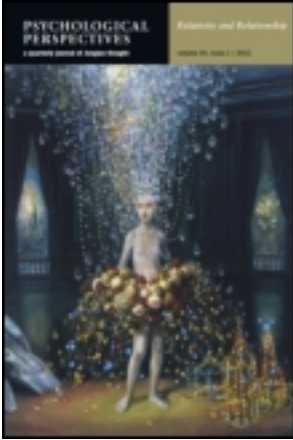


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September 11, Global Consciousness, and Jung

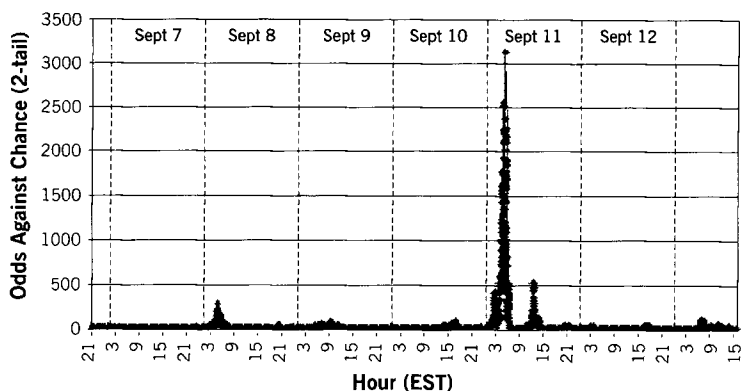
Barry Jeromson

The events of September 11 brought possibly the greatest focusing of human emotion in history. Billions worldwide sat aghast as images of massive tragedy, horrifying, unbelievable, gleamed from their television screens. A large part of the collective human psyche became immersed in a pall of grief.

At the same time, something amazing and mysterious happened in Princeton, New Jersey. A research group called the Global Consciousness Project, or GCP, recorded a large, unexpected aberration from thirty-seven matchbox-sized electronic devices located around the globe. Known as random event generators, or REGs, the devices seemed to register the massive global emotional shock with an output of anomalous data. The spikes in the graph show the shocks registered by the global network of REGs around the time of the September 11 attacks. Did a “spike” appear in global consciousness? Was it a case of psyche influencing machine, of mind over matter? Or was it a graphic demonstration of Carl Jung’s hypothesis that psyche and matter are outward manifestations of a deeper unified field of meaning in the collective unconscious?

What is a random event generator? A REG plugs into the back of a personal computer and produces a continuous stream of random oscillations every second. These register in the computer as either “1” or “0.” In effect, the REG is an electronic coin-flipping machine. It randomly flips 200 coins every second: 1 = “heads,” 0 = “tails.” The computer records the results of all these coin tosses every second, packages them into five-minute chunks of data, and relays them, via the Internet, to the headquarters of the project. There they are archived and analyzed.

Let’s digress and forget the electronics for a moment. Instead, think about the everyday act of flipping a coin. Flipping a coin is a random experiment. If you do it 200 times, you will get around 100 heads and 100 tails. Of course, it isn’t always this neat. *Chance* enters the picture, and sometimes you get more or less heads or tails. What statisticians do



September 11: A “spike” in human consciousness? This graph continuously registers the odds against chance of deviations from randomness, both positive and negative, in the REGs. The period is from September 7–12. The main feature is an extraordinary spike, or anomaly, with odds of more than 3,000 to 1 against. It peaks at 6:10 A.M. on September 11, just before the attacks. A second spike, with odds of 600 to 1 against, occurs several hours later. For further analysis of this and other graphs obtained from its September 11 data, visit the GCP’s web site at: <http://noosphere.princeton.edu> and follow the links.

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know is that if you flip a coin 200 times, you will get, almost certainly, between 80 and 120 heads. The odds of getting less than 80 heads, for example, are about 500 to 1 against. If you flipped a coin 200 times and less than 80 heads came up, then a statistician would regard it as highly significant. For it to happen would suggest that something other than blind chance might be influencing the result.

Now imagine that 40 of your friends each flip a coin 200 times. This is one set of data. They repeat this exercise over and over until they have 300 sets of data. Then they phone in the results to you. This is not a good way to keep friends, but it’s what the GCP sites all over the world do every five minutes. The scientists at the GCP compare each data set with what they would expect to get if the data were random, and they work out the odds of any deviation from expectations.

Most of the time, the REGs tick away randomly, producing results that fall within expectations. But occasionally, something amazing happens. Several times over the last few years, during events of world importance, the combined REG results significantly exceeded chance expectations. The machines stopped performing randomly and threw up long runs of heads or tails. In statistical parlance, structure entered the otherwise random data.

On September 11, the global network of REGs registered what the project director, Roger Nelson, called “an unmistakable and profound response.” The REG network produced anomalies that deviated from expected randomness, sometimes with odds as high as 1,000 to 1 against. At one instant, as the graph shows, the data showed odds against chance of more than 3,000 to 1. What is more, the anomalies seemed to build up several hours *before* the attacks began and lasted for several hours afterwards. What was happening? And just who is making these claims? Who or what is the GCP?

The project’s crowded website (<http://noosphere.princeton.edu>) lists its planning group: a software engineer, a software designer, a data analyst, an artificial intelligence researcher, a physicist, and several psychologists. These people seem to have impeccable research qualifications.

The GCP grew out of, but is distinct from, the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) Project. In 1979, PEAR began extensive rigorous tests to determine if human consciousness interfered with highly sensitive microelectronic systems. Volunteers sat in front of earlier, static versions of REGs and focused on a particular result. Deviations from expectations were small, but they were statistically significant. Measurable mind/machine interaction occurred routinely—and results seemed to be independent of distance from the machine.

We are reminded here of the investigations of extrasensory perception and psychokinesis—collectively called psi phenomena—conducted in the 1930s by J. B. Rhine. In Rhine’s experiments, dice were rolled or cards were dealt, while a subject tried to predict the outcome. Rhine found that predictions were better at the beginning of the experiment, when the subject’s interest was aroused and more intensely focused.

Something similar happened in an astrological experiment conducted by Jung in 1952. He was looking for patterns in the marriage horoscopes of 483 couples. Jung’s individual results were not significant. However, he found that they were better at the beginning when the experimenter was focused and excited at the possibility of uncovering some sort of mystery. Afterwards, they became less significant as attention faded. This experiment was one of the foundations of Jung’s notion of synchronicity—meaningful coincidences of psyche and matter. Jung

concluded that in such phenomena, “the emotional factor plays an important role” (p. 440).

Eventually, emotion entered the picture in the PEAR project. At one point, a couple who were in love acted as joint subjects. The result was significant enough to bring about a change in emphasis. Researchers placed REGs near people engaged in affect-charged activities—prayer meetings, meditation groups, and major sporting occasions—with significant results. In 1997, a REG was located in a sacred site in Egypt, near a group of people chanting and meditating, again with highly significant results.

In 1997, a prototype GCP trialed a network of REGs during the funeral of Princess Diana. The recorded anomalies were highly significant. In August 1998, the GCP went online, recording data from around the world. It now has more than forty sites. Of the many events monitored prior to September 11, those with significant outcomes included the U.S. embassy bombings in Africa, New Year Y2K, and the U.S. presidential election finality in 2000.

The GCP constantly monitor and seek to improve their methods and statistical procedures. The researchers do not monitor data in advance and then look around the world for a spectacular event to match any anomaly. Something is always happening somewhere. Instead, rigorous procedures are followed to predict possible outcomes for events, and the data are scrutinized afterwards. All results, favorable or otherwise, are published online. Since 1998, many events predicted to rouse global consciousness produced no significant anomalies.

What, then, is the GCP tapping into? The project members admit that they don't know for sure what's happening. But they do offer some speculations. One plausible explanation, which Nelson attributes to Lian Groza, postulates the existence of some sort of wave-like nonphysical information field. Information is encoded in the shape of the wave, but not its amplitude. That means that it is independent of distance—recall the PEAR experiments, in which the results were not influenced by the distance of the subject from the REG. Possibly, the information field interacts with the electromagnetic field, which surrounds us all the time. Just as electricity moving in a wire creates a magnetic field, so too certain types of electromagnetic waves from biological sources—for example, people—can create an information field. A highly focused, “realized” human being, emits electromagnetic waves that carry structured, coherent information. This information, in turn, resonates with sensitive electronic devices such as REGs (and possibly other random systems), and makes them behave in a more orderly manner. The rest of us less realized folks meantime give off weak, mutually destructive information field sig-

nals. It is only when large numbers of us all focus together on something that we can produce an effect.

At this point, let's return to Jung. In formulating his theory of synchronicity, Jung came to conclusions that resonate very strongly with the above speculations. Jung put forward the idea of a field of meaning which he called psychoid, that is neither physical nor psychic but which participates in both (p. 176). A synchronicity occurs when the psychoid manifests as a meaningful coincidence of psyche and matter. The GCP result of September 11 is a resounding example of this phenomenon—massive focusing of the collective psyche accompanied by heightened regularity in the behavior of matter, in the form the REGs.

There is an important difference, though, between Groza's speculations and Jung's theory. The interaction theory, whereby an information field intersects with, and affects, an electromagnetic field is a causal explanation: the focusing of human emotion caused the REGs to behave as they did. Jung, however, would view the phenomenon as acausal in nature. In Jung's view of the collective unconscious, time and space are relative; they dissolve into nothing. Under such conditions, causality cannot exist. Thus synchronistic phenomena must be acausal (pp. 445–446). Moreover, the presence of emotion suggests an archetype at work. The synchronistic example of September 11, then, is an outward manifestation of a psychoid archetype.

Space does not permit a lengthy digression into the nature of archetypes that might have emerged. A Jungian interpretation of the GCP's results requires that causality be jettisoned. This is not something that comes easy to the scientific mind. Yet how do we account for the buildup of structure in the REGs well before the attack of September 11? The information field/electromagnetic interpretation would require anomalies to emerge only *after* everyone had begun to focus on the event. Does the synchronistic explanation overcome this discrepancy with its notion of temporal relativity in the collective unconscious? Like someone dreaming of an event before it occurs, did the collective human psyche become aware of the event at an unconscious level even before it emerged as a manifested event? In the physical world, were the REGs responding to this unconscious buildup? If, in fact, the GCP devices are somehow interacting with focused human consciousness, such a discovery would vindicate, at least in part, those theories of Jung so long dismissed by mainstream science.

Barry Jeromson, Ph.D., teaches in the School of Communication at the University of South Australia. His research interests include links between Jung and the mathematical sciences.

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