Metaxis and Recovery: Towards a New Vision of Health

CHAPTER TWO

THE FIELD MODEL

SCIENCE AND PARADIGMS

For something so powerful, so debated and with such an influence in our lives, science is poorly understood by most people. It tends to conjure up images of the white lab coat and bubbling beakers. Science though, can be understood as a basically very simple activity. Indeed, in a rudimentary way we are all scientists. Science is really nothing more than observation. It is when the discussion turns to scientific *methods* that complexity and debate enter the picture. The validity of scientific methods--aids and enhancements to basic observation--has been debated in the past. This discussion has witnessed a resurgence as of late.

Science is first and foremost a human activity. No other animal engages in disciplined, scientific observation. Even from within a primitive, magical understanding of reality science plays a role. When the shaman or priest observes omens and signs that may indicate the wishes of the gods they are engaging in a type of science. It is their *methodology* we today would question, not the attempt at disciplined observation itself.

The development and successes of today's scientific methods comes out of a view of reality that is essentially mechanistic. That is, reality is seen and can be understood as being like a giant machine. We view the human body too as a machine with interchangeable parts. If it breaks we can fix it. This mechanistic view is what is called a *paradigm.* A paradigm is a central, unifying construct or insight. So, for instance, in science the dominant paradigm could be said to be "machine" or "mechanistic." This paradigm is what creates a similarity between the aeronautical engineer and the heart transplant specialist.

In our own lives we operate under paradigms. It is what allows us to organize our experiences and the complexity of those experiences into a coherent whole. For instance, the common definitions of two types of person--the pessimist and the optimist--could be said to indicate what paradigm, what central unifying theme each utilizes. The pessimist sees the hole while the optimist sees the donut. We generalize this aphorism to the whole of the pessimist's and the optimist's life. They see things, or organize their experiences like this not just when encountering donuts, but most, if not all parts of their life. It is the paradigm under which they operate.

Another term for paradigm might be "world view." A world view would be a certain outlook or interpretation of events that would change from person to person and certainly differ between cultures. We cannot underestimate the power of the world view or paradigm to orient--perhaps even *determine* what it is we actually see. On a surface level this can be illustrated nicely by the differences of etiquette and insult between cultures. Here in America when we cross our legs it is a sign of comfort, at-

easeness, and informal social gathering. In Arab culture however, crossing the leg would be a grave insult. Actually it is not the crossing of legs itself, but rather the showing of the sole of the shoe. When the Arab and the American are in the same room they bring to that situation different world views or paradigms. In this respect they are not even really in the "same" room. What they are "seeing" is quite different one from the other.

To truly understand how "world views" or "paradigms" effect our perceptions and understandings--what we "see"--is a necessarily humbling experience. It displays how totally arbitrary our decisions might be concerning what is real and what is not real. This is an especially dangerous idea when applied to science. After all, science is that field of endeavor where we supposedly discover what *is* real and objective: the truth. Of course, there are some indubitable facts about what is real, about what we observe, but these are more on the order of how our senses are "programmed" or "wired" to process the information that comes to us from the outside world. The philosopher Immanuel Kant declared that space and time are not "things" but are ways in which all human minds are "programmed," so to speak, to order and perceive things.

"In 1781 Immanuel Kant pointed out that time and space are not phenomena or things, but ways of organizing data, thus effectively opening the way for Einstein. Kant gave to what we now call 4-space (space consisting of three linear dimensions and time) the title `a priori'--an invincible way- of-seeing with which humans are born."

THE STORY OF FLATLAND

There is a delightfully entertaining and easy to read book that easily communicates the effect of world views or paradigms, and the effect of what we might call our biological "wiring." *Flatland* is a book about a being who lives in only two dimensions called, aptly enough, "Flatland." He first describes his world. He then proceeds to describe a dream he had of a one dimensional world called "Lineland." He then relates a most marvelous adventure wherein he is visited by a being from "Spaceland"--our own familiar world of three dimensions.

Our little hero is, in his own world a square, but in his own world he appears as a line. Here is how Abbott indicates how Flatland appears to its inhabitants--its difference from Spaceland.

"Place a penny on the middle of one of your tables in Space; and leaning over it, look down upon it. It will appear a circle.

"But now, drawing back to the edge of the table, gradually lower your eye (thus bringing yourself more and more into the condition of the inhabitants of Flatland)... when you have placed your eye exactly on the edge of the table (so that you are, as it were, actually a Flatlander) the penny will then have ceased to appear oval at all, and will have become, so far as you can see, a straight line."

The inhabitants of Flatland live in a world of lines and points. They can feel angles, but cannot see them. Think of a flat piece of paper with North, South, East and West drawn upon it. Flatland has these directions, but there is no "up" or "down" other than the directions of North and South.

Now, what would happen if when holding the piece of paper you passed a sphere through it? From the Flatlander's perspective you would not see a sphere dissected by a piece of paper, you would see a point suddenly appear in front of you. The point would stretch to a line (as the larger center of the sphere passed through the paper). If the Flatlander felt this apparition it would feel like a circle. This is what happened one day to our little Flatland hero.

The square living in two dimensions could not possibly imagine a third dimension. When we look down at the square on the paper we see the space between the four lines that make the square. This is our friend's insides. Any other flatlander could only see the four lines that make the square edge-on. The 3-D sphere was unable to make the square understand Spaceland even after he touched his insides--as if you put your finger inside the square drawn on a piece of paper. And so the Sphere brought the square up off his plane into the land of three dimensions.

"Ha! Is it come to this? thundered the Stranger: then meet your fate: out of your Plane you go. Once, twice, thrice! 'Tis done!

An unspeakable horror seized me. There was a darkness; then a dizzy, sickening sensation of sight that was not like seeing; I saw a Line that was no Line; Space that was not Space: I shrieked aloud in agony, `Either this is madness or it is Hell.' `It is neither,' calmly replied the voice of the Sphere, `it is Knowledge; it is Three Dimensions...

I looked, and, behold, a new world! What seemed the center of the Stranger's form lay open to my view: yet I could see no heart, nor lungs, nor arteries, only a beautiful harmonious Something--for which I had no words; but you, my Readers in Spaceland, would call it the surface of the Sphere."

The square not only had his world view of symbolic meanings shattered, he also had, in a sense, his natural "wiring" re-routed!

OUR CURRENT SCIENTIFIC WORLD VIEWS

Certainly in our quest to maximize the good parts of ourselves and keep our shadow, evil side under control, it is wise to consult experts. Scientists do the "dirty work" for us all. We act on their results. However, we are in danger if we think that science somehow provides us with "truth." We have to recognize that anything we observe whether as undisciplined lay people, or as disciplined scientists is to a large degree influenced by our particular world view or paradigm. This influence is much more than just personal or cultural (though as we shall see later in the book the small degree of freedom possessed by the human lies in this area) it is also biological; built into the construction of our physical bodies. In this sense we are always prejudiced people.

Thomas Kuhn wrote a book called *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* wherein he discusses the role of paradigms in science. This is especially interesting because it points out a certain degree of arbitrariness in science. This is odd because we tend to think of science as set, firm, full of facts and knowledge. Well, in many ways *it isn't*! Science itself operates under a paradigm or world view and in this respect the findings of science are somewhat arbitrary. This is not to totally discount scientific findings,

but merely to place them in context. Scientists, as the experts we turn to for help in our lives, must recognize that they are not "gods." They do not have the "truth" in the strict sense of the word. Normal operating science is a "white" sham. It sort of pretends to have the truth--to say what is really out there. This is fine, and has certainly been helpful and enlightening. However, it is far too easy for scientists to cross the line into "black" sham. This occurs when medical doctors take seriously their limited powers over life and death. It occurs when human scientists take their idiosyncratic theory as the only correct description of their observations.

The sham aspects of science are particularly dangerous in two main ways. First, it is dangerous to the scientists. They are to be expert observers of reality--this is their job. If they do not recognize or acknowledge that they always operate under a paradigm or world view they are unable to see how that paradigm effects their observations. Secondly, it is especially dangerous for the non-scientist. We must rely upon the conclusions drawn by experts. The non-scientist needs a certain degree of circumspection when applying the findings and conclusions of science to their own lives.

We are heirs to the scientific paradigm and the methods that developed out of the view that originated with such people as Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon and Galileo. This method of observation is called "experimental." It does not rely upon speculation, but upon repeatable, controlled demonstrations of various phenomenon. It is through disciplined observation and the experimental method that science as we know it has been able to provide us with polio vaccines, color TVs, heart transplants, electric can openers, etc. These methods have allowed us to gain understanding of the natural world as well as many aspects of the human world.

Modern sciences of human reality are derived from, and limited by what is called the Newtonian-Cartesian model, paradigm, or world view. This world view, prevalent today, originated with the explorations of nature by Isaac Newton, and the application of his work to the human realm by Rene Descartes (Descartes=Cartesian). Prior to these two intellectual giants people conceived of the universe largely through magical or superstitious approaches or paradigms. The publication of Newton's *Principia* represents a shift from superstitious speculation to mechanics and natural law. It is the mechanical approach that is the scientific heritage of our various experts.

Descartes posited an essential mind-body dualism. There were two distinct "substances;" a thinking substance that was essentially immaterial and a mechanical, material body substance. They were seen as distinct from each other. This dualism allowed for the modern study of the body. Prior to Descartes, the human body was viewed as holy, and consequently inviolate. Dissection of the body has been a heinous crime in the past.

A great change occurred with Descartes' famous analogy: the healthy body was like a well operating clock and the diseased body was a broken clock in need of repair. This analogy created the abstraction of the body as a machine, with disease indicating a defective machine. The door was opened for dissection and study of the distinct parts or organs of the body. The mind was relegated to the fields of religion and philosophy (and later psychology) while the framework was built that would allow for modern bio-medicine.

What many people do not know is that during the historical period of the Enlightenment there surfaced a debate concerning the proper methods for observing the human as opposed to the rest of nature. A gentleman named William Dilthey felt that the methods used by the natural sciences such as physics and biology were inadequate to explore many aspects of human existence. For instance, if we are going to study the behavior of, say, centipedes we can bring some home with us (well, maybe into our lab!) and write down what we observe. If you want to check the precision and accuracy of my observations you too could go get some centipedes and then compare what you observe to what I had written down. But the problem arises; what if I want to observe strictly *human* phenomenon such as love? Well, the mechanistic, experimental methods of observation aren't going to work as well. This was the gist of Dilthey's argument. In order to observe such human phenomenon different methods of observation were needed. The methods useful for the natural sciences didn't always work in the human sciences.

Dilthey lost that first round of debate on proper scientific methodologies. Dilthey lost not so much because his perceptions were incorrect, but because the discoveries of the new experimental methods were so astounding and came so quickly one after the other. Optimism for the method ran quite high. During the Enlightenment, during the time of Thomas Jefferson, there were even attempts to devise mathematical equations for such characteristics has human happiness and social justice!

Such was the power of what has become known as the Newtonian-Cartesian mechanistic view of reality. All reality, including human reality was interpreted as a great machine; amenable to experimental duplication and mathematical notation. This is our current scientific paradigm or world view. Even more than that, it is our general, individual world view. *We as individuals operate under a view of the world that is mechanistic.*

Taken to extremes the Newtonian-Cartesian mechanistic approach in science resulted in what is called *positivism.* Positivism maintains that *only* observations amenable to the experimental method can be called knowledge, and only these methods could properly be classified as "scientific" observation. This effectively closed off vast amounts of human experience. Issues of will, value, concern, caring, love, hate etc. were banished from scientific inquiry. In fact, some positivists maintained that since such things were not amenable to experiment the words themselves were meaningless! Religious and ideological discussions were nothing but a string of nonsense words that *seemed* to mean something in ways similar to the way the sentence: "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously" seems to mean something. The right types of words are in the correct order, but it makes no sense.

There was no talking to the positivists. They were right and had "science" to back them up. Actually they were poor scientists. They ignored certain indubitable phenomenon. They were methodological fundamentalists. They refused to attempt the creation of new methods that would permit disciplined observation of distinctively human phenomenon. The positivist camp was, and still is quite powerful.

How desperately we long for certainty and the security that comes with it. We are so unlike the other animals. *They* are not torn in two as we are. They have their bio-genetic instincts to guide their behaviors and decisions. We don't. We are the "god

that shits." We almost have to feel sorry for the positivists. Their dogmatic certainty, their inability to take into account their own world view has, in a sense, backed them into a corner. They are overly compartmentalized. They are in denial. They resort to scorn and ridicule when faced with other scientists' objections to their extreme position. But are we non-scientists any different? In our discussions of the human situation we spoke at length about how anything or anyone different than we are is also at the same time a threat of death. If we seriously and honestly acknowledge the role of paradigms in our life and in our science we push against the barriers of our denial of death. We have to acknowledge the two parts of our being: "god" and "shadow."

In spite of the great technological progress that has resulted from the mechanistic paradigm we have made little if any progress in the development and recognition of those things that truly make our lives worth living. The "Great Society" crumbled. The "War on Poverty" is lost. The victories hard one by our grandparents and great-grandparents have been abdicated. Not too long ago people fought, sometimes to the death, for less work and more leisure. What have we done? Voluntarily re-instituted the 14 hour work day and the six day work week in order to get ahead. Ahead of what? Well, we run ahead of the shadow that constantly looks over our shoulders. We today can't even sit in our cars alone, we bring the phone and our work with us. Leisure time, quiet time is a door through which we may glimpse death waiting for us. This is too terrifying. Leisure can be a threat to our denial.

Such developments (not to mention the *lack* of development) is a result of our prevailing Newtonian-Cartesian mechanistic paradigm or world view. What happens when we look at reality as a machine? We've certainly devised a number of cliches that indicate the negative impact of this paradigm. "Dehumanized," "feel like a number," "just a cog," "just a functionary," "another statistic" are terms that indicate the very real, yet negative effects of seeing reality (and ourselves) as a giant machine. These cliches develop because our institutions and social systems have been built upon a mechanistic foundation. As with all cliches they express a grain of truth. In light of our dual nature, over-compartmentalization and denial the truth they express is disturbing.

THE NEED FOR A NEW PARADIGM

So many of our human (as opposed to technological) problems are attributable to the Cartesian world view. The inability of science to provide us with quality solutions to these problems is also attributable to the fact that science is so mechanistic. What is needed is a different paradigm or world view. In actuality we operate under two versions of the mechanistic paradigm. One version is specifically physical (materialist-technocratic), the other is mental (idealist). There is a seductive quality to each. We tend to acknowledge only one version at a time rather than both. This is because they are both "subsets" of the greater mechanistic view. Machines are made of separate, independent parts. We can concentrate on one part of a machine while ignoring the others. We do the same thing to the human being. Both "versions" of the mechanistic paradigm are limited perspectives. Any emphasis upon one can be seductive so that the other perspective is ignored.

THE NEW PHYSICS AND PARADIGM SHIFT

It is apparent that much of science, and much of our own lives is dominated by an outmoded paradigmatic view of the human. The Cartesian approach was based not upon an initial study of the human, but upon the natural physics explored by Isaac Newton. Newton discovered mechanistic "laws" ordering the natural world. By analogy, Descartes applied these to the human realm. *Physicists today have overturned the Newtonian view of the universe.* Atoms are no longer understood as little "things" or particles, but as mathematical probabilities. The advent of the "new physics" represents what is known as a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift occurs when there is some brand new discovery or insight that quite radically alters our conception of what is real and of how reality is constructed. Examples in history would be the switch from thinking that the sun moved around the earth to our present understanding of the earth revolving around the sun. In physics this paradigm shift *has occurred.* Modern physics is a completed paradigm shift from the classical Newtonian physics to the new physics of quantum reality.

Today's physics is difficult for us to picture and is best understood by mathematicians. "Our brains have devised quantum logic, but to see its implications we require a different sort of brain...The only way to obtain such a brain...is to construct one." However, it does have something to offer us as we move into our own new paradigm of *human* reality. According to the new physics the scientific observer cannot be purely objective. In the act of observation the scientist intimately effects the outcome of the mathematical probabilities. This finding has resulted in an approach to, and conceptualization of physical phenomenon that is best described as a "field approach." This field approach is totally different than anything that might be construed as mechanistic or machine-like.

The purpose of this book is not to explicate the strange findings of the quantum physicists. There are numerous books designed for the non-scientist. (however, this doesn't mean they are all that easy to read or understand. We're dealing with *really* strange stuff here.) It might serve to simply mention some of the conclusions of today's physicists to provide a taste of what happens during a paradigm shift. Now these examples are *very* rough, but they should give you an idea of what we're up against. We also have to remember that this is for subatomic reality. For our daily lives, such as laying tiles on a floor, Newtonian-Cartesian understandings certainly suffice.

1. Non-locality. Two particles, one positive the other negative are always paired together. If one changes the direction of its spin the other will also. However, let us say the particles are miles apart. Certainly, in the Cartesian paradigm there must be some means of communication between the two particles. In actuality the particles change the direction of their spin immediately with no intervening communication. Its kind of like ESP.

2. Discontinuity. We are all familiar with the "solar system" drawing of atoms. Electrons orbit a nucleus. How far the electron is from the nucleus depends upon the amount of energy. More energy: greater orbit. In a Cartesian sense the electron has to move to the greater orbit through space. In actuality it just "jumps" there without crossing the intervening space. This is the "quantum leap." Its kind of like the transporter beam in Star Trek.

3. Non-causality. The mechanistic paradigm is built upon causality. If you smack your head against the wall you feel pain, the smack causes the pain. Causality is independent of us, it just always happens. In today's physics there is no causality, it has been replaced by probability. In a subatomic version of this example the smack on your head might not hurt. There is no cause, only a probable outcome. The physicists discovered that the experimental method of observation was not reliable because of its inconsistency of results. Depending on how the experiment was set up would alter the probabilities of the result. I might get one result, you might get another. Kind of like magic.

A NEW VIEW OF THE HUMAN

In many ways we have failed to learn from history with regard to those areas that most effect our lives as they are actually lived, that is, the realm of the paradigm and world view. The paradigm is the foundation upon which we make judgments of right, wrong, value etc. Prior to the historical period known as the Enlightenment which is when the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm was truly at its peak we could say that the prevailing world view was of magic or superstition. The belief in magic oriented how people saw themselves and the universe and determined how they ordered their relationships and institutions. When Christianity rose as a great political power it served as a mini paradigm shift. As such a shift it served to radically alter the entire human landscape economically, personally, socially and politically.

We are truly in a desperate need today for another paradigm shift. The Newtonian-Cartesian mechanistic view has admittedly brought us many good things, but it has also brought us the threat of nuclear annihilation. It has done nothing to solve issues of social justice, poverty, crime, or even the quest for personal fulfillment.

As we have said, a paradigm shift has already occurred in the realm of physics. This puts us all in an interesting historical situation. As we have also said, Descartes based his understanding of the human upon the mechanistic physics of Newton. Why do we not make a similar move?

Actually, a number of people have attempted such a move, but the results have been less than satisfying. The examples of the new physic "weirdness" cited above have provided ample fodder for quacks and armchair philosophers. They *seem* to legitimate things such as telepathy and other paranormal powers. They do no such thing. Such thinkers (if you could call them that) that take the findings of contemporary physics and apply them to our own lived world commit a grave error. The difference of scale between ourselves and the subatomic world is so great that the findings simply cannot be legitimately applied one to the other. On the scale of our everyday world the old Newtonian physics works just fine. We can't apply them to the subatomic realm just as we can't apply the "rules" of our larger scaled reality to quantum reality.

Yet we cannot dismiss out of hand (as some scientists are wont to do) ways in which contemporary physics might be able to contribute or at least guide us to a new paradigm of what the human being may actually be. This may sound like a strange type of statement; "what the human may be" but it really isn't. Whenever there has been a major paradigm shift such as from magic to mechanics, or even a mini shift such as the rise of Christianity as a political system there has also been a re-

questioning of the nature of what it is to be human. The definition of "human" changes.

In trying to figure out how quantum physics might enlighten us we have to remember the natural "wiring" spoken of by Immanuel Kant that effects our perceptions. These "a priori" categories of space and time must also include one other bit of internal circuitry. We are bound not only by space and time but as Alex Comfort points out:

"The other difficult human prejudice, not mentioned by Kant, but even more a priori than our vision of the time arrow, is positional identity. This is the belief that there is an I inside (or, as some sensory experiments suggest, just behind) our heads, which is separate from what we are observing, and which is situated at this particular locus in space-time."

We have to take into account how we are "wired" to perceive reality. Let us say that you go about your day wearing glasses with red lenses. Everything you see has a red tint. Late that night, after work and a few drinks you go to the local 24 hour family restaurant. You decide you're in the mood for breakfast and so order two fried eggs sunny side up. Surprise! The eggs look red and there is no difference between the color of the yolk and the white! Ah, but you remember you have red-lensed glasses on. There is nothing wrong with the eggs. You proceed to eat with relish. Now what happened here? Well, you simply recall how what you saw was effected by the glasses. You remembered that you weren't seeing things as they *really* were. Once you remember this you proceed with your everyday activities. If you were of a scientific bent you might ask why the white and the yolk were the same color when viewed through a red lens. You would then learn all sorts of interesting things about light waves and frequencies.

We have to make a similar move. We are programmed to always view things through the "lenses" of space and time. More importantly to our considerations is the "lens" of positional identity. We identify ourselves as somehow "in this body." We have a sensation that "I" am somehow "behind my eyes." All three of these prejudices keep us from viewing what reality is really like. They keep us from understanding what *we* are really like as human beings.

As we have said, the Cartesian approach and conceptualization is mechanistic. It reduces, separates, and isolates. Phenomenon under study are divided into distinct, independent, isolated entities.

Here is a traditional Cartesian model of the human subject.

The subject is divided roughly into "mind" and "body." Biomedical physicians study the "body" part composed of genetics, organs, cells etc. while psychologists study the "mind" part. Psychologists use various concepts to understand the lived experience of the human mind: ego, archetypes, cognitions, perceptions, personality types, etc.

THE NEW MAP OF HEALTH-TOWARDS FIELD THINKING

The solution that is proposed to the problems and limits of the Cartesian model is the ecological field model of health. In this paradigmatic approach the integrity of the full

human is preserved. The methodologic and epistimologic limits of the technologic model are not transgressed. We are less apt to be seduced into dehumanized attitudes.

In this model the human is understood as suspended in an ecological field. This paradigm necessitates a counter-intuitive shift. Taking our lead from modern physics just as Descartes took his lead from Newton's physics we devise a picture of the human as a field of dynamic interactions. The human is seen as a systemic *process* that includes all the components of lived human existence.

Notice what occurs. There is a radical change in conceptualization of what the human being actually is. As with physics no longer conceptualizing atoms as little "things," so too we no longer understand the human subject as an independent, isolated entity. We take the Cartesian human "thing" and place it as one aspect of the dynamic system; along with aspects or poles identified as social, natural and divine.

THE ECOLOGICAL FIELD

By "field" we mean both an *approach to* and a *conceptualization of* the human being. The field is a map of the human subject that allows us to visualize and organize the diverse dimensions of human life. It is holistic. The field approach allows us to understand and appreciate the full range of concerns that effect health and illness. By means of this approach we: 1. resist the temptation to reduce the whole human to one phenomenon and 2. are better positioned to recognize the impact of other aspects of human experience upon various areas of specialization. It is a model of the human that is ecological and integrated. This model views the whole and not just the parts. It addresses the diversity and interrelatedness of human meaning and existence.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE FIELD: A FOUR POLE MODEL

NATURAL

The natural aspect or pole of the field is the most familiar. It is the pole of the interaction of the physical, organic organism as embedded in a physical, organic environment. It is in this pole that we conceptualize and understand genetic determinants, somatic functioning and the organic etiology of health. The natural pole is largely objective and empirical. It includes the organism's environment; the presence of pollutants and such. Medical physicians/surgeons specialize in this pole as do people such as landscape designers, builders, engineers and ecologists.

SOCIAL

It is in the social pole that we understand communal and interpersonal phenomenon and effects. Here we assess the social support the individual may or may not experience, the impact of cultural norms and mores, and institutionalized meanings and symbols. The social pole is both overt and covert. It includes "hidden" cultural meanings (such as it is sexy to smoke or success equals wealth). People who specialize in this pole would be marital counselors, advertisers, communications experts, sociologists, demographers.

SUBJECTIVE

The pole of the private self conceptualizes our personal subjectivity, our individual, unique experience of feelings, thoughts and bodily states. Psychological mental states and attitudes are located here. Central to this pole are our memories and anticipations. These form the basis for our psychological self-awareness. Inner self-knowledge resides here as well as our ability to understand our personal interests. Psychoanalysts specialize in the attempts to understand the pole of the private self. Interviewers too could be said to specialize in this pole of the field. Whenever you make a new friend or lover you attempt to get to know their subjective pole as well as communicate your own subjective experience.

DIVINE

Among the four poles of the ecological field the divine pole is unique and distinctive. In many ways it is not comparable to the other three poles. It is also the aspect of human existence most easily ignored and the least amenable to mechanistic analysis, but it is central to understanding the human as distinct from the other animals. It tends to be the "missing link" in our search for health and fulfillment. As we shall see throughout the book, the divine pole maintains a certain primacy of importance over the other three poles. It is not as easily conceived as a wholly "separate" realm of human experience.

The divine pole is the realm of ultimate meanings, what has been defined broadly as human spirituality. It does not refer to religiosity in a social or external sense (e.g. religious affiliation). It does not refer to a person's belief in God or religious convictions (though it is in this pole that we are able to understand such beliefs and convictions). What we do mean is how the person responds on a deep level to the limits encountered in life. Suffering, pain and death are classic boundary situations that give rise to the human pursuit of ultimate meanings.

The divine pole describes the dimension of ultimate meanings and specifically the encounter with "mystery" that lies beyond human limits. The essential lack of explanation for human suffering, pain, and death point the human toward the beyond and the realm of ultimate meaning. The limits of reason and the unknowability of the other person, the nature of the universe, and the depths of our own self enable us to encounter--for lack of a better word--"mystery." We are concerned here with the *interpretation* of that mystery (hence the opening for religious considerations).

In a primal sense we are always confronting this mystery and interpreting it in three main ways: in relation to our health and fulfillment it is always interpreted as being either benign (God), indifferent (scientist) or hostile (the suicide). In actuality we act upon a combination of these three main possibilities. These interpretations are the primal foundations for all we do. Upon these foundations are built entire cultures and each individual life. In this sense, the divine pole, our awareness of the mystery, our spirituality, is of primary importance in our lives--whether we acknowledge it or not. People who specialize in the encounter with mystery are: religious mystics, terminally ill people, artists and great scientists.

HOW THE MYSTERY APPEARS OR IS KNOWN

The mystery in and of itself always remains essentially Beyond or Unknowable. That is, it is totally *transcendent*. As a physicist does not conceptualize atoms as little "things" or particles, so too when we discuss the mystery we are not talking about a "thing." Atoms are understood as mathematical probabilities. The mystery is understood as what *lies behind* our meaningful interpretations of events. The mystery itself, in turn, must be interpreted. For instance, death is an undeniable event that we interpret as meaning "non-existence" or "entrance to paradise." Death is a great mystery and so demands an interpretation. We have already mentioned the three basic forms of interpretation of the mystery: benevolent, hostile or indifferent.

This primal, interpretation is always used because the mystery appears or is indicated through the poles of the field and therefore through everything we experience. Because of this the processes of the divine pole are unique and form the foundations of human life. You can be married for years, talking and sharing all the time, but you will never fully know the other person completely. You encounter what we call the mystery through the social pole. Likewise, you can spend years in self reflection, introspection and analysis. You will never find the "I." You encounter the mystery in the subjective pole. We also come up against boundary when we seek to apply our powers of reason and understanding to the natural world such as during scientific research.

In all of these situations, encounter with another, encounter with yourself and encounter with the natural world we come up against a boundary or limit beyond which we can't go. The boundary may change as we add to our stock of knowledge or understanding. However, there is always a boundary, and beyond that boundary what we call the mystery. Scientists are those who constantly push at the boundaries of reason and understanding--expanding its realm of comprehensible order. The scientist is egged on by the mystery beyond the boundary of reason and understanding. Two lovers seem to talk for hours and hours learning about each other; enamored by the mystery of the other.

No matter how much we learn, how great our understanding we are always and forever surrounded by mystery. When the scientist says something to the effect that for every new answer there are numerous new questions he is indicating the pervasiveness of the mystery. Exactly *what* constitutes a boundary or limit for us may change and fluctuate. What is *indicated* by the presence of boundaries and limits in human experience--the mystery--does not.

THE REALM WITHIN OUR BOUNDARIES AND LIMITS

We can roughly envision the human realm as an island in the sea. We are limited by the boundary of the island's shoreline. Perhaps a large wave washes up every so often and dumps sand on the island thereby enlarging and expanding the shoreline. But always surrounding us is the deep, dark mystery of the ocean. The island may change size and shape, but the ocean remains and appears the same.

The question is: what is the human realm composed of? What serves to push at our boundaries and limits and thus expand our realm? The answer has, in some ways, already been given: lived events and the meanings we give to them. We could say that the "matter" of the realm within our boundaries and limits are real events such as birth

and death. Our past experiences, traditions and history make up this realm. These facts and events are then combined with the symbolic meanings we give to them such as in our example of different meanings death may have for different people. It is symbols that "shape" the "matter" of the human realm.

A symbol is always an *interpretation* of some event. For instance, let us say you are talking to someone. The person gives you "a look." The look is an actual event, but it also indicates, points to, or comes from that part of the person that is always redolent of the mystery. You can't get into the person's head to find out precisely what the look meant. So what do you do? You *interpret* the look in some way. You attach a symbolic meaning to the look. Was the look hostile, flirtatious, angry? The meaning of the look does not reside in the look itself, but in *you* and the meaning you give to it. Largely, the meaning you give to it will be determined by the set of meanings provided for your use by the culture of which you are a part. Your own personal realm, set within and surrounded by the mystery of reality and existence, is in some part enlarged by the event. The "shape" of your personal realm will be dependent upon how you interpreted that event; the meaning you gave to it.

It is in the dimension of symbolic interpretations, of meanings, that we are able to become creative, heroic artists of our own lives. It is through the interpretation of meanings that our imagination can come into play. It is through this portal that we find the freedom to break our denial and connect to the whole of life. This is only possible when we view the human as a field rather than as a machine. This small degree of freedom is a function of the divine pole. It is *applied to* the other three poles by means of what we call "field thinking."

SYNCHRONICITY: THE DOOR TO FIELD THINKING

Synchronicity is an idea made somewhat popular by Carl Jung. It indicates an occurrence of two events that are not causally linked in any real sense, but between which we still perceive as being in some type of relationship. Here is Jung's description of such an event:

"My example concerns a young woman patient... She had had an impressive dream the night before, in which someone had given her a golden scarab--a costly piece of jewelry. While she was telling me this dream, I heard something behind me gently tapping on the window... I opened the window immediately and caught the insect in the air as it flew in. It was a scarabaeid beetle or common rose-chafer (Cetonia aurata), whose gold-green colour most nearly resembles that of a golden scarab. I handed the beetle to my patient with the words, Here is your scarab."

Synchronous events occur in unison with one another. These synchronous events are not necessarily causally linked. Because of our Cartesian heritage we tend to only consider causal relations as being significant. Any blatantly synchronous event is passed off as "only coincidence." But coincidence of events that we know are causally unrelated can be quite an eye opener. They greet us with a bit of surprise, sometimes delight. When thinking about a friend and that friend then calls we exclaim "Wow! I was *just* thinking of you!" It has the feeling of a "sign," an "omen": *it might mean something*. Rarely do we indulge this feeling of the presence of meaning during coincidental happenings. This propensity to dismiss might not be too wise.

There might be a tendency to say that such meanings are not "real." But they are *very* real. They definitely have the power to change lives and behaviors. The synchronistic attitude is the absence of denial. It recognizes what I feel right now and what it is that is making me feel this way. It is the human search for meaning. It necessitates courage, openness, imagination and practice. Perhaps we should be fostering an appreciation of synchronicity by being open to moments when seemingly unrelated thoughts, memories or experiences might appear to be meaningfully connected. It is in this way that our creative imagination can be fueled by analogy and metaphor.

From within the Cartesian paradigm synchronicity is a joke. It isn't valid. This is because of the Cartesian view that reality is like a giant machine. In a purely mechanical system you do not combine parts from one machine with another and expect it to work. All parts must fit together logically and with a designated purpose. The synchronistic attitude does not follow a mechanistic logic. It is precisely that human ability of imagination to forge meaningful connections between disparate entities and occurrences that allow for synchronicity. In the field approach to the human this is permissible because the field is one whole. The four poles are not like parts of a machine that fit together like cogs, wheels, pipes and belts to run the mechanism. The placement of any particular event or experience in any particular pole is in some respects arbitrary because each pole interpenetrates all the others. In this respect we say that the synchronous attitude can lead to our main concern: that of *field thinking*.

FIELD THINKING

By "field thinking" we mean to indicate that change in strategic thinking that results during the shift from the mechanistic to a field approach. We have been trained and oriented by the Cartesian paradigm to attack problems, to engage in problem solving in a rather rigid, narrow and limited way. As usual, this is related to our tendency to mechanize reality. Our problem solving methods are limited only when applied to problems that are not properly solved by mechanics. That is, specifically *human* problems. There can be no doubt that we have vast skills when it comes to solving problems in the areas of technology or engineering. We also make great strides when we attack human problems that are amenable to the mechanistic approach. The war against disease would be a good example. However, when we attempt to apply these same techniques to our relationships, our individual growth needs, or to social problems such as poverty or racism we fall far short of truly addressing these distinctively human issues.

The field approach is opposed to Cartesianism because of its tendency to always isolate and reduce. The field encourages us to always search for the interrelations, the synchronous aspects if you will, between the various dimensions of our lives. This searching is an art and a skill that is developed through practice and application in our daily lives as they are really lived. This field thinking is, in fact, less of an abstraction than is a mechanistic approach. We are all familiar with synchronous moments and experiences. To see them may even be a part of who we are as human beings. Certainly if the human is, in fact, a field it is such moments that highlight the fact that we can never divide our selves into separate compartments. We can never divorce our search for greater emotional satisfaction from the structures of our society. We can

never separate our quest for satisfying interpersonal relationships from our ultimate values and beliefs.

Field thinking takes into account any information available on the problem at hand, but it does not reduce the problem to mere information. A good illustration of this is found in the area of sexuality. From one perspective sexual performance is mechanical. After all, all you really need is the proper plumbing! But from another perspective sexual performance is anything but mechanical. It enters the realm of the distinctively human. Let us posit a man who wishes to improve his sexual techniques. He might go buy a sex manual. Excited (no pun) he runs to his lover to try out what he has learned. He's kind of dirty because he was working on his car that day and kind of sweaty because he ran so fast. He bursts in "Honey, Honey! I just read this great book! Let's do it and I'll show you what I learned!" She rejects his erotic overtures. Now why is this? If sex was purely mechanical, and he had taken the time to learn the proper techniques why was she not receptive? Well, because sex as distinctively human incorporates the entire field. Good sex results from at least rudimentary field thinking and a rudimentary application of creative imagination. The mechanics relate to the natural pole, but what about the social, subjective and divine poles?

Let us posit another man who buys the same manual. He calls his lover. His voice over the phone is somewhat lower than usual, he speaks a bit more slowly and conveys a certain languid sensuality. He arranges a date. He greets his lover with flowers and a kiss. They have a romantic dinner by candlelight--looking into each other's eyes, talking about nothing, giggling--well, you get the idea. Later, he uses some of the techniques he has learned. Ah! Love! This man took into account social meanings such as dinner and candlelight. He imaginatively catered to his lover's subjective experience. She was made to feel good and desireable. In the divine pole he communicated love and not just lust, and of course physically he had learned some new mechanistic skills. The manual provided *information* about sex, but it did not exhaust or communicate the *meaning* of the sex. The man had to be sensitive and imaginative to this himself: an easily understood example of field thinking in action.

It is field thinking that is missing from modern life. It is the constant surveying of all four main aspects of our lives for meanings that are relevant to our lives. It is the absence of denial and the presence of openness and courage. Information is logical, causal, usually not connected in any intimate way with who I am. It is represented by a list of facts. Field thinking pays attention not to facts, but to how I feel in light of certain experiences and encounters. It is how something relates to my life as a whole. Do I resist or welcome a certain encounter or experience? What is its significance for my life? Field thinking is not a question of agreeing or disagreeing. It is not necessarily logical or rational. That would be a function of information. This is not to say it would be illogical or irrational, it may simply be *non*-logical, *non*-rational, or creatively imaginative. It is a question of *what something means* to me, to the course of my life; good or bad, true or false.

Everything can always mean something. Let us picture a tree. In terms of information we might tell what species it is, what climate it inhabits etc. If we look at the tree from within field thinking we might think how its cooling shade is like the protective love of our spouse. The green reminds us of our best friend's car. The rough bark is like the argument of the other day. Field thinking is an active looking for meanings that relate

to our present concerns. While informational thinking is *linear* field thinking is *dialogical*. We dialogue with all four poles of the field each with the other and with our lived experiences. Using our imagination we survey all possible meanings in each pole and relate them together with our memories and anticipations. As we attempt to relate them together we often hit upon new possible meanings through the analogies and metaphors that result from the dialogical process.

FIELD THINKING AND THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT

Of course, no matter whether we utilize informational or field thinking we eventually have to act. We always have to assess reasons and input we receive in making a decision about a particular course of action. When utilizing information we might check up on the author and the research. Were the methods used valid? Does the author have a reputation for quality work or for quackery? We may also assess how the information relates to our own lived experiences. Does it jell with what we know and understand? The same is true for the meanings that emerge from field thinking. These meanings have to be assessed. This type of assessment entails a bit more than checking on the quality of research or the author's reputation as we would for purely informational conclusions. In assessing the meanings elicited from field thinking we again have to look at how those meanings might impact each of the four poles.

It is in the area of assessment that we begin to take into account the radical shift in world view that is represented by the field. Usually, when we assess and decide upon a course of action we are guided by self-interest. For many people this self-interest is all encompassing and can lead to abuse of other people. From within the field approach self-interest takes on a radically different connotation than what we might usually think.

When we think of self-interest we are centering on what in the field is called the subjective pole. That is, when deciding upon a particular course of action we make the subjective pole our primary concern. Within the field though, we have to treat all four poles equally. In a later chapter, when we discuss the subjective pole we will talk about "subjective prejudice." Subjective prejudice is intimately related to our biological wiring that causes us to always see in terms of space-time and positional identity. As we shall see in that chapter the human self is *not* the human ego. The ego is one aspect of the subjective pole. Our self, our identity results from the dynamic dialogue between all four poles. We begin to see how strange are the demands of the field approach. Field thinking is much more than a technique or a skill. Field thinking is a total, and very real shift in our real life perceptions of our selves, of others and of the world. We do not see different things through field thinking, but we see things differently--radically differently. It is a new paradigm or view of the world.

We always need certain guidelines or standards by which we can guide our assessments. For instance, rules of logic and research methodology guide the assessment of information. Field thinking cannot be assessed in such a way. We need other guidelines or standards. Taking into account the holism of the field we offer the following tentative standards of congeniality, compassion and compatibility. Taken together they provide the over all guide, standard or goal for the human-as-field: metaxic balance.

GUIDE FOR ASSESSMENT: CONGENIALITY

Through a combination of genetics and conditioning we develop within ourselves certain unique gifts, talents, and qualities that make us who we are as unique individuals. One person is a dancer, the other a plumber. One person is interested in cooking, the other in English literature. The extent to which we are aware of and follow this inner prompting is the measure of what is called congeniality.

Many people have been taught not to trust these inner promptings. Some have been pressured to ignore them. An example would be the person who caves in to pressure to enter the family accounting business when she really wants to be a marine biologist. Our cultural values are often followed at the expense of our congeniality. Congeniality is not the same as being selfish, nor is it the same as our usual understandings of self-interest. The sense of an inner prompting, call or unique direction in life is a result of the four pole dialogue.

The subjective pole is the "center," if you will, of our apprehension of symbolic meanings and our experience of assessment of those meanings. However, just as we experience others (social pole) as "not us" and the physical world (natural pole) as "not us" so too our subjective experiences are "not us." While it may *appear* that the subjective pole is the seat of the self, or is somehow "in" as opposed to the world and others being "out," it is not. Congeniality though, could be said, for the sake of convenience and ease of discussion, to be primarily an aspect of the subjective pole. Our use of the term "inner" direction, call etc. is a symptom of our Cartesian heritage (in which we are still embedded). The authors are unable to come up with a more accurate term that will at least still point to the phenomenon we are talking about.

Congeniality is a guide to a more fulfilling life. When we lack congeniality we ignore our inner direction and the uniqueness of the personal range of our field. As a consequence we may never know who we most deeply are. We may even learn to devalue ourselves because our inner uniqueness is not valued by our social and cultural milieu. This can lead to self-hate.

GUIDE FOR ASSESSMENT: COMPASSION

Human relations in the field approach is a broad category. It entails not only our immediate interpersonal relationships, but also anything produced by other people such as social institutions and historical traditions. Human relations can only rest on compassion. It is a necessity in the social pole. Contrary to our intuitions the person sitting across from you is not entirely separate from you. From within the field approach people exist on a continuum, each intimately effecting the other. This interpersonal effect occurs between individuals as well as between society, its history and traditions, and individuals. This is another example of how the field approach is radically counter-intuitive. Compassion means "to suffer with." It is the capacity to empathize with others, to see another's view, to "walk a mile in their shoes." Compassion is directed both towards others and yourself. By compassionately recognizing your own pain, fear and denial you are enabled to relate to others with sensitivity to *their* vulnerability and suffering.

Compassion also relates to your ability to forgive. For instance, your spouse may have disappointed you dreadfully, but compassion allows us to let go of the anger, pain and bitterness. While we don't approve of what they may have done we gain understanding of their own pain that resulted in cruelty. We are then free to forgive and continue with our own quest for health and growth. Forgiveness is much more than some elusive quality called into use when faced with "big" hurts or disappointments. It is called into use everyday. The disgusting belch, the cranky attitude, the dirty dish all call for forgiveness. It is in the little things that compassion is brought forth out of the hero. Like congeniality compassion is a result of the dialogical dynamism of the field.

The human is a social animal. We need human community. Our compassion can develop community support systems. We are not isolated and self-sufficient. We are not just the subjective pole. We cannot control the world. Winds blow, rain falls and disease can strike without warning. Especially at these times we need the love, compassion and support of caring others, *and we need the ability to accept that support*. The hero is not deluded as to her "toughness." She accepts her vulnerability, her dependence upon others, her own need to be understood. Good social support is necessary for health and growth. It can include receiving knowledge, financial, and physical support. It also includes the possibility of having someone with whom you can share your hopes, fears, and dreams. Support is especially needed in times of crises and emergency whether physical or emotional. In one sense "support" can be translated into "friends." People who lack support are often socially isolated and lonely. Their fields are not in a proper balance. Such people are often in active denial of death. To admit their own weakness and vulnerability, their need for other's love is to recognize the closeness of death. To ask for help often takes great courage and great insight into the basic human condition.

Certainly it is easier to love and be compassionate towards some people rather than others. Those who appeal to us, who are similar to us, to whom we are attracted invite our caring and concern. Love does not necessarily mean "like." It is possible to dislike someone--to not be "friends" and yet still respond with love and compassion. We need to love and have compassion for ourselves also. This means that we often have to draw boundaries with people we find unpleasant or manipulative. We do not however, have to hate them. Our tendency to avoid people who are different than us is a symptom of the denial of death. When confronted with a person who does not think like we do, speak like we do, dress like we do, or share the same tastes in food, music, entertainment we also face a potential negation of our own selves. When we encounter such differences there is an unspoken undercurrent of threat to us. "If he is different than I is he *better* than I? If he is better than I he must have more *life* than I. If he has more life I am being threatened by death."

We often say that "the world is shrinking." Indeed, it is. Problems in other parts of the world now have the potential to greatly effect our own lives. And yet the people in other cultures may be so different than us as to be almost incomprehensible. This is a threat. At root it is a threat of negation and death. How we respond to this difference or unattractiveness is a measure of the strength of our denial of death. Global awareness provides input and information we need in assessing *our own* lives. We learn of the differences of people, how their actions may effect us. We learn to both suffer and celebrate with others. In the past people were unable to experience global

awareness. For us it is both an additional opportunity and an additional responsibility. It is an opportunity to become courageously heroic. It is a responsibility to respond to all people with love and compassion.

GUIDE FOR ASSESSMENT: COMPATIBILITY

It would be a perfect world if everyone was able to spend their days in congenial pursuits, performing activities that were true expressions of their interests and desires. There is no doubt that the world would be a much better place if we could all show just a little more compassion towards each other. Obviously, it is not a perfect world. This creates the demand for compatibility.

The philosopher Martin Heidegger said that the human finds himself "thrown" into the world. We inhabit a world with structures, institutions and traditions that are not of our making and may have little to do with how we *really* feel. Victims of any kind of racism or ethnic discrimination are an example of how we are "thrown" into the world. Its almost as if we just wake up one day and find ourselves in a place different from where we fell asleep. Whenever we assess meanings and decide upon a course of action we must take into account the situation and circumstances in which we find ourselves. As congeniality can (for convenience' sake) be associated with the subjective pole, and compassion with the social, compatibility can be associated with the natural pole.

On a very basic level anything we do must take into account our biological limits. We have already discussed how we are biologically "wired" to organize our experiences in terms of space-time and positional identity. During his attempts to discuss human freedom the French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre used an example of a paraplegic looking at a mountain. Let us say that this person would like to climb that mountain. It seems congenial with who he is. However, it is not compatible with his physical condition. A very painful example of the need for compatibility is experienced by many of our senior citizens who have their driver's licenses taken away.

On another level compatibility is expressed by means of the social institutions within which we find ourselves. For instance, let us say a young person is going for a job interview. He fancies himself a rock 'n roller and so affects the dress and hair style compatible with that situation. However, the job market is a different situation. In order to be compatible he may have to re-style his hair and buy different clothes. Compatibility and compassion are closely interrelated. Attending certain types of social functions without the proper attire or use of proper etiquette would not only be a problem of compatibility, but of compassion also. The wrong attire and a lack of etiquette may seriously offend and insult some people and thus be lacking in compassion to their sensitivities.

Compatibility is especially lacking today vis a vis our environment. Our environment is delicate and effects the sensibilities of other people. When on the highway you toss out the bag, can or bottle you are displaying a lack of compatibility with the environment.

THE GOAL OF ASSESSMENT: METAXIS

In our discussion of congeniality, compassion and compatibility you may have hit upon how difficult our decision making can actually be. Unlike using logical guidelines or a specific research method these three guidelines can rarely, if ever be totally satisfied. It is probably safe to assume that we will never find ourselves in a position in which we are fully congenial, compassionate or compatible. With informational thinking we can always point back to the validity of our logical processes. We can do no such thing with field thinking. There will always be give and take, there will always be a demand for compromise.

Let us return to the example of an upper class social soiree. There will be certain expectations of dress and deportment. Now, suppose a young social iconoclast is somehow invited to this function. How will he balance these three guidelines? Allowing for congeniality he is condemning of such affairs, its clothes and its mores. Allowing for compassion he understands these people as products of their own history, conditioning and traditions. Allowing for compatibility he will have to somehow balance his iconoclastic tendencies--his own sense of right and value--without totally alienating the people with whom he disagrees. Somewhere, somehow there is going to have to be a compromise. He may simply choose not to show up. He may show up in jeans and a tee shirt and be very cordial to people he doesn't really care for. He may "play the game" but inside seethe as his congeniality is violated.

The goal of human assessment and action must be finding a proper balance between the four poles of the field. This proper balance (more accurately an *approximation* of the balance) is what is known as "metaxis." Because the field is dynamic metaxis is not a state achieved once and for all, it is only approximated. In each situation into which we are "thrown" there is a demand for the surveying of each pole for symbolic meanings. There is the demand for assessment of all the various meanings and a demand for a balancing between the four poles. Certainly in our example of the self-interest that can result from an elevation of the subjective pole the imbalance from the selfishness is easy to see. Another familiar example of imbalance is that of the "martyr." This is the person who seems to elevate the social pole. Always helpful and giving care this rebounds when the person discovers his own needs not being met. He then goes into a martyr routine where he is unappreciated for all the good he does for others. Other types of imbalance are found in any type of fanaticism. Fundamentalistic thinking is usually lacking in balance.

We can only move towards metaxis by moving out of a state of denial and compartmentalization. Metaxis cannot be gained if we ignore any pole of the field or do not treat each pole equally. We will not move towards metaxis if we deny real aspects of our existence such as death. The field approach demands that the person be open to the symbolic meanings emanating from each pole. When we compartmentalize or deny aspects of our lives we are no longer open. We do not receive the data we need for a proper assessment. Hence, we live lives that often fall far short of being satisfying or fulfilling.

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE FIELD APPROACH

In order to understand the human as a whole we cannot "see" people as being like a machine as does the Cartesian paradigm. We must see people as hermeneutic; as the

"creature-that-interprets." Hermeneutics--the interpretation of meaningful symbols--*always* at the same time indicates the possibility for re-interpretation.

Re-interpretation allows for transcendence and the experience of human freedom in response to limit. The person stricken with cancer can transcend that fate with a creative suffering, one that makes use of re-interpretation. The illness is given new, life affirming meaning.

It would be incorrect to conceive of the poles of the field as something we "have." The field is not a simple re-working of Cartesian body-as-machine ideas. The human individual is not properly understood as an independent, isolated entity. The human *is* the field. The understanding of the human-as-field is largely counter-intuitive, yet the authors have not "invented" it out of thin air. The progress of science and human understanding is often counter-intuitive. Discoveries of the round earth, the sun centered solar system, evolution and unconscious drives have all been counter-intuitive, though more accurate portrayals of human reality. So too the field. We join the cry of some hermeneutical thinkers for a "second Copernican revolution."

Copernicus, as we all know, "discovered" the sun centered universe. We fail today to appreciate the implications, lessons, and dangers of this move. Prior to Copernicus people understood the solar system according to the findings of Ptolemy. What caused Copernicus and Ptolemy to differ so? Certainly they were observing the same thing. Copernicus had no new technology that altered what it was he observed. Both Ptolemaic and Copernican systems explained what was observed: the movements of sun, moon and planets. What exactly was the difference? Copernicus was willing to move counter-intuitively. He simplified the explanations needed to describe the movements of the various celestial bodies. Whereas Ptolemy had the planets moving frontward, backward and in spirals Copernicus found he could more accurately and simply describe the motions if he "pretended" all the planets were moving around the sun rather than the earth.

This was a major shift in perception the effects of which we might have difficulty comprehending. The "Copernican Revolution" was much more than placing the sun at the center of the solar system. It also included a revolution of creative explanation. It not only "decentered" the earth, it "decentered" human observation. Even today, when we look outside it *seems* as if the sun is moving. It *seems* as if the earth is flat. Likewise, it *seems* like we are independent, isolated entities who are "in" a body. Copernicus' ideas caused great cultural upheaval. So much of what people thought about reality was intimately related to the earth and man (literally *man*, women were more oppressed than even today) being the center of the whole universe. But Copernicus' explanations were simpler and more accurate than were Ptolemy's, and we know today they were true.

The field approach is in many ways a second revolution. First, it is a more accurate portrayal of human reality. It does not need to exclude aspects of human experience as does the Cartesian approach. Second, it is quite counter-intuitive. The field approach decenters our subjective, private experiences as the location of our identity and sense of self (a product of our biological "wiring"). Our sense of self identity is always of ourselves *as a whole*. Our subjective experiences are *not* all that we are. We are intimately *constructed* by the environment, society, ultimate concerns, *and* our

subjective experiences. Our identity, our self, our being cannot be reduced to our subjective experience *of* identity, self, being. Thirdly, the field approach is, in actuality, a simpler model in that it allows us to describe actual observations. This may seem strange, but no stranger than a sun centered universe was for people many centuries ago. It is simpler because it is inclusive. In detail we may get very complex, but this is also true for a detailed explanation of planetary motion, forces of gravity, etc.

Let us make no mistake. The field is a radical move. From this basic view of the human we must re-view all aspects of our lives. This results in some very surprising results.