



Colloquium

The Global Consciousness Project: Meaningful Patterns in Random Data

DR. ROGER D. NELSON

*Director, Global Consciousness Project
Princeton, New Jersey*

The Global Consciousness Project (GCP) is an international collaboration of researchers interested in the frontiers of consciousness research. Since 1998, we have been recording continuous, parallel data sequences from physical random sources located around the world. The resulting database can be assessed for correlations with physical and social variables. We ask whether major world events that engage the attention of large numbers of people relate to anomalous structures in the data, and whether this might be interpreted as effects of an operationally defined global consciousness.

The GCP network has nodes in 65 sites covering the globe from Alaska to Fiji, hosting physical random devices that generate data continuously and send it for archiving to a dedicated server in Princeton, New Jersey. Analysis determines whether the random sequences contain periods of structure during pre-specified global events. According to standard physical theory, there should be no structure at all in these random data. Yet, we find that many of the events we examine are associated with striking patterns in the data. Special times like the celebrations of New Years, and tragic events like the attacks on September 11, 2001, show changes that apparently are linked to shared periods of deep engagement or widespread emotional reactions.

As of the end of 2005, the results for a series of over 200 formal tests during seven years of continuous running indicate a small but significant correlation with major events. In addition, we find long-term structure in the data that is correlated with social measures such as polling data, and with repeated events of importance to humans such as damaging earthquakes. We believe the GCP data and analyses provide evidence for meaningful interactions of consciousness with the physical world. Speculative interpretations suggest that we may be seeing effects of a "consciousness field" carrying information that creates subtle changes in the unfolding future – at least for our non-deterministic random sources.

Wednesday, October 11, 2006

4:15 P.M. (Refreshments at 4:00 P.M.)

Lyman Spitzer Building, M. B. Gottlieb Auditorium