

Named but not a Thing!

- from: Cyril Forssander, 18 Rue Rouzig, 22700 Perros-Guirec France.

The answer to the problem posed by Peter Fenwick in your April Editorial, as to whether one of the dimensions of the human condition should be named spiritual, depends on whether dimension itself is more than just another multi-purpose word. The SMN, he points out, was founded to explore that very question.

A contemporary psychological hypothesis divides human personality into physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. Between these (linear) dimensions there is said to be a continuity of (non-linear) experience. Some practitioners, following Descartes, have attempted to divide the spiritual or subjective dimension into named parts that can be arranged as a science (as had been done with the physical dimension).

In contrast, there is also the stirring of a movement today, of which you, Sir, cannot be unaware, reaching beyond the dictionary sense of Scientific, Medical and Spiritual. It proposes that named parts arranged in systems purport to analyze matter, experience and spirituality, but actually synthesize a separate, mathematical, substitute for existence which shadows the real thing. When Lafeu (*All's Well that Ends Well* V iii 325) announced that he could materialize the smell of onions with his eyes:

'Mine eyes smell onions. I shall weep anon'

he was identifying, by analogy, the unreality of language that had caused Diana, a betrayed mistress, to cry out:

'Dead though she be she feels her young-one kick;

So there's my riddle; one that's dead is quick'

a riddle immediately resolved by Helen the seducer's betrayed wife:

'Tis but the shadow of a wife you see;

The name and not the thing'

An onion, a wife, a lover, a shadow, death, a physical and a spiritual dimension, each named yet not a thing! More research is needed!

A Question of Words

- from: David Tompsett, 30 King's Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon., RG9 2DG

In his Editorial for Network 66, Peter Fenwick rightly notes that the word 'spiritual' carries "too much baggage". This has reminded me of what Dorothy L Sayers had to say in *The Mind of the Maker* (Methuen 1941). On page 149 she comments as follows:

"Spiritual" is not quite the right word to oppose to "material"; nor yet is "vital" or "mental". Each is too limited, while "non-material" is too purely negative. As R.O. Kapp says (in *Science versus Materialism*, Methuen 1940), 'we require a word which suggests that non-material reality possesses attributes lacking in matter'; and we require that this word shall cover the whole field of non-material reality. The word he suggests is 'diathetic', meaning 'capable of disposing to a specification'. Since this useful term is not yet common currency, we must make do with one of the others, intimating that we intend by it that which is purposive and orderly in its dealings with matter, as opposed to the random and chaotic habit of inanimate matter when left to itself.

Sayers had been impressed by Kapp's book, particularly its long central Section entitled "Double Determinateness" (pages 63 to 172). His suggested neologisms which she quotes

are explained on pages 263 to 267 at the end of Chapter 27 entitled "Non-material Reality". He was aware that the word had a specialised use in medicine, but believed that no possible confusion could occur between that and his proposed use in philosophy. He acknowledged help from M. T. Smiley, Professor of Greek at University College London (where Kapp was Pender Professor of Electrical Engineering) in finding "diathetic" in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. Further useful derivatives, "diathesis", "diatheme", "adiathetous" and "eudiathetous" were also suggested, together with "diathete" "the influence that exercises a diathetic activity". As Kapp explains: "All diathetes together make up the counterpart of Matter. This shows that the distinction we are now making between diathetes and Matter is the same as is made by philosophers between Mind and Matter and by religious teachers between Spirit and Matter and it may be thought that we should have done better to retain one of the older words instead of introducing a new one. However, we believe that both 'Mind' and 'Spirit' have certain disadvantages from which 'diathetes' is free." (page 265). On the next page Kapp says, "We are now, at last, able to provide simple and concise definitions of Matter and diathetes. Anything is Matter which has location in space. Anything is a diathete which discriminates."

Almost 60 years after Sayers and Kapp, it is much to be regretted that philosophers have still not provided us with baggage-free terminology. Perhaps the Network should at least examine Kapp's suggestions among whatever others are advanced.