

Inside my greenhouse is a biosphere I control under God; outside is the global biosphere God used to control alone, now controls with some positive human **intervention** (eg, my garden), and will control in spite of negative human **interference** (eg, desertification from deforestation and groundwater depletion; upper-atmosphere ozone depletion; ground-resources [fossil & mineral] loss by consumption & diffusion; the human extinction of many other species; & land-water-air pollution)....This Thinksheet prays that the rising local & global concern for the environment will mature past humanity-centered intervention & interference to biosphere-centered **cooperation** with God and our fellow-creatures toward homeostatic symbiosis, a self-sustaining nature under the control of supernature....Imagine you are about to go to a conference on this subject: read these notes in that light. (Yes, the Thinksheet is a prepaper for a conference I'm soon to lead on this theme, which in my mind transcends and should inform many of the local and larger private and public issues today.)

1. "What shall we talk about?" The first person to respond at a church coffeehour or party or wherever is apt to define/confine the conversational territory, and it takes courage and finesse to say "I'd rather talk about...."....The great, underheralded American philosopher Susanne K. Langer: "If we would have new knowledge, we must get a **whole world of new questions**." Consider, now, that the new questions are asked from within a new paradigm or "world" (or, as I like to put it, "way of seeing the world"). Eg, from within the "development" paradigm, the operant question is "How can we help the developing (erstwhile, "underdeveloped") nations develop?" But from within what I'm calling the "geobiocentric" (centered on earth's entire life-process) paradigm, the critical question is "How can we prevent 'development'?" If the latter question is attacked as "insensitive," the response must be "To what?" Ie, the response must point to the paradigm-shift's redefinition of "sensitivity."

2. While thinking of that saying of Langer, I went to my library for her MIND: AN ESSAY ON HUMAN FEELING (Jns. Hopkins). In vol.1 she exhibits the full sweep of sensitivity, of feeling, from the lowliest organic activity to the highest human spirituality, and has this dedicatory: "To them in whom I hope to live even to the great World Peace--my children and their children"--expressing compassion for the unconceived, not just for the living. It's a proper extension of the compassion of Jesus, who in his time, not facing ecodeterioration, preached the meeting of immediate human needs. In vol.2 she deals with "The Great Shift," the changes that must have occurred to move us from our continuity with to our discontinuity from other organisms, from what in biblical language we call our fellow-creatures. From that title (which is part 4 of her six-part masterwork, parts 5 & 6 being vol.3) comes what's in quotes in this Thinksheet's title.

3. What I'm calling, here, "the second great shift" is a shift both **backwards** (returning our consciousness to continuity with the whole earth organism) and **forewards** (advancing our consciousness beyond the present anthropocentric, species-narcassistic absorption in the humanism of "Humanity is the measure of all things" and "This land was made for you and me").

4. Sounds like the fashionable "**creation spirituality**"? Overlapping, but the motives differ. My "second great shift" is motored by concern for the already irreversibly raped, God-given-as-good earth; "creation spirituality," by (1) the theological concern to counterbalance, with fresh attention to nature, the West's excessive concentration on history, and (2) the humanistic, human-potential concern to restore body to soul. While I share these two concerns, actual observations + the "CS" literature worry me: the movement is so vulnerable to narcissistic privatism. Yes, my "SGS" is open to attack as utopian (our species being too unruly to save the environment), draconian (requiring the surrender of democracy vis-a-vis environmental decisions), and promethean (doomed because exceeding the God-given limits of human controls).

5. Another way I have of referring to the shift I'm discussing is "**the second Copernican Revolution**." This historical analogy can be multidimensionally instructive. Both revolutions (1) are "natural," ie, about nature, (2) deliver from species-narcissism by shifting attention away from humanity (the first, indirectly, by relativizing earth vis-a-vis sun, then the universe; the second, directly, by relativizing humanity vis-

a-vis the thin, fragile earth-envelop we've latterly learned to call the biosphere, and (3) are r/evolutionary leaps of consciousness requiring heroic courage (Galileo, where are you?). The church should have helped Galileo: will the churches now help or hinder?....Note the order: A new world-paradigm creeps up, then is noticed, then (never without sweat and sacrifice!) is affirmed, then is inhabited (generally accepted as true, actual, factual). The medieval phrase, "theology the queen of the sciences," gains fresh meaning: every paradigm must confront the ultimate questions and from their answers derive the sub/culture's "logic," ie, style-form-content of deductive reasoning into which the data of inductive reasoning are made to fit--which is as true of Carl Sagan's atheism as of Galileo's theism. Hear Albert Einstein (xix, Foreword to GALILEO GALILEI, DIALOGUE CONCERNING THE TWO CHIEF WORLD SYSTEMS--PTOLEMAIC AND COPERNICAN, trd. by Stillman Drake; pub. 1953 by U. of Cal. Press): Galileo's "endeavors are directed not so much at 'factual knowledge' as at 'comprehension.' But to comprehend is essentially to draw conclusions [deductively] from an already accepted logical system." To this epistemological limitation we must add the powers/limits set by linguistic, economic, esthetic, and religious factors (ie, sociology of knowledge).

6. As the good is oft enemy to the better, which is oft enemy to the best, the old is oft enemy to the new ("time makes ancient good uncouth," "new occasions teach new duties"), and the flipside of a particular strength is oft its correlative weakness. **Compassion** for the human individual is a strength of our religion; but when this particular sensitivity is elevated to the level of idolatry (as in "right to life" priority of the fetus), a weaknesses of our religion is being exploited, blinding against the rights of the pregnant and of the biosphere (one human fetus, living till ago 70, producing enough polluting excretions to fill a small lake; so every abortion is a victory for the biosphere)....I'm for God-home-mother-and-apple-pie, I'm not a misanthrope. But neither am I primarily a philanthrope: I have only a relative love of humanity, a love relativized by the priority of love for God. Since Scripture assumes our love for the world-as-creature-God-calls-"good," from the fact that little is said of that love it cannot be concluded (*argumentum e silentio*) that its status is inferior to that of love for humanity. Further, the Bible assumes the unity of humanity and nature under the Creator (who sees both as together "good"), the Sustainer (whose providing, provid-ence, is for "all creatures great and small"), and the Redeemer (who sees both as corrupt and delivers both)....An NYTS teacher is completing her PhD thesis on the doctrine of nature in 4th c. Eastern Christian thinkers: the new global attention to nature will soon produce a sturdier, more useful **theology of nature** than the Church has ever had before--more useful apologetically, polemically, and in joint decision-making in nonecclesial situations.

7. Let's call this, too, "**the fourth technological revolution.**" Mechanical (eg, Pascal's computer), electrical, electronic, and now (let's say) geobiotic (addressing planetary life as a self-sustaining set, for which we might use the automotive analogy of cruise control vs. both brake & accelerator, or the analogy of gravity governor on a vertical dynamo or engine, or the analogy of gyrostabilizer on ship or plane).

8. Situation definition is the first stage of planning, but on emotional issues it's hard to get a good fix on **the situation**: the worried are like those who need medical diagnosis but who fear it more than the consequences of avoiding it. The world, having evaded environmental issues, is now having the geobiotic diagnosis thrust upon it. The biosphere can never completely recover its health and wealth; we are in metastasis and must shift the treatment from cure to control. Alex. Meiklejohn: "Democracy is people thinking independently together." A friend is promoting "peaceseeds" and "Earth Gardens." Can we think together, and soon enough?

9. The world needs a **liberation theology for nature**, to free it from human oppression. What bearing does this fact have on social liberation?....Science was first discouraged, then worshiped, and now must be harnessed to the new paradigm. Our species was threatened, now is out of (birth-) control, and will be brought under control on its own or by reflex actions of nature abused (famine, disease, predation, war).

10. In the perspective of the new paradigm, consider the Lord's Prayer, the simplification of life (a new asceticism?), a spirituality of cruise control.