thus, we can refuse to purchase throw-away products. We can hang onto the old jacket for another season; we can stoutly refuse to follow the latest fashion trend; we can resist when the salesman tells us it's time to trade in our automobile. In this way, we reduce the need to make and break ties with the physical objects around us.

We can use the same tactic with respect to people and the other dimensions of experience. There are times when even the most gregarious person feels anti-social and refuses invitations to parties or other events that call for social interaction. We consciously disconnect. In the same way, we can minimize travel. We can resist pointless reorganizations in our company, church, fraternal or community groups. In making important decisions, we can consciously weigh the hidden costs of change against the benefits.

None of this is to suggest that change can or should be stopped. Nothing is less sensible than the advice of the Duke of Cambridge who is said to have harumphed: "Any change, at any time, for any reason is to be deplored." The theory of the adaptive range suggests that, despite its physical costs, some level of change is as vital to health as too much change is damaging.

Some people, for reasons still not clear, are pitched at a much higher level of stimulus hunger than others. They seem to crave change even when others are reeling from it. A new house, a new car, another trip, another crisis on the job, more house guests, visits, financial adventures and misadventures—they seem to accept all these and more without apparent ill effect.

Yet close analysis of such people often reveals the existence of what might be called "stability zones" in their lives—certain enduring relationships that are carefully maintained despite all kinds of other changes.

One man I know has run through a series of love affairs, a divorce and remarriage—all within a very short span of time. He thrives on change, enjoys travel, new foods, new ideas, new movies, plays and books. He has a high intellect and a low "boring point," is impatient with tradition and restlessly eager for novelty. Ostensibly, he is a walking exemplar of change.

When we look more closely, however, we find that he has stayed on the same job for ten years. He drives a battered, seven-year-old automobile. His clothes are several years out of style. His closest friends are long-time professional associates and even a few old college buddies.

Another case involves a man who has changed jobs at a mind-staggering rate, has moved his family thirteen times in eighteen years, travels extensively, rents cars, uses throw-away products, prides himself on leading the neighborhood in trying out new gadgets, and generally lives in a restless whirl of transience, newness and diversity. Once more, however, a second look reveals significant stability zones in his life: a good, tightly woven relationship with his wife of nineteen years; continuing ties with his parents; old college friends interspersed with the new acquaintances.

A different form of stability zone is the habit pattern that goes with the person wherever he travels, no matter what other changes alter his life. A professor who has moved seven times in ten years, who travels constantly in the United States, South America, Europe and Africa, who has changed jobs repeatedly, pursues the same daily regimen wherever he is. He reads between eight and nine in the morning, takes forty-five minutes for exercise at lunch time, and then catches a half-hour cat-nap before plunging into work that keeps him busy until 10:00 P.M.

The problem is not, therefore, to suppress change, which cannot be done, but to manage it. If we opt for rapid change in certain sectors of life, we can consciously attempt to build stability zones elsewhere. A divorce, perhaps, should not be too closely followed by a job transfer. Since the birth of a child alters all the human ties within a family, it ought not, perhaps, be followed too closely by a relocation which causes tremendous turnover in human ties outside the family. The recent widow should not, perhaps, rush to sell her house.

To design workable stability zones, however, to alter the larger patterns of life, we need far more potent tools. We need, first of all, a radically new orientation toward the future.

Ultimately, to manage change we must anticipate it. However, the notion that one's personal future can be, to some extent, anticipated, flies in the face of persistent folk prejudice. Most people, deep down, believe that the future is a blank. Yet the truth is that we *can* assign probabilities to some of the changes that lie in store for us, especially certain large structural changes, and there are ways to use this knowledge in designing personal stability zones.

We can, for example, predict with certainty that unless death intervenes, we shall grow older; that our children, our relatives and friends will also grow older; and that after a certain point our health will begin to deteriorate. Obvious as this may seem, we can, as a result of this simple statement, infer a great deal about our lives one, five or ten years hence, and about the amount of change we will have to absorb in the interim.

Few individuals or families plan ahead systematically. When they do, it is usually in terms of a budget. Yet we can forecast and influence our expenditure of time and emotion as well as money. Thus it is possible to gain revealing glimpses of one's own future, and to estimate the gross level of change lying ahead, by periodically preparing what might be called a Time and Emotion Forecast. This is an attempt to assess the percentage of time and emotional energy invested in various important aspects of life—and to see how this might change over the years.

One can, for example, list in a column those sectors of life that seem most important to us: Health, Occupation, Leisure, Marital Relations, Parental Relations, Filial Relations, etc. It is then possible to jot down next to each item a "guesstimate" of the amount of time we presently allocate to that sector. By way of illustration: given a nine-to-five job, a half-hour commute, and the usual vacations and holidays, a man employing this method would find that he devotes approximately 25 percent of his time to work. Although it is, of course, much more difficult, he can also make a subjective assessment of the percentage of his emotional energy invested in the job. If he is bored and secure, he may invest very little—there being no necessary correlation between time devoted and emotion invested.

If he performs this exercise for each of the important sectors of his life, forcing himself to write in a percentage even when it is no more than an extremely crude estimate, and toting up the figures to make sure they never exceed 100 percent, he will be rewarded with some surprising insights. For the way he distributes his time and emotional energies is a direct clue to his value system and his personality.

The payoff for engaging in this process really begins, however, when he projects forward, asking himself honestly and in detail how his job, or his marriage, or his relationship with his children or his parents is likely to develop within the years ahead.

If, for example, he is a forty-year-old middle manager with two teen-age sons, two surviving parents or in-laws, and an incipient duodenal ulcer, he can assume that within half a decade his boys will be off to college or living away on their own. Time devoted to parental concerns will probably decline. Similarly, he can anticipate some decline in the emotional energies demanded by his parental role. On the other hand, as his own parents and in-laws grow older, his filial responsibility will probably loom larger. If they are sick, he may have to devote large amounts of time and emotion to their care. If they are statistically likely to die

within the period under study, he needs to face this fact. It tells him that he can expect a major change in his commitments. His own health, in the meantime, will not be getting any better. In the same way, he can hazard some guesses about his job—his chances for promotion, the possibility of reorganization, relocation, retraining, etc.

All this is difficult, and it does not yield "knowledge of the future." Rather, it helps him make explicit some of his assumptions about the future. As he moves forward, filling in the forecast for the present year, the next year, the fifth or tenth year, patterns of change will begin to emerge. He will see that in certain years there are bigger shifts and redistributions to be expected than in others. Some years are choppier, more change-filled than others. And he can then, on the strength of these systematic assumptions, decide how to handle major decisions in the present.

Should the family move next year—or will there be enough turmoil and change without that? Should he quit his job? Buy a new car? Take a costly vacation? Put his elderly father-in-law in a nursing home? Have an affair? Can he afford to rock his marriage or change his profession? Should he attempt to maintain certain levels of commitment unchanged?

These techniques are extremely crude tools for personal planning. Perhaps the psychologists and social psychologists can design sharper instruments, more sensitive to differences in probability, more refined and insight-yielding. Yet, if we search for clues rather than certainties, even these primitive devices can help us moderate or channel the flow of change in our lives. For, by helping us identify the zones of rapid change, they also help us identify—or invent—stability zones, patterns of relative constancy in the overwhelming flux. They improve the odds in the personal struggle to manage change.

Nor is this a purely negative process—a struggle to suppress or limit change. The issue for any individual attempting to cope with rapid change is how to maintain himself within the adaptive range, and, beyond that, how to find the exquisite optimum point at which he lives at peak effectiveness. Dr. John L. Fuller, a senior scientist at the Jackson Laboratory, a bio-medical research center in Bar Harbor, Maine, has conducted experiments in the impact of experiential deprivation and overload. "Some people," he says, "achieve a certain sense of serenity, even in the midst of turmoil, not because they are immune to emotion, but because they have found ways to get just the 'right' amount of change in their lives." The search for that optimum may be what much of the "pursuit of happiness" is about.

Trapped, temporarily, with the limited nervous and endocrine systems given us by evolution, we must work out new tactics to help us regulate the stimulation to which we subject ourselves.

SITUATIONAL GROUPING

The trouble is that such personal tactics become less effective with every passing day. As the rate of change climbs, it becomes harder for individuals to create the personal stability zones they need. The costs of non-change escalate.

We may stay in the old house—only to see the neighborhood transformed. We may keep the old car—only to see repair bills mount beyond reach. We may refuse to transfer to a new location—only to lose our job as a result. For while there are steps we can take to reduce the impact of change in our personal lives, the real problem lies outside ourselves.

To create an environment in which change enlivens and enriches the individual, but does not overwhelm him, we must employ not merely personal tactics but social strategies. If we are to carry people through the accelerative period, we must begin now to build "future shock absorbers" into the very fabric of super-industrial society. And this requires a fresh

way of thinking about change and non-change in our lives. It even requires a different way of classifying people.

Today we tend to categorize individuals not according to the changes they happen to be undergoing at the moment, but according to their status or position between changes. We consider a union man as someone who has joined a union and not yet quit. Our designation refers not to joining or quitting, but to the "non-change" that happens in between. Welfare recipient, college student, Methodist, executive—all refer to the person's condition between changes, as it were.

There is, however, a radically different way to view people. For example, "one who is moving to a new residence" is a classification into which more than 100,000 Americans fit on any given day, yet they are seldom thought of as a group. The classification "one who is changing his job" or "one who is joining a church," or "one who is getting a divorce" are all based on temporary, transitional conditions, rather than on the more enduring conditions between transitions.

This sudden shift of focus, from thinking about what people "are" to thinking about what they are "becoming," suggests a whole array of new approaches to adaptation.

One of the most imaginative and simplest of these comes from Dr. Herbert Gerjuoy, a psychologist on the staff of the Human Resources Research Organization. He terms it "situational grouping," and like most good ideas, it sounds obvious once it is described. Yet it has never been systematically exploited. Situational grouping may well become one of the key social services of the future.

Dr. Gerjuoy argues that we should provide temporary organizations—"situational groups"—for people who happen to be passing through similar life transitions at the same time. Such situational groups should be established, Gerjuoy contends, "for families caught in the upheaval of relocation, for men and women about to be divorced, for people about to lose a parent or a spouse, for those about to gain a child, for men preparing to switch to a new occupation, for families that have just moved into a community, for those about to marry off their last child, for those facing imminent retirement—for anyone, in other words, who faces an important life change.

"Membership in the group would, of course, be temporary—just long enough to help the person with the transitional difficulties. Some groups might meet for a few months, others might not do more than hold a single meeting."

By bringing together people who are sharing, or are about to share, a common adaptive experience, he argues, we help equip them to cope with it. "A man required to adapt to a new life situation loses some of his bases for self-esteem. He begins to doubt his own abilities. If we bring him together with others who are moving through the same experience, people he can identify with and respect, we strengthen him. The members of the group come to share, even if briefly, some sense of identity. They see their problems more objectively. They trade useful ideas and insights. Most important, they suggest future alternatives for one another."

This emphasis on the future, says Gerjuoy, is critical. Unlike some group therapy sessions, the meetings of situational groups should not be devoted to hashing over the past, or to griping about it, or to soul-searching self-revelation, but to discussing personal objectives, and to planning practical strategies for future use in the new life situation. Members might watch movies of other similar groups wrestling with the same kinds of problems. They might hear from others who are more advanced in the transition than they are. In short, they are given the opportunity to pool their personal experiences and ideas before the moment of change is upon them.

In essence, there is nothing novel about this approach. Even now certain organizations are based on situational principles. A group of Peace Corps volunteers preparing for an overseas mission is, in effect, just such a situational grouping, as are pre- and post-natal

classes. Many American towns have a "Newcomer's Club" that invites new residents to casserole dinners or other socials, permitting them to mix with other recent arrivals and compare problems and plans. Perhaps there ought to be an "Outmovers Club" as well. What is new is the suggestion that we systematically honeycomb the society with such "coping classrooms."

CRISIS COUNSELING

Not all help for the individual can, or necessarily should come from groups. In many cases, what the change-pressed person needs most is one-to-one counseling during the crisis of adaptation. In psychiatric jargon a "crisis" is any significant transition. It is roughly synonymous with "major life change."

Today persons in transitional crisis turn to a variety of experts—doctors, marriage counselors, psychiatrists, vocational specialists and others—for individualized advice. Yet for many kinds of crisis there are no appropriate experts. Who helps the family or individual faced with the need to move to a new city for the third time in five years? Who is available to counsel a leader who is up- or down-graded by a reorganization of his or her club or community organization? Who is there to help the secretary just bounced back to the typing pool?

People like these are not sick. They neither need nor should receive psychiatric attention, yet there is, by and large, no counseling machinery available to them.

Not only are there many kinds of present-day life transitions for which no counseling help is provided, but the invasion of novelty will slam individuals up against wholly new kinds of personal crises in the future. And as the society races toward heterogeneity, the variety of problems will increase. In slowly changing societies the types of crises faced by individuals are more uniform and the sources of specialized advice more easily identifiable. The crisis-caught person went to his priest, his witch doctor or his local chief. Today personalized counseling services in the high technology countries have become so specialized that we have developed, in effect, second-layer advice-givers who do nothing but counsel the individual about where to seek advice.

These referral services interpose additional red tape and delay between the individual and the assistance he needs. By the time help reaches him, he may already have made the crucial decision—and done so badly. So long as we assume that advice is something that must come from evermore specialized professionals, we can anticipate ever greater difficulty. Moreover, so long as we base specialties on what people "are" instead of what they are "becoming" we miss many of the real adaptive problems altogether. Conventional social service systems will never be able to keep up.

The answer is a counterpart to the situational grouping system—a counseling set-up that not only draws on full-time professional advice givers, but on multitudes of lay experts as well. We must recognize that what makes a person an expert in one type of crisis is not necessarily formal education, but the very experience of having undergone a similar crisis himself.

To help tide millions of people over the difficult transitions they are likely to face, we shall be forced to "deputize" large numbers of non-professional people in the community—businessmen, students, teachers, workers, and others—to serve as "crisis counselors." Tomorrow's crisis counselors will be experts not in such conventional disciplines as psychology or health, but in specific transitions such as relocation, job promotion, divorce, or subcult-hopping. Armed with their own recent experience, working on a volunteer basis or for minimal pay, they will set aside some small part of their time for listening to other lay

people talk out their problems, apprehensions and plans. In return, they will have access to others for similar assistance in the course of their own adaptive development.

Once again, there is nothing new about people seeking advice from one another. What is new is our ability, through the use of computerized systems, to assemble situational groups swiftly, to match up individuals with counselors, and to do both with considerable respect for privacy and anonymity.

We can already see evidence of a move in this direction in the spread of "listening" and "caring" services. In Davenport, Iowa, lonely people can dial a telephone number and be connected with a "listener"—one of a rotating staff of volunteers who man the telephone twenty-four hours a day. The program, initiated by a local commission on the aging, is similar to, but not the same as, the Care-Ring service in New York. Care-Ring charges its subscribers a fee, in return for which they receive two check-in calls each day at designated times. Subscribers provide the service with the names of their doctor, a neighbor, their building superintendent, and a close relative. In the event they fail to respond to a call, the service tries again half an hour later. If they still do not respond, the doctor is notified and a nurse dispatched to the scene. Care-Ring services are now being franchised in other cities. In both these services we see forerunners of the crisis-counseling system of the future.

Under that system, the giving and getting of advice becomes not a "social service" in the usual bureaucratic, impersonal sense, but a highly personalized process that not only helps individuals crest the currents of change in their own lives, but helps cement the entire society together in a kind of "love network"—an integrative system based on the principle of "I need you as much as you need me." Situational grouping and person-to-person crisis counseling are likely to become a significant part of everyone's life as we all move together into the uncertainties of the future.

HALF-WAY HOUSES

A "future shock absorber" of a quite different type is the "half-way house" idea already employed by progressive prison authorities to ease the convict's way back into normal life. According to criminologist Daniel Glaser, the distinctive feature of the correctional institutions of the future will be the idea of "gradual release."

Instead of taking a man out of the under-stimulating, tightly regimented life of the prison and plunging him violently and without preparation into open society, he is moved first to an intermediate institution which permits him to work in the community by day, while continuing to return to the institution at night. Gradually, restrictions are lifted until he is fully adjusted to the outside world. The same principle has been explored by various mental institutions.

Similarly it has been suggested that the problems of rural populations suddenly shifted to urban centers might be sharply reduced if something like this half-way house principle were employed to ease their entry into the new way of life. What cities need, according to this theory, are reception facilities where newcomers live for a time under conditions halfway between those of the rural society they are leaving behind and the urban society they are seeking to penetrate. If instead of treating city-bound migrants with contempt and leaving them to find their own way, they were first acclimatized, they would adapt far more successfully.

A similar idea is filtering through the specialists who concern themselves with "squatter housing" in major cities in the technologically underdeveloped world. Outside Khartoum in the Sudan, thousands of former nomads have created a concentric ring of settlements. Those furthest from the city live in tents, much like the ones they occupied before migration. The

next-closer group lives in mud-walled huts with tent roofs. Those still closer to the city occupy huts with mud walls and tin roofs.

When police set out to tear down the tents, urban planner Constantinos Doxiadis recommended that they not only *not* destroy them, but that certain municipal services be provided to their inhabitants. Instead of seeing these concentric rings in wholly negative terms, he suggested, they might be viewed as a tremendous teaching machine through which individuals and families move, becoming urbanized step by step.

The application of this principle, however, need not be limited to the poor, the insane or the criminal. The basic idea of providing change in controlled, graduated stages, rather than abrupt transitions, is crucial to any society that wishes to cope with rapid social or technological upheaval. The veteran, for example, could be released from service more gradually. The student from a rural community could spend a few weeks at a college in a medium-size city before entering the large urban university. The long-term hospital patient might be encouraged to go home on a trial basis, once or twice, before being discharged.

We are already experimenting with these strategies, but others are possible. Retirement, for example, should not be the abrupt, all-or-nothing, ego-crushing change that it now is for most men. There is no reason why it cannot be gradualized. Military induction, which typically separates a young man from his family in a sudden and almost violent fashion, could be done by stages. Legal separation, which is supposed to serve as a kind of half-way house on the way to divorce, could be made less legally complicated and psychologically costly. Trial marriage could be encouraged, instead of denigrated. In short, wherever a change of status is contemplated, the possibility of gradualizing it should be considered.

ENCLAVES OF THE PAST

No society racing through the turbulence of the next several decades will be able to do without specialized centers in which the rate of change is artificially depressed. To phrase it differently, we shall need enclaves of the past—communities in which turnover, novelty and choice are deliberately limited.

These may be communities in which history is partially frozen, like the Amish villages of Pennsylvania, or places in which the past is artfully simulated, like Williamsburg, Virginia or Mystic, Connecticut.

Unlike Williamsburg or Mystic, however, through which visitors stream at a steady and rapid clip, tomorrow's enclaves of the past must be places where people faced with future shock can escape the pressures of overstimulation for weeks, months, even years, if they choose.

In such slow-paced communities, individuals who need or want a more relaxed, less stimulating existence should be able to find it. The communities must be consciously encapsulated, selectively cut off from the surrounding society. Vehicular access should be limited to avoid traffic. Newspapers should be weeklies instead of dailies. If permitted at all, radio and television should be broadcast only for a few hours a day, instead of round the clock. Only special emergency services—health, for example—should be maintained at the maximum efficiency permitted by advanced technology.

Such communities not only should not be derided, they should be subsidized by the larger society as a form of mental and social insurance. In times of extremely rapid change, it is possible for the larger society to make some irreversible, catastrophic error. Imagine, for instance, the widespread diffusion of a food additive that accidentally turns out to have thalidomide-like effects. One can conceive of accidents capable of sterilizing or even killing whole populations.

By proliferating enclaves of the past, living museums as it were, we increase the chances that someone will be there to pick up the pieces in case of massive calamity. Such communities might also serve as experiential teaching machines. Thus children from the outside world might spend a few months in a simulated feudal village, living and actually working as children did centuries ago. Teenagers might be required to spend some time living in a typical early industrial community and to actually work in its mill or factory. Such living education would give them a historical perspective no book could ever provide. In these communities, the men and women who want a slower life might actually make a career out of "being" Shakespeare or Ben Franklin or Napoleon—not merely acting out their parts on stage, but living, eating, sleeping, as they did. The career of "historical simulant" would attract a great many naturally talented actors.

In short, every society will need sub-societies whose members are committed to staying away from the latest fads. We may even want to pay people not to use the latest goods, not to enjoy the most automated and sophisticated conveniences.

ENCLAVES OF THE FUTURE

By the same token, just as we make it possible for some people to live at the slower pace of the past, we must also make it possible for individuals to experience aspects of their future in advance. Thus, we shall also have to create enclaves of the future.

In a limited sense, we are already doing this. Astronauts, pilots and other specialists are often trained by placing them in carefully assembled simulations of the environments they will occupy at some date in the future when they actually participate in a mission. By duplicating the interior of a cockpit or a capsule, we allow them to become accustomed, by degrees, to their future environment. Police and espionage agents, as well as commandos and other military specialists, are pre-trained by watching movies of the people they will have to deal with, the factories they are supposed to infiltrate, the terrain they will have to cover. In this way they are prepared to cope with a variety of future contingencies.

There is no reason why the same principle cannot be extended. Before dispatching a worker to a new location, he and his family ought to be shown detailed movies of the neighborhood they will live in, the school their children will attend, the stores in which they will shop, perhaps even of the teachers, shopkeepers, and neighbors they will meet. By preadapting them in this way, we can lower their anxieties about the unknown and prepare them, in advance, to cope with many of the problems they are likely to encounter.

Tomorrow, as the technology of experiential simulation advances, we shall be able to go much further. The pre-adapting individual will be able not merely to see and hear, but to touch, taste and smell the environment he is about to enter. He will be able to interact vicariously with the people in his future, and to undergo carefully contrived experiences designed to improve his coping abilities.

The "psych-corps" of the future will find a fertile market in the design and operation of such preadaptive facilities. Whole families may go to "work-learn-and-play" enclaves which will, in effect, constitute museums of the future, preparing them to cope with their own personal tomorrows.

GLOBAL SPACE PAGEANTS

"Mesmerized as we are by the very idea of change," writes John Gardner in *Self-Renewal,* "we must guard against the notion that continuity is a negligible—if not reprehensible—

factor in human history. It is a vitally important ingredient in the life of individuals, organizations and societies."

In the light of theory of the adaptive range, it becomes clear that an insistence on continuity in our experience is not necessarily "reactionary," just as the demand for abrupt or discontinuous change is not necessarily "progressive." In stagnant societies, there is a deep psychological need for novelty and stimulation. In an accelerative society, the need may well be for the preservation of certain continuities.

In the past, ritual provided an important change-buffer. Anthropologists tell us that certain repeated ceremonial forms—rituals surrounding birth, death, puberty, marriage and so on—helped individuals in primitive societies to re-establish equilibrium after some major adaptive event had taken place.

"There is no evidence," writes S. T. Kimball, "that a secularized urban world has lessened the need for ritualized expression ..." Carleton Coon declares that "Whole societies, whatever their sizes and degrees of complexity, need controls to ensure the maintenance of equilibrium, and control comes in several forms. One is ritual." He points out that ritual survives today in the public appearances of heads of state, in religion, in business.

These, however, represent the merest tip of the ritual iceberg. In Western societies, for example, the sending of Christmas cards is an annual ritual that not only represents continuity in its own right, but which helps individuals prolong their all-too-temporary friendships or acquaintanceships. The celebration of birthdays, holidays or anniversaries are additional examples. The fast-burgeoning greeting-card industry—2,248,000,000 Christmas cards are sold annually in the United States alone—is an economic monument to the society's continuing need for some semblance of ritual.

Repetitive behavior, whatever else its functions, helps give meaning to non-repetitive events, by providing the backdrop against which novelty is silhouetted. Sociologists James Bossard and Eleanor Boll, after examining one hundred published autobiographies, found seventy-three in which the writers described procedures which were "unequivocally classifiable as family rituals." These rituals, arising from "some simple or random bits of family interaction, started to set, because they were successful or satisfying to members, and through repetition they 'jelled' into very definite forms."

As the pace of change accelerates, many of these rituals are broken down or denatured. Yet we struggle to maintain them. One non-religious family periodically offers a secular grace at the dinner table, to honor such benefactors of mankind as Johann Sebastian Bach or Martin Luther King. Husbands and wives speak of "our song" and periodically revisit "the place we first met." In the future, we can anticipate greater variety in the kinds of rituals adhered to in family life.

As we accelerate and introduce arhythmic patterns into the pace of change, we need to mark off certain regularities for preservation, exactly the way we now mark off certain forests, historical monuments, or bird sanctuaries for protection. We may even need to manufacture ritual.

No longer at the mercy of the elements as we once were, no longer condemned to darkness at night or frost in the morning, no longer positioned in an unchanging physical environment, we are helped to orient ourselves in space and time by social, as distinct from natural, regularities.

In the United States, the arrival of spring is marked for most urban dwellers not by a sudden greenness—there is little green in Manhattan—but by the opening of the baseball season. The first ball is thrown by the President or some other dignitary, and thereafter millions of citizens follow, day by day, the unfolding of a mass ritual. Similarly, the end of summer is marked as much by the World Series as by any natural symbol.

Even those who ignore sports cannot help but be aware of these large and pleasantly predictable events. Radio and television carry baseball into every home. Newspapers are filled with sports news. Images of baseball form a backdrop, a kind of musical obbligato that enters our awareness. Whatever happens to the stock market, or to world politics, or to family life, the American League and the National League run through their expected motions. Outcomes of individual games vary. The standings of the teams go up and down. But the drama plays itself out within a set of reassuringly rigid and durable rules.

The opening of Congress every January; the appearance of new car models in the fall; seasonal variations in fashion; the April 15 deadline for filing income tax; the arrival of Christmas; the New Year's Eve party; the fixed national holidays. All these punctuate our time predictably, supplying a background of temporal regularity that is necessary (though hardly sufficient) for mental health.

The pressure of change, however, is to "unhitch" these from the calendar, to loosen and irregularize them. Often there are economic benefits for doing so. But there may also be hidden costs through the loss of stable temporal points of reference that today still lend some pattern and continuity to everyday life. Instead of eliminating these wholesale, we may wish to retain some, and, indeed, to introduce certain regularities where they do not exist. (Boxing championship matches are held at irregular, unpredictable times. Perhaps these highly ritualistic events should be held at fixed intervals as the Olympic games are.)

As leisure increases, we have the opportunity to introduce additional stability points and rituals into the society, such as new holidays, pageants and games. Such mechanisms could not only provide a backdrop of continuity in everyday life, but serve to integrate societies, and cushion them somewhat against the fragmenting impact of super-industrialism. We might, for example, create holidays to honor Galileo or Mozart, Einstein or Cezanne. We might create a global pageantry based on man's conquest of outer space.

Even now the succession of space launchings and capsule retrievals is beginning to take on a kind of ritual dramatic pattern. Millions stand transfixed as the countdown begins and the mission works itself out. For at least a fleeting instant, they share a realization of the oneness of humanity and its potential competence in the face of the universe.

By regularizing such events and by greatly adding to the pageantry that surrounds them, we can weave them into the ritual framework of the new society and use them as sanity-preserving points of temporal reference. Certainly, July 20, the day Astronaut Armstrong took "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," ought to be made into an annual global celebration of the unity of man.

In this way, by making use of new materials, as well as already existing rituals, by introducing change, wherever possible, in the form of predictable, rather than erratic chains of events, we can help provide elements of continuity even in the midst of social upheaval.

The cultural transformation of the Manus Islanders was simple compared with the one we face. We shall survive it only if we move beyond personal tactics to social strategies—providing new support services for the change-harassed individual, building continuity and change-buffers into the emergent civilization of tomorrow.

All this is aimed at minimizing the human damage wrought by rapid change. But there is another way of attacking the problem, too. This is to expand man's adaptive capacities—the central task of education during the Super-industrial Revolution.