



The Tao of Physics

Dr Paul Filmore, Chairman
chairman@scimednet.org

Forum: Editorial (Please comment via the members' website)

One of the responsibilities in being your chairperson is the honour of chairing at meetings. At our recent (spectacularly successful) Mystics & Scientists conference in April, I chaired the Skype session with Fritjof Capra, who was online from a hotel room in California. See Fritjof's article on page 15 in this issue. Not only was it a challenge for the technology, but also for attendees and Fritjof to see and hear one another, first in the talk and then, afterwards, during the meaningful dialogue. In fact, the session ran very smoothly, and was one of the highlights of the conference.

During Fritjof's opening talk, I suddenly realised that here I was, sitting in front of someone who may have had a significant influence in changing my life! Many years ago, I was a physics undergraduate at Surrey University, only 10 miles down the road from where we were holding the conference. During this time, I read Fritjof's book *The Tao of Physics* and was much moved by it. As Fritjof discussed writing the book and the effect it had had on his life and peers (both positive and negative), I realised that perhaps Fritjof had not understood another major reason for the worldwide effect of the book. When he finished his talk, I was able to have a brief dialogue with him on this matter in front of the audience. I realised that, as an undergraduate, Fritjof had become a role model for me. It was not so much because of the physics in the book, or his vision, but that one, (I), could relate, learn from, and develop new thoughts and concepts from very different subject areas. In fact, I could relate areas of experience and knowledge which my schooling, and even contemporary society, had kept in separate boxes. This was true 'thinking outside the box'.

The issue here is that we really do not know what influence we can have on the world, and the people around us. Sometimes we have to put our heads up above the parapet and express or share what we believe or are thinking at present, understanding that this can, and probably will, change as the journey of life gives us more insights, experience and wisdom. I am thinking here, as one example, of the evolving journals of Thomas Merton. However, is this not what we also, the SMN, are doing? I hope so. The journey may not always be comfortable, but it is a journey well worth undertaking, and the rewards for others are enormous.

Please continue to support us, the work we do, and the people (particularly young people, of whom there were quite a few at the Mystics conference) we attract. We need more of the right types of role model in our world. Perhaps by giving young people, as we did in Mystics and Scientists, a platform to speak, we can empower this happening into the next generation.

[To comment on this editorial, please visit our web site, and when logged in, click on 'Forums' under 'Network', and find the 'Editorial' group.]

Bibliography:

Merton, T. (1973) *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton*, New Directions.

For information:

At the Mystics & Scientists 40 conference, Charlotte Lorimer (final year undergraduate) gave a talk on her final year project, and Merlin Sheldrake did the same with reference to his PhD research. In addition, three MSc students were supported in their attending by reduced fees. Merlin and his brother Cosmo Sheldrake provided musical entertainment on Saturday night.

You complain because there is a war, but war is the proper state of the world in which men are a series of numbered bodies.

War is the state that now perfectly fits your philosophy of life: you deserve the war believing the things you believe. Insofar as I tend to believe those same things and act according to such lies, I am part of a complex of responsibilities for the war too. But if you want to identify me, ask me not where I live, or what I like to eat, or how I comb my hair, but ask me what I think I am living for, in detail, and ask me what I think is keeping me from living fully for the thing I want to live for.

Thomas Merton

