Instruments located around the world are constantly feeding data to a central computer in an experiment which is researching the hypothesis that there may be a global consciousness. In Part 3 of this series, Dr Roger Nelson, Director of the Global Consciousness Project, reports on the analysis of data recorded during moments of celebration, and times of anguish.

THE GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS PROJECT

BY ROGER NELSON

The Global Consciousness Project (GCP) is an international effort involving researchers from several institutions and countries, designed to explore whether the construct of interconnected consciousness can be scientifically validated through objective measurement.

Where electroencephalographs (EEGs) measure signals in an individual brain, random event generators (REGs) have shown in laboratory experiments that the human mind can influence distant instruments (1).

Taking that concept to a worldwide scale is what the Global Consciousness Project is about. Accordingly, it uses the acronym "EGG" from the coined term, "Electro-Gaia-Graph," when referring to the continuously running network of REGs located around the earth.

We asked ourselves, if we can register the influence of one mind, and also see effects from a deeply engaged group, might we be able to capture such effects on a broader scale? Why not ask if the whole world, at least occasionally, becomes sufficiently "resonant" to affect the same kind of technology? The question led to the establishment of a network of detectors which transmit data that can be tested for correlation with events that may evoke a worldwide consciousness.

Data from the few minutes around midnight on New Year's Eve (1998

Part 3 - War and Peace

"PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD HAD BEEN THINKING ABOUT Y2K IN A CRESCENDO OF ANTICIPATION THAT WOULD CULMINATE IN THE MOST EXTENSIVE CELEBRATIONS EVER. AS A WHOLE, WE DEFINITELY WERE PAYING ATTENTION AND SURELY BECAME MORE FOCUSED AND COHERENT IN OUR THOUGHTS AS MIDNIGHT APPROACHED."

to 2001) have shown striking results. Other cases are the first hour of NATO bombing in Yugoslavia, the Middle East in March 2000.

In a series of such cases, the GCP has asked whether events that engage global attention are correlated with increased structure in the data from appropriately designed instruments.

SAMPLING THE RESULTS

The first actual data were taken in the working network on the 5th of August, 1998, with three eggs running, two in Princeton and one in Neufchatel, Switzerland.

Three days later, terrorists linked to Osama bin Laden bombed the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killing 224 people, including 12 Americans, and injuring thousands of others (2).

This shocking breach of civilized practice was a focus for concern around the world, and our simple analysis showed a remarkable jump in the absolute scores at the time of the bombings, continuing for a few hours. In statistical terms, this inaugural "global event" showed one of the strongest effects we have seen, with a probability less than 1 in 1000 that it would happen merely by chance (3).

We were off and running, but we also very quickly learned how difficult the task would be of understanding the messages presented by the EGG network. A week later, another shocking event struck the world consciousness: the Omagh bombings in Ireland. This time, in a situation that seemed terribly like the embassy events, the data showed not a glimmer of response.

There were more tragedies, including airplane crashes (Swissair 111, off Newfoundland, September 2, 1998 with the loss of 229 lives (4)) and hurricane-induced disasters. In October 1998 Hurricane Mitch, the deadliest hurricane in 200 years, struck Central America, killing at least 11,000 people, with tens of thousands missing and hundreds of thousands left homeless. The Casitas Volcano crater in Nicaragua filled and collapsed, wiping out four villages and killing 2000 people in a 50-square-mile area (5).

SHOCK AND DISMAY

With the beginning of the NATO bombing in Yugoslavia on March 24, 1999, the EGG data seemed to reflect the shock and dismay of the civilized world, with a data trace that shot upward just at the moment the bombing began. Then, two and a half months later, the EGG breathed a significant sigh of relief, along with the world, when Milosevic marked the end of the war and the bombing with a speech on June 10th.

Some tragedies focus the attention of people all around the world. One was the terrible earthquake in Turkey on August 17, 1999 in which over 15,000 people died, twice that number were injured, and 23,000 were reported missing (6). The EGG data appeared to "see" the quake itself, showing a 1 in 100 deviation in the half hour exactly centered on the main temblor. The biggest part of this deviation actually preceded the moment of the first big quake, suggesting that the EGG network might be sensitive to precursors or tensions that signal such an event.

However, while it appeared that we had enough indications of "something there" to preclude a conclusion that we were simply observing chance fluctuations, we did not have enough to go shouting from the rooftops about global consciousness being captured in our net.

THE LIGHTER SIDE

There were also some joyful moments like McGwire's record-breaking home run (admittedly a U.S.-centered event). We also looked at The World Peace Prayer at the UN on the 12th of December, 1998, the United States' Congress voting on the Clinton impeachment, and then Christmas Eve in Europe and the U.S.

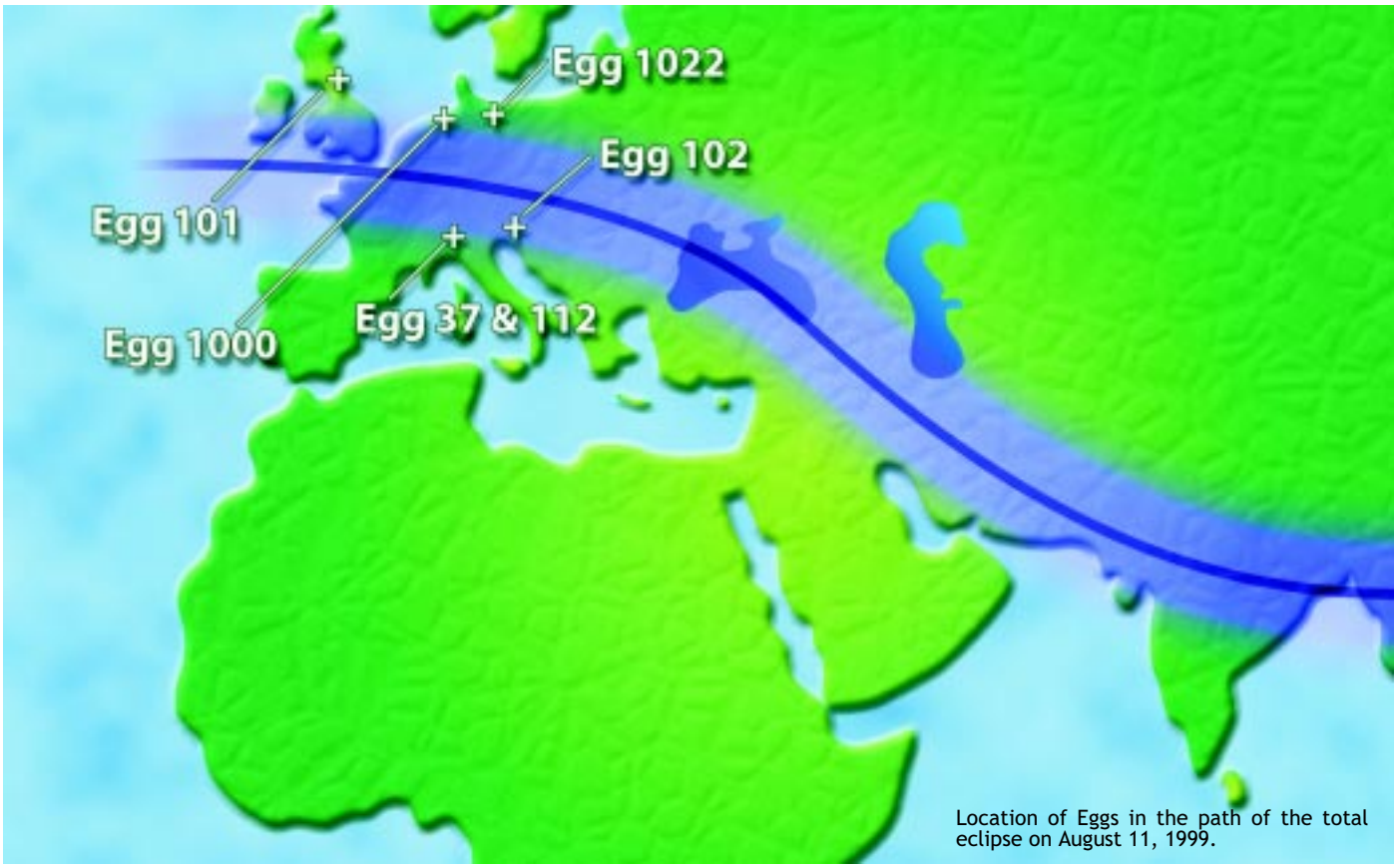
Many of these events had strongly suggestive positive data, but some leaned the other way, in the familiar mix of hits and misses that is characteristic of science at the margins of our understanding.

New Year's Eve, 1998, presented an excellent opportunity to test our hypothesis. Of course New Year's doesn't happen all at once, but again and again as the earth turns and brings the end of the old and the beginning of the new to each time zone. Our plan was to gather the data surrounding each of the midnights, and to compound all of the time zones into a single data set that would represent a brief period marking the height of celebration everywhere.

When this was done, the result was a spectacular confirmation of the prediction. Data from the ten-minute period around midnight differed from what theory and calibrations predict, with a probability of three parts in 1000 that the deviation was just chance fluctuation. The scores were slightly but consistently less random than at other times; they were more structured than they were supposed to be.

Surely the most obvious prediction for the GCP to make was that there should be a strong effect of global consciousness at the Y2K New Year's transition. People around the world had been thinking about Y2K in a crescendo of anticipation that would culminate in the most extensive celebrations ever. As a whole, we definitely were paying attention and surely became more focused and coherent in our thoughts as midnight approached.

The main GCP prediction was that there would be an accumulation of deviant EGG data during a ten-minute period around midnight. The result in this case was positive but not very impressive compared to the year before.



Location of Eggs in the path of the total eclipse on August 11, 1999.

On the other hand, a striking outcome was generated with a different analytical approach applied by GCP associate Dean Radin (7), Senior Scientist with the Institute of Noetic Sciences. He predicted that the variation among the individual eggs (we had 27 running by this time) would decrease near the transition to the New Year, and become very small just as everyone's focus centered on the stroke of midnight. His analysis showed a spectacular confirmation of that idea, with a highly improbable spike in the data, registering its greatest deviation just a few seconds from midnight. The probability for this outcome was very impressive, on the order of 1 in 1000, even with an appropriate adjustment for multiple tests.

LOCATION IN MIND

On August 11th, 1999, a full solar eclipse passed over Europe and parts of Asia, in view of large numbers of fascinated people. We predicted the event would generate a widespread coherence of attention and a correlated effect on the GCP eggs. The result was highly instructive. Taken overall, the deviation was not significant. But that is not the whole story. For just the EGGs in the eclipse's path, the deviation was highly significant at 3 parts in 10,000.

Although some other cases suggest otherwise, these eclipse results indicate that the EGGs are most sensitive to relatively local influences, in apparent contradiction of one of our ingoing assumptions, which says that the location of events relative to the EGGs should be unimportant. If this indication is confirmed in other assessments, it means that although the anomalous interaction of minds and machines that we use for our measure is nonlocal, it isn't unboundedly so. We must also be aware that the manner in which we choose to isolate blocks of data for analysis (by the second, minute, hour, or day) can yield differing comparative results. Further, at the subtlest level, there exists the possibility that the consciousness or expectations of those doing the analyses also has an influence on the outcome. Certainly we have to learn much more before drawing conclusions in this deeply complex area.

GLOBAL MEDITATION

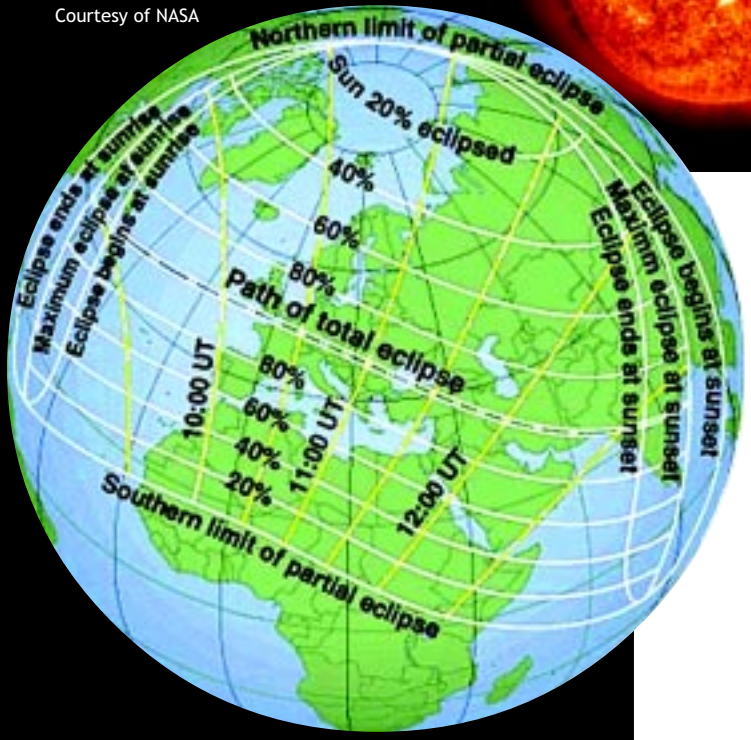
Because opportunities for conscious cooperation are enhanced in today's communication environment, the idea of doing something about peace and the creation of a positive future has become the focus of an increasing number of organized "global" meditations or calls to prayer.

The GCP itself sponsored one such event on January 1, 2000, when we promoted a suggestion made by Mahadeva Srinivasan to take "Just a Minute" at noon to think about peace and the beginning of a millennium of progress for humanity. The relevant minute of data was collected from every time zone, and the one-minute epochs were superimposed and averaged. The result was a highly significant departure from expectation — it could happen by chance, but only once in a hundred repetitions of the extraordinary conditions for this experiment.

THE POPE

Then there was the historical pilgrimage of the Pope to the Holy Land in March 2000. The six-day visit incorporated many individual events that might have some significance to the world. There was intense news coverage and, though not everyone was pleased with the tour, people could be seen in the TV footage weeping for joy at the Pope's obviously heartfelt effort to lead in the right direction.

For the GCP analysis, a decision was made simply to look at the accumulated deviation for the whole period, and the outcome was remarkable — a steady trend over the six days, with a likelihood of a few parts in a hundred for such a strong effect. Such a long-continuing deviation was so unlikely that it seemed necessary to check that the EGG network and the analysis were functioning properly, so a similar sample was taken a few days after the Pope's visit ended. In



Below:
A Total Eclipse of Europe.
Courtesy of NASA

Image on left:
Eclipse from Space
Image on right:
Eclipse from Earth
Courtesy of NASA and SOHO

this six-day sequence, there was no trend at all.

Despite the subtleties inherent in the question we are addressing, these results give unequivocal evidence that some combination of factors has produced an anomalous effect associated with those special moments we have identified as global events.

Endnotes

1. http://www.princeton.edu/~rdnelson/reg.html
2. http://abcnews.go.com trial report Feb 6 2001
3. Full details on the analytical treatment of this and all other formal events are available on the GCP Web site at http://noosphere.princeton.edu
4. http://www.herald.ns.ca/cgi-bin/home/package?Swissair1
5. http://lwf.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/reports/mitch/mitch.html
6. Earthquake Museum-1999 Earthquakes http://www.olympus.net/personal/gofamily/quake/1999quakes.html
7. http://www.psiresearch.org/CRL.htm. Radin is also the author of *The Conscious Universe,* published by HarperEdge, New York.