

THEOSOPHY-SCIENCE GROUP

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EDITORIAL NOTES

This Newsletter is prepared by the Theosophy-Science Group in Australia for interested members of the Theosophical Society in Australia. The email version is also made available on request to members of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand and USA by the respective National bodies. Members in USA should contact tsa@theosophical.org, Members in New Zealand should contact: john@serion.co.nz. Recipients are welcome to share the Newsletter with friends but it must not be reproduced in any medium including on a website. However, permission is given for quoting of extracts or individual articles with due acknowledgment. Selected items appear from time to time on the website of the TS in Australia – austheos.org.au.

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THEOSOPHY SCIENCE SEMINAR, 19-23 May 2011

Held at the THEOSOPHICAL EDUCATION AND RETREAT CENTRE,
Springbrook

Report prepared by Vicki Jerome, National Vice-President, NZ Theosophical Society.

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NEW PERSPECTIVES IN COSMOLOGY

This was the theme for the first day. After introductions and attunement led by Victor Gostin, the inaugural event was a talk by the coordinator of the Brisbane TS-Science group, David Allan – *The Evolving Drama of our Strange Universe* – which David described as “200 years of mystery, discovery and more mystery”!

The Electric Cosmos – The Emerging Plasma Cosmology Paradigm

After morning tea another Brisbane Lodge member, Aldo Donadel, brought us some “offbeat cosmology” – his description!

It can be said that the scientific material in the *Secret Doctrine* is 19th century science, but Aldo said that it can be looked at differently – the focus of his talk was to bring back together theosophical principles with new discoveries. In all her occult writing, e.g. *Isis Unveiled*, HPB is transmitting occult traditions, and one of the most persistent ideas found in the occult sciences is the assertion that electromagnetism pervades space, its heavenly bodies and Life itself. This energy needed a medium for its transmission, commonly called ‘aether’ or ‘akasa’. For decades this concept of ‘aether’ had been discarded by 20th century science, but the question of its existence is now being revisited by pioneers in the new science of Plasma Physics.

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Inflationary Cosmology

At 4.30 pm, duly refreshed and reinvigorated, we were entertained by Dr Brian Harding MA(Oxon.), PhD, past President of Canberra branch but now living in Brisbane, speaking from his discipline of nuclear physics, on *Inflationary Cosmology* – or, as he preferred to paraphrase it, “an Inflated Universe or Puffed Up Mathematicians?”

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Exoplanets and Astrobiology

After dinner, Dr Victor Gostin gave a fascinating powerpoint talk on the universe's abundant planetary systems and the past emergence, evolution, tenacity and future of life – a discipline known as astrobiology, which outlines fundamental concepts of life and habitable environments that help us to recognise biospheres that might be quite different from our own, and embraces the search for potentially inhabited planets within and beyond our Solar System.

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On Saturday we moved from outer space to inner, with the theme for the day being:

NEW PERSPECTIVES IN CONSCIOUSNESS

Universal Consciousness – Poetry, Metaphor or Science?

The Evolution of Consciousness: the significance of Spiral Dynamics for our times

After morning tea, Rosanne DeBats gave a Second-Object-themed talk exploring the unfolding of a limited aspect of the huge subject of consciousness – our individual consciousness and awareness within our bodies, in our community and culture on this earth at this time. This creates our worldview, how we experience the world, which can restrict what we are capable of seeing. Thus, for example, the classic materialist worldview has limited our ability to comprehend intuition.

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The Conscious Heart

Murray Stentiford introduced this topic by asking the audience for examples in everyday language of phrases referring to the heart. This had everyone thinking... but, said Murray, the heart has a mystical element too, being regarded from ancient times as the seat of the soul in the body. Science, on the other hand, has, until recently, seen it simply as a pump. In fact, the whole subject of emotion has generally been undervalued and denigrated in Western culture. So, how to combine these two opposing views?

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EVOLUTION, INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND OTHER TOPICS

With this theme for Sunday, the day began with Dr Brian Harding's talk:

Entanglement Untangled

Brian began by reminding us of the arguments and challenges Einstein presented to Niels Bohr arising from his difficulty in accepting the probabilistic nature of quantum mechanics, which he perceived to be an incomplete theory.

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Living a Full Life – Through dynamic collaborative awareness and deep Connection

After morning tea, Aaron Lim gave us a very positive talk on how to live a full life, which he defined as: capturing every moment with all our given abilities.

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Intuition, Luck and Science

After lunch, Chris Pang Way spoke on *Intuition, Luck and Science* – a title chosen because 20 years ago he gave a talk on intuition to this group.

In summary, Chris reminded us that emptying the mind and dropping preconceptions and expectations is another way to invite buddhi (intuition). Blavatsky taught that higher truth cannot be absorbed by a mind filled with preconceptions, prejudices or suspicion.

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Neanderthals and Other Close Relatives – Catastrophes and Human Evolution.

Later that afternoon, Dr Victor Gostin gave this talk describing how the eruption of two super-volcanoes during the last 200,000 years has significantly influenced human prehistory. Near-equatorial Toba in Sumatra erupted over 3000 km³ of pyroclastic ejecta (ash) during its 73,000 BP (=before present) explosion; the Campanian super-volcano in Italy erupted some 300 km³ ash in 40,000 BP covering most of east-central Europe. Both volcanoes emitted huge amounts of sulphur that created acid rain as well as global darkness. As a result, our close relatives, the Neanderthals, some of whose genes we have inherited, appear to have suffered extinction. As conditions improved, our forbears migrated into Europe, bringing with them farming, pottery, music, and spectacular art.

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