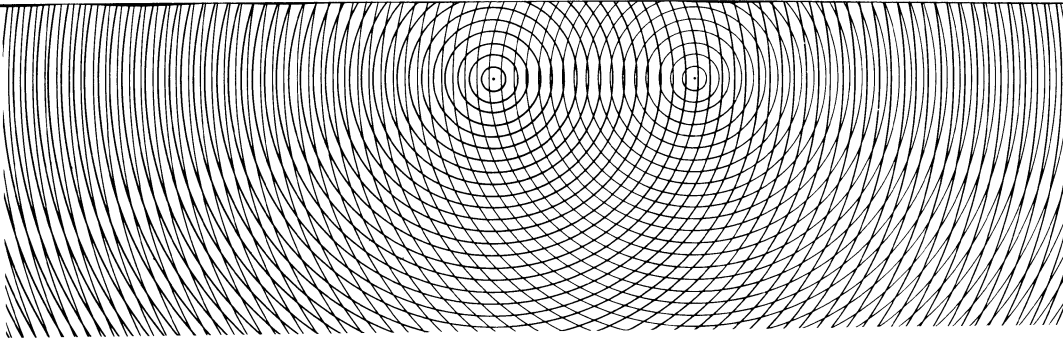


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## Fields and Their Clinical Implications

### Part I

*Dora Kunz and Erik Peper*

A DUALISTIC MATERIAL PERSPECTIVE is the common assumption underlying much of Western psychology; namely, we are physically and mentally apart and separated from each other. This article proposes that an energetic perspective, in which individuals are interconnected and are local concentrations within a larger field, is a more accurate description, or working hypothesis of reality. In fact, when one describes interpersonal (emotional) interactions between people such as "he gives me a lift" or "I feel drained," the language reflects this dynamic, energetic perspective. Underlying this model is the assumption that the energies interchanged in ordinary human interactions are modulated in (via) a universal field which permeates all matter. Such a model can be used to generate useful clinical interventions.

Every individual living organism can be described both as a physical entity and as a system of energy fields that are constantly interacting with the environment, which includes all other organisms. These fields (like all those known to science) permeate

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space. Each individual is a localization (concentration) of energy within these universal fields. Moreover, these individual local fields interact with one another, being part of one whole, dynamic, and interdependent system.

The perspective that each of us is interconnected offers a holistic model of how human beings affect each other. We propose that it furnishes a description of, as well as a mechanism by which such disparate phenomena as placebo and experimental bias affect the outcome of research studies; how bedside manner affects the health of the patient; how some schizophrenics sense our strengths and our insecurities; how we may become exhilarated and/or drained by other people with or without verbal contact.

An energetic approach to human interaction may explain how individuals unknowingly affect each other; it offers us the possibility of developing strategies to influence and change these interactions. In fact, the application of such a perspective may have outcomes that change our perception of human relationships, since every thought or emotion is an energy that may affect the energy field of others. These interactions can be positive, negative (draining), or neutral and are illustrated in the following examples: a person in a group becomes angry or hostile and immediately arouses a similar emotion in the other group members; a disturbed patient is soothed when a nurse quietly places her hand on his shoulder; a discussant becomes exhilarated during a lively discussion; a nurse becomes tired and drained after seeing one patient while calm and relaxed after treating another.

These experiential observations describe an energy exchange which is common to all human interactions whether they be thoughts, emotions, or physical actions. These energies radiate out from the body into space in wave-like patterns of motion that slowly attenuate and dissipate at a distance they sink back and merge into the universal field.

Each thought, action, and emotion can thus be seen as an energetic pattern with distinct characteristics a pattern which we may unconsciously radiate or deliberately direct at another person. In fact, illness and health have characteristic patterns of energy

flow within each individual. Such dynamic patterns may be likened to the ripple formation caused when a pebble is dropped into water. The amplitude of the wave which is generated depends upon the force of the impact when the pebble hits the water. Similarly, the intensity and duration of the human energetic patterns are modulated by the degree of concentration (focus), or intentions provided by the emotion, thought, or action. At times, one is unaware of the action. For example, one may feel little emotional response when he/she is engaged with an intellectual problem. Even though unperceived, changes are always taking place and this can be perceived as a field phenomena.

In describing the principle characteristics of the individual within the larger universal field, it is important to remember that such a description is only a static representation of a dynamic process. It is like a still photograph of a falling rock which, by freezing the motion of its descent in mid-air, might deceive us into thinking that the rock is floating in space. In the same way, any static description of the energy fields needs to be seen as a momentary, artificial arrest of the continuous motion which characterizes any field.

These fields are local concentrations within a universal field. This focus of energy is what we experience as *ourselves*. The different fields of an individual can be perceived in terms of sub-categories related to specific functions. Somewhat analogous is the way white light can be perceived as a composite of all the colors, yet can be separated into its component spectral colors with the use of a prism.

The fields which constitute a person include, among others, the electro-magnetic, the strong and weak nuclear (of the physical body), and in addition, consist of:

1. The vital field, which is closely associated with the body and is often referred to as the etheric.
2. The emotional field, often called the aura, which is made up of feelings. (Individuals can project this field.)
3. The mental field, which is the embodiment of our thinking and incorporates our visual images as well as our concepts and ideas.

4. The intuitional field, which is characterized by order, creativity, and compassion. (This field is a source of healing.)

#### ENERGY FLOW IN THE FIELDS

THE HUMAN field is much like a musical symphony. The musical dynamic is expressed in terms of inner consistency and harmonic relationships, no matter how dissonant the individual elements appear. Within the field, energies continuously circulate and flow outward and, sometimes, inward. The basic physical energy or vitality comes from what is called *prana* in Eastern philosophy. Prana enters the body through the vital counterpart of the spleen (not the actual organ, which in fact may be missing or damaged) and is modulated and distributed by a field mechanism known as a chakra (wheel), which might be called an energy "transformer." The solar plexus chakra transforms this prana into the vital energy which is so important to the physical body. The level of vital energy depends on how much energy flows through the spleen chakra, how it is processed in the solar plexus chakra, and the rate by which it flows outward and is distributed throughout the body.

This process can be illustrated in Fig. 1 by the water hose analogy.

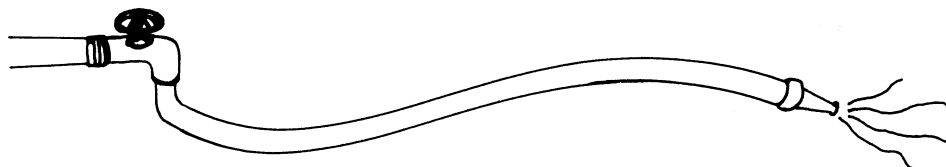


Figure 1

In this illustration, the open intake of the hose at the left represents the point of entry of prana at the spleen chakra, while the valve represents the solar plexus chakra. When the flow of water passes freely through the hose, without meeting any obstructions at the intake, middle, or end, a state of health ensues. Any obstruction which hinders the flow constitutes a pathological condition. A state of lower vital energy in an individual is usually related to a constriction in the solar

plexus chakra, which inhibits the flow of prana and/or leads to the depletion of the vital energy through excessive tension. Lowered vital energy is often the precursor of pathology.

Lowered energy may be experienced as a highly nervous state in which the "driving energy" disturbs the organizational balance of the individual and often results in a state of exhaustion. The physical symptoms associated with this lowered energy may range from irritability and exhaustion, to tightness in the abdomen, to difficulty in initiating even the simplest actions, which can feel overwhelming. The psychological symptoms include depression, a sense of withdrawal, immobilization, discouragement, and hyper-nervousness.

Ironically, individuals tend to be unaware that their energy level is changing or dropping until a threshold is reached and the previously named symptoms come into the foreground. Awareness is masked by various factors, such as one's attention being too involved in one's work or by being emotionally driven. In either case the exhaustion may set the stage for future illness, unless the process is reversed and the flow of energy is replenished. Ironically, when one's energy is low one tends to search for stimulants to "pep up." The result is often addiction, such as alcoholism;

however, "pepping up" is not the solution for energy depletion. To enhance the vital field, we must allow ourselves to relax. The process of relaxation increases the flow of prana through the solar plexus, thereby increasing our reserves of vital energy, a process in which we expend less vital energy.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE VITAL, EMOTIONAL, MENTAL AND INTUITIONAL FIELDS

### *The Vital Field*

THE PHYSICAL body is surrounded and permeated by the vital (etheric) field, which attenuates at about one to six inches from the body, or, two inches on the average. This field is an intrinsic part of the body itself; every cell is part of the vital field and contributes to its overall rhythm.

When the vital field is healthy, there is within it a natural autonomous rhythm. It is only when pathology occurs that dysrhythmic patterns and other accompanying changes appear. The whole etheric system can be thought of as analogous to the functioning of the heart. If the heart is dissected, each small part will seem to have its own autorhythmicity, but when the heart is healthy, the pacemaker establishes a unified overall rhythm.

In the same way, each organ in the body has its corresponding energetic rhythm in the etheric field. Between the spheres of the various organs the different rhythms interact, as if a transfer function were occurring. When the body is whole and healthy these rhythms transfer easily from organ to organ. However, with pathology, the rhythms as well as the energy levels are changed. For example, the residue of a surgical appendectomy can be perceived in the field. The physical tissues which are now adjacent to each other have an altered energy transfer function which was previously modulated by the appendix. In physics this is called impedance matching or mismatching. Each adjacent tissue is "impedance matched," which means that the energy can easily flow through all the tissue. Surgery or illness changes the impedance matching, so that the energy is to some degree dissipated rather than transferred.

It is only through field interactions that one can become aware of a field. In order to experience the vital field, we must be in close contact with another person so that the two fields can meet and interact. By exercising the powers of awareness, one can become sensitive to the presence of another person's field. For example, gently rub your hands together, then stop and very slowly separate the hands while feeling and listening to the sensations in the hands. Imagine that the hands are connected even though they are actually separated in space. Note the feelings,

such as tingling, electrical connection, or magnetic drawing. Now gently place your hands over your partner's hand without touching and listen or feel for the sensations as shown in Fig. 2.

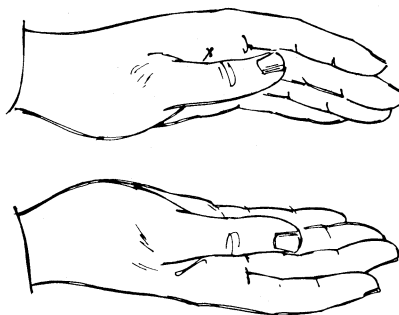


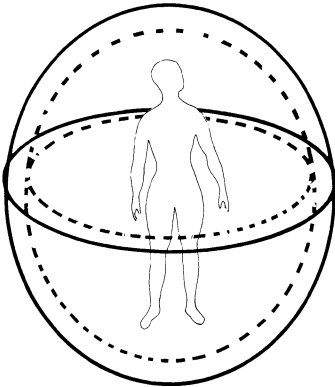
Figure 2

This intention of sensing for the field, establishes a resonance between the fields of the people. In this instance, the fields interact and resonate together in order for awareness to occur—the observer and the observed are always interacting. A detailed teaching strategy for learning this energy sensitivity for healing, known as therapeutic touch, has been developed and described by Dolores Krieger in her book *The Therapeutic Touch*.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Emotional Field*

Interpenetrating both the physical body and its vital field is the emotional field. This field is wider in scope, extending about eighteen to forty-eight inches beyond the body. Thoughts or intentions can enlarge its normal ovoid shape to express the strong feelings projected by the person—elasticity is one of its major characteristics as illustrated in Fig. 3.

Through thoughts and intention, the individual emotional field can be stretched to considerable distances, such as ten to fifteen feet. As it projects out, and if another emotional field is there, it tends to interpenetrate the other's emotional field and thereby affect the other person's feelings. This interaction is illustrated in Fig. 4.



**Figure 3**

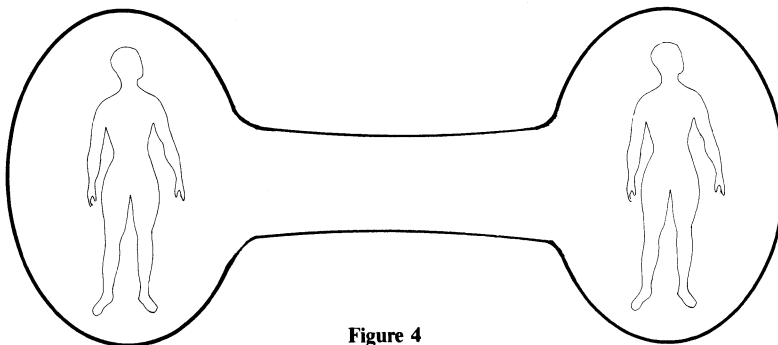
Such interactions frequently cascade and result in a domino effect, thereby affecting people at a distance. For example, actors or musicians may affect the emotional fields of people sitting in the front rows of a theater; these in turn affect others around them, and so forth, until the whole audience is influenced by the performance. The emotional field is more permeable and more easily affected by other people's emotional fields. Like bacteria and viruses, emotions are highly contagious, as is easily observed in mob hysteria.

The emotions enter the vital field through the chakras such as the solar plexus and thus affect the vitality and health of the physical body. The solar plexus, a focusing point or nexus, is where the vital and emotional energies most directly intermingle.

Feelings move through the emotional field freely, and their effects are almost instantaneous. For example, when a person's anger is aroused, that emotional energy either explodes from his field in all directions or is projected at a specific person like a bullet to a target. If there are other people present, this energy pattern of anger will interact with their

fields, resonate with them, and amplify any similar feelings which they may have. The result is that anger may be aroused in another person even if he/she is unaware of it. Of course when there is little interaction among the people present, the original feeling of anger tends to attenuate and dissipate. However, if anyone responds at that time, the anger will escalate and more and more people will become affected. The process by which anger may trigger the similar feeling in others has an analog in physics. Most materials have a frequency which can be amplified with little or no energy if force is applied at the resonating frequency of the material—the standing wave gets larger and larger. If the force is applied at a non resonating frequency, a standing wave is not initiated.

One can nullify the effects of this interchange by recognizing the source of the anger and determining its irrelevance and unimportance. This process allows one to diffuse the situation rather than actively attempting to control the energy of anger itself. Active control of the emotion, "I must not be angry!" tends to return the energy back to the angered person instead of allowing it to dissipate at the periphery of the field. This returned energy, if not dissipated, has long term, deleterious effects. It is more effective to recognize and to acknowledge the feeling in ourselves at the moment by saying, "I am angry and I know it." By singling out the reasons for one's anger, one can often smile at the ridiculous disproportion between the anger and the precipitating event. Similarly, if one can acknowledge to him/herself that he/she feels hurt or unloved, he/she can transform the disharmonious energy pattern of anger with a smoothing pattern by thinking of something that restores the other person to



**Figure 4**

his or her usual place in one's affections. In other words, the anger is recognized, dissipated, and transformed by the caring thoughts.

These factors affect the emotional field; each such perturbation affects the solar plexus chakra either positively or negatively and thereby influences the flow of prana into the various organs. The energy generally tends to radiate outward from the body in a continuous flow in healthy people. This energetic inflow and outflow is effected by what the person does. Relaxation tends to expand the field; meditation allows the field to expand in all directions and becomes more energized, balanced, and harmonized; while anxiety tends to constrict the field.

#### *The Mental Field*

The individual's mental field is part of a universal mental field and interpenetrates the emotional as well as other fields. The mental field can be described as representing one's intellectual functioning. It reveals one's ability to visualize and rationalize or conceptualize, to think clearly, and to synthesize or make meaning out of one's experiences. This process is more complex than described since categorization and rationalization are related to the emotional field; while conceptualization, synthesis, and creativity are associated with the intuitional field. The size and luminosity of this field relates to the way the intellect functions.

If a clear mental image is combined with emotional drive then the mental field can reach far out into space and/or extend itself to someone at a great distance. Although usually smaller in size than the emotional field and highly localized, it is more intense. It has the ability to radiate out a very small portion of itself over long distances when directed by one's thoughts. For this field to reach out to others, it needs the impulse of a strong emotion such as love or anxiety. The emotional impulse is often triggered when there is need, such as fear or anxiety. This need allows the mental field to reach out and resonate with the mental field of another person.

#### *The Intuitional Field*

The intuitional field is omnipresent and,

like the other fields, permeates the whole universe. The interconnections with this field deepen when there is a harmonious relationship between our emotional and mental fields, that is, when our emotions are at peace and our chattering mind is quiet. Even though the energy of this field permeates everything, one symbolizes it "as coming from above." This appears to be an actual experience, since the energy comes from above when one is centered and grounded. This is an experience in which we are *still within ourselves*. The action of this field can be likened to soft, beautiful background music that we cannot hear through the din of our daily lives. Yet the sounds are ever present and can be perceived clearly when the world is quiet. Hence people, if they train themselves to listen, can become aware of the music even when there are loud noises present.

The different qualities within each of the fields are similar to the spectrum of light, in which there are different vibratory frequencies or wave lengths, as well as densities and degrees of brilliance. This effect has often been described by clairvoyants, who already have enhanced perception. People who have not developed this ability can enhance their awareness of these fields by learning meditation, therapeutic touch for healing, and other strategies.<sup>2</sup> With practice many therapeutic touch practitioners can learn to discriminate and recognize some of the characteristics in a patient's vital and emotional field. For example, when practitioners gently attend to the sensations and cues in their hands as they assess the patient's field, they may sense a lack of energy or tingling. These sensations may indicate a physical or emotional disturbance. The sensations in the hands are often similar to the feeling of the warmth or coldness of an object at a slight distance. In addition, the emotional field can be sensed when the healer's empathy deepens to the point that there is an impression of the person's feelings and an intuition of that person's difficulty.

#### FIELDS AND THEIR INTERACTIONS

AS MENTIONED previously, the four fields just described are integral and have distinctive features. They are variations of the whole human field, just as red, blue, and yellow are

part of the spectrum of white light. The fields continuously interact with one another through the chakras and they are also affected by the fields of others. It is this interpersonal interaction that keeps us alive.

To maintain a state of health, the energy in all the fields must be incoming, outgoing, and freely flowing. A pathological state takes over when the energy is blocked and/or constricted in any of the fields, causing the flow to falter or slow down. Seen from this point of view, man is part of a dynamic energetic pattern—the interactions of which only cease at death. This process is analogous to the dynamic interaction of wave patterns in water which are in a state of incessant motion as shown in Fig. 5.

These interactions occur between people, in which one's physical, vital, emotional, mental, and intuitional fields express the state of the organism. A change in any of our localized fields affects our expression in the

other fields, since we are one whole. These categories are in turn interrelated, for when a field interacts with another field it changes and reorganizes itself. It is important to remember that this is a system's perspective. Within the human field perspective, every part is affected by and affects every other part. □

*Footnote:* We wish to thank John Kunz and Michelle Moran for their incisive comments and critique during the preparation of this manuscript.

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<sup>1</sup>Krieger, D., *The Therapeutic Touch: How to Use Your Hands to Help or Heal*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979; additional information can also be found in Borelli, M.D. and Heidt, P., *Therapeutic Touch*. New York: Springer, 1981.

<sup>2</sup>See Krieger, D. *The Therapeutic Touch*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979.



Figure 5