

Roger Nelson's "Global Consciousness" Does Not Exist

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ABSTRACT

In 1999, physicist Roger Nelson of the Princeton Institute began a worldwide experiment in the search for Global Consciousness by installing tunneling computers in the USA and Europe. The aim of this study was to demonstrate the presence of psychic synchronicities and prove the existence of a cloud of consciousness around our Earth. 24 years later, the experiment is still running. However, we consider that this cloud of supra-human consciousness is nonsense and that this experiment is philosophically aberrant.

Keywords: Body schema, collective unconscious, global consciousness, Roger Nelson.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since ancient Persian times, man has possessed a soul destined to join the world of the gods after his death. The Greek philosophers (Plato among them) specified that the human soul has two parts, called Thumos and Epithumia, which became Anima (*vigour*) and Spiritus (*Spirit*). Spiritus is the gerund of the verb *Spirare*, which means to breathe. The Spirit is "what is breathed," so it is invisible and collective, like air. How can man be aware of this Spiritus, which is invisible and everywhere?

2. METHOD

This paper considers that the search for global Consciousness is not a computer problem but a metaphysical question. It must be studied with philosophical tools, not with machines placed all around the world. As a starting point, a collective emotion seemed to modify the emission of "bits" by a quantum tunneling computer. Is this Consciousness? We wish to philosophically demonstrate that consciousness is an individual, impermanent, and necessary object. By its very nature, these attributes cannot be demonstrated by a calculator. Paradoxically, Roger Nelson's real aim seems to be to search for Spiritus, its nature, and its distribution.

3. THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

1) On the Origin of Spiritus

The Greek scientist Anaximenes was born around 585 BC (a century before Plato). He claimed that the source of human thoughts was air (pneuma). Air was the original substance and basic form of the physical world and psychic life. It was divine and transformed by condensation and rarefaction. There was a close relationship between cosmic air and the soul-breath. One of Anaximenes' fragments reads as follows:

As our soul, being the air, holds us together and controls us, so the wind and the air enclose the whole world.



Remarkably, the term *psuchè* is etymologically linked to the verb *psuchèin*, which means 'to blow' or 'to breathe.' Its Latin equivalent *spirare* is *Spiritus*, etymologically "which is breathed." This aerial origin is still found today. Elisabeth Behr-Sige ([Behr-Sigel, 2019](#)) reports:

...the invocation of the Spirit accompanies and authenticates all the sacraments. It is the breath of the Church.

So, is the Spirit intelligible? Does the Spirit create self-awareness, or does self-awareness create the Spirit?

2) On the Origin of God

Since 1667, this question seems to have been settled. The statement "God is Nature" appears three times in Baruch Spinoza's *Ethics*. The philosopher asserts that God and Nature are essentially the same things ([Crivellato & Ribatti, 2007](#)):

The power that enables singular things, and therefore man, to retain their being, is the very power of God, that is, of Nature (Deus sive natura, in Latin) (Garett, 2018, p. 499).

For the philosopher, God is a single, perfect "substance" that envelops everything, animate or inert beings, human or non-human. This primary substance can be declined ad infinitum, like so many 'attributes' of reality:

By God, I mean an absolutely infinite being, i.e., a substance consisting of an infinite number of attributes, each of which expresses an eternal and infinite essence (Garett, 2018, p. 478).

Here, we find attributes very close to Anaximenes' *Spiritus*.

3) On the Nature of the Soul

The Greek philosopher and scientist Democritus of Abdera ([Morel, 2000](#)) was born around 460 B.C. and died in 370 B.C. He was considered a materialist because of his conception of a universe made up of atoms and a vacuum. He remained strongly influenced by Anaximenes. He wrote that:

The atoms of the soul are widely present in the air. The soul itself is a material aggregate, composed of very fine and mobile corpuscles. In breathing, every living being loses a certain quantity of psychic atoms, and after death all these principles of life are dispersed. All in all, the cosmos appears to be a dynamic mixture of vital entities (Tutrone, 2014, p. 15).

For Democritus, there is no doubt that the soul has a material (atomic) nature, transported by the air that is essential to life. Its particles are endowed with dynamic and psychic energy. The soul is, therefore, psychic consciousness, a statement similar to Spinoza's. From this, we can deduce that consciousness is material, i.e., natural. This vision was taken up again in the 20th century by the "new philosophy" under the influence of the nascent psychoanalysis. Gaston Bachelard conceived of the human soul as material and dual:

A material soul: Bachelard's soul vibrates in a double orientation, subjective and objective, solitary and altruistic, one and multiple, changing and perfectible, inseparable from the soul of the material world as well as from the soul of other living beings. Animus [Spiritus] vibrates with anima, and vice versa, between daydreams and concepts, philosophy and poetry, in the knowledge that the past of our soul is deep water (Bachelard, 1942, p. 74).

4) On the Origin of Consciousness

From the foregoing, we can conclude that Man possesses a soul (Anima) that animates his body (soma) and a Spirit (Spiritus) whose essence is both natural and universal (infinite).

- 1) We can easily understand the genesis of the human body (soma) thanks to the contributions of science, in particular biology, which has been studying living things since the discovery of the microscope by the Dutchman van Leeuwenhoek, a contemporary of Spinoza. The body results from the fusion of two germ cells from the mother and father in a process called fertilisation. The result is a complete individual with psychic and sensitive activity. All the physical and

psychological characteristics of an individual are contained in a single cell (egg) that encloses its personal genetic code in the form of a complex protein called DNA. This truth is widely accepted. An individual's physical and psychological appearance is genetically predetermined.

- 2) Anima is the part of the soul that animates the body. It is the life that enables homeostasis ([Homéostasie, 2024](#)), conservation and transformation of the body. This Anima is self-aware and is also called the 'Ego'. The 'Ego' is the conscious part of the soul. It is linked to knowledge of one's own body (body schema). The neurologist Henry Head ([Pipeyre, 2021](#)) is credited with the first elaborations of the notion of body schema. Based on research into disturbances in the ability to localise external stimuli, Head accepted the existence of tactile, visual, postural, and motor patterns or schemas of the body. This is a system for memorising the body's position according to organised patterns. According to the neurologist, this system is unconscious. The philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote that:

The body brings together and encompasses very heterogeneous parts, composes with itself and constantly constructs a new set of inter-sensory, intra-sensory, sensory-motor and spatio-temporal analogies, in order to adapt to the various situations of perceptive life, to respond to the demands of the world and to the need for unification of the thing, to the demands emanating from a constellation of data? The body gives meaning to its surroundings, gives us access to a practical environment and gives rise to new meanings, both motor and perceptual... The world is organically centred on the body. ([Angelino, 2008](#), p. 172).

- 3) On the other hand, the nature of the Collective Spirit is still debated today. There are two opposing schools of thought, and they are explained below.

a) Spiritual and Transcendent "Panpsychism" ([Evrard, 2021](#))

One school considers that the Spirit is not generated but is innate. It is concentrated in the Universe, or around the Earth, and has been called "Panpsychism" by Henri Bergson ([Dolbeault, 2013](#)), "Noosphere" by Vladimir I. Vernadsky and quoted by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin ([Fuchs-Kittowski & Krüger, 1997](#)) in 1955 in his book "Le Phénomène Humain":

According to the Russian scientist Vladimir Vernadsky and the French philosopher Teilhard de Chardin, the intuitive right brain is endowed with yet another gift, that of being able to connect to what they call Noosphere. The Noosphere could be represented as a large cloud encircling the planet, just like the atmosphere. This immaterial spherical cloud would be made up of all the human unconsciousness emitted by upright brains. The whole would constitute a great Whole, the global human Mind, as it were ([Werber, 2024](#)).

This school of thought was updated by the work of Roger [Nelson \(2006\)](#), who asserted the existence of a collective Earth Consciousness. American researchers have used a tunnel-effect computer to demonstrate the existence of psychic synchronicities throughout our world that modify the random distribution of numbers generated by this computer. As a result, scientists wondered whether human minds could interfere with a machine and whether they could interfere with each other invisibly, at great distance.

... databases and analytical research are full of suggestive indications. I think that this... will help to formulate better questions and that these will gradually reveal more of the subtle character of human consciousness. It is clear to me that direct interactions of consciousness with the physical world are of immense philosophical and scientific importance. Ultimately, this work supports a vision of the world in which we humans have the capacity and responsibility for the evolution of consciousness. Our future is in our minds." ([Nelson et al., 1998](#), p. 344).

This hypothesis was also evoked by Carl Jung and Wolfgang Pauli as early as 1920. The quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli was a patient of the psychiatrist Carl Jung. Pauli passed on his dream accounts to Jung over a period of more than 20 years. These very vivid dreams led to the concept of an imaginary, collective, and synchronous unconscious, similar to quantum physics (Pauli's dreams). It is therefore a highly intellectual psychoanalysis. The theory of the collective unconscious was therefore mainly based on the dreams of one man:

In the end, directly or indirectly, Jung compiled around 1,300 of Pauli's dreams and used them for his research. As a result, as Beverley Zabriskie ironically points out, « readers of [...] Jung know more about Wolfgang Pauli's unconscious than they do about his life as a physicist and his discoveries". His dreams considerably enriched the resources that Jung could use to develop his theories ([Werber, 2024](#)).

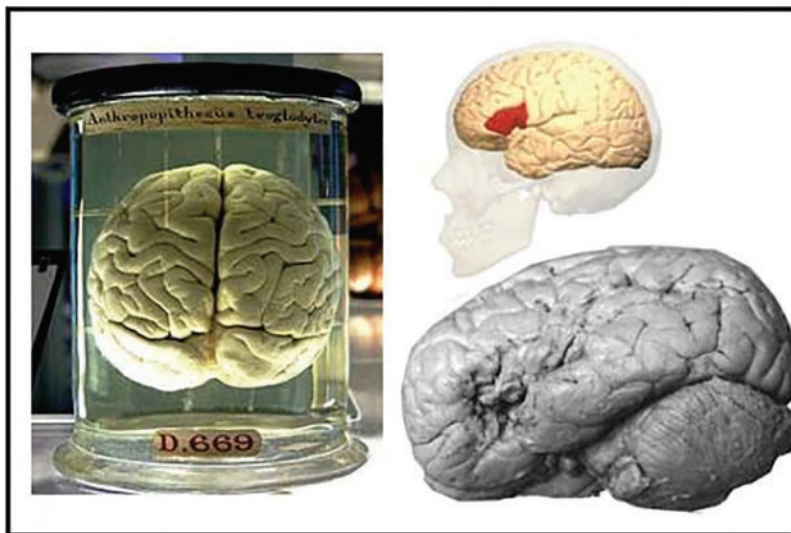


Fig. 1. The brain of 'Tan,' autopsied by Broca in 1861, shows the relationship between damage to the left hemisphere and loss of language (Source: Goslan, 2019). This discovery has given human thought a material and impermanent nature. The neuronal nature of thinking activity has an important philosophical consequence. Is philosophical discernment possible without neurons? What would be the point of a universal Higher Intelligence if Man were unable to perceive it? Is man capable of perceiving non-neuronal thought if his own thought is necessarily neuronal?.

b) A natural and necessary Spirit

In 1861, Paul Pierre Broca, an anatomist and anthropologist, described for the first time the relationship between loss of language and a necrotic lesion. He correctly postulated about the genesis of areas of the brain. Speech was therefore not innate. This discovery has given human thought a material and impermanent nature. The neuronal nature of thinking activity has an important philosophical consequence. Is philosophical discernment possible without neurons? What would be the point of a universal Higher Intelligence if Man were unable to perceive it? Is man capable of perceiving non-neuronal thought if his own thought is necessarily neuronal?

Consequently, many schools considered that the Spirit was a concept produced by the neuronal activity of the brain, unconsciously, subconsciously, or consciously. This materialist thesis was developed by the philosophers Gaston Bachelard and Merleau-Ponty. It is based on the work of the two neurologists Broca and Wernicke (Broca, Wernicke, and the other language areas). They demonstrated that the loss of the faculty of speech or ideation was due to the destruction of a specific and distinct part of the left brain. By deduction, since language and ideation are two components of the attributes of the psyche that allow access to Consciousness, Consciousness is necessarily linked to the integrity of the brain.

The psychic (from the Greek *psuchē*) or spiritual (from the Latin *spirare*) faculty is linked to the feeling that the same Spirit animates the thinking of all human beings. Does its collective nature imply that it is superior and transcendent? Or is the Spirit only collective in appearance, and its true nature is individual and impermanent, under the determinism of the genetic code? To answer this question, we need to refer to recent knowledge about psychic development (Fig. 1).

5) On the Origin of the Psychic Faculty

If psychic activity derives from neuronal activity in the Broca and Wernicke areas, it is, therefore, material by nature and metaphysically impermanent. In this case, it can be neither universal nor transcendent. However, it can give the impression of being so because all human beings think according to the same (predetermined) neuronal processes with the same mental models. The result would be an appearance of continuity and universal permanence. This illusion would attribute spiritual thoughts to a single, superior, and collective Spirit.

In fact, individual consciousness is unique to each individual but is an attribute of all human beings without exception (except those suffering from profound alterations). The link between ideation and the integrity of the brain demonstrates that ideation is of a material nature. It is even possible to give rise to psychic sensations by simply stimulating the brain electrically:

After a craniotomy, an electrode placed on the cortex enables an electric current (of a few milliamps) to be applied for a few seconds during an operation on an awake patient. During the stimulation, the patient's performance in a series of tests specifically evaluating one or other function or skill

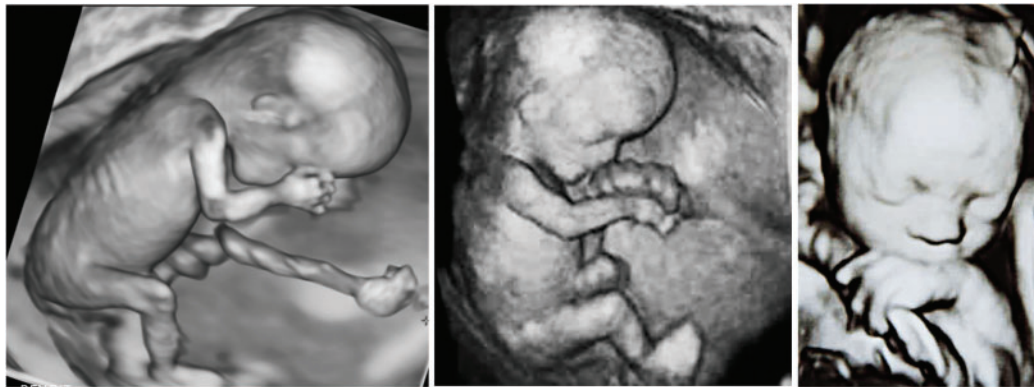


Fig. 2. The proprioceptive experience of the fetus: it touches itself, so it discovers that it has a body. This proprioception takes two routes, one conscious and one unconscious. Does this anatomical peculiarity explain the nature of our psyche, which is largely unconscious? In: <https://www.dsjuog.com/doi/pdf/10.5005/jp-journals-10009-1063> and in: <https://www.quora.com/Is-a-human-fetus-ever-sapient-If-so-when-If-not-then-at-what-point-does-a-human-first-exhibit-sapience-not-just-sentience>.

is recorded, enabling us to identify which functions are affected by the stimulation. For example, a disturbance in speech (naming images or reading aloud) induced by stimulation indicates that the area under the electrode is involved in this function. (Faure, 2012, p. 85)

From this, we deduce that the psychic faculty is material and impermanent.

6) On the Construction of Consciousness

From the foregoing, it is necessary to admit that there is no thought without neurons (Broca, Wernicke) and sufficient to consider that consciousness, being a thought, is, therefore, an attribute of the human brain. Consciousness is linked to the construction of the body schema (Etchelecou, 2017) from the fetal period in the fifth month of pregnancy (Kinseher, 2020). At the same time, the process of constructing a bodily identity leads to the emergence of a personal identity, the 'Ego'.

Existence is experienced and renewed in the here and now. I can live my existence and recognise that my existential reality is particular, subjective and belongs to me alone. Its justification is not rational, because it appears as an outpouring that has no reason or logic. And yet it unfolds with every step I take (it lies beneath every step I take, wherever I move, wherever I am). (Boulanger, 2021)

Each individual possesses a three-dimensional image of his or her body at the threshold of consciousness. It is thanks to this image of our body that it is possible for us to feel, to perceive, and finally to develop our action on ourselves and the world around us. Thus there is a dialectical movement between the body image and the factors involved in its creation. (Wittling, 1968, p.195)

From this, we can conclude that consciousness is one of the expressions of the 'Ego,' in other words, the taking of possession of the body by itself. It is the consequence of the emergence of personal identity. Tactile, articular, and visual sensations, etc., help to construct the image of the 'I' (what is my body) and the 'non-I' (what is not my body).

However, as 90% of proprioceptive information is unconscious, the ways in which the 'Ego' is constructed are not very accessible to consciousness. This strangeness explains the mystery surrounding the nature of human thought. Proprioceptive neuronal information reaches the brain and cerebellum via the neuronal pathways of Goll and Burdach. As a result, the origin of the 'Ego' is perceived as strange, even foreign.

Foreign would imply the intervention of a higher spirit. Since the superior Spirit would be the necessary consequence of the construction of the 'Ego' by the unconscious pathway, it would possess his very attributes: it would be non-conscious (mysterious) and non-I' (infinite). The nature of the functioning of the Goll and Burdach pathways would explain the attributes of the supra-human Spirit.

7) On the Construction of the 'Ego'

There is a consensus that the fetus experiences sensations from the fifth month of its existence and is able to experiment with its immediate environment. The fetus, therefore, sets out to discover its body and its environment.

He presses on the sides of his pocket, plays with his cord, sucks on his hand, and rubs his eyes (see Fig. 2). It receives skin sensations in return when it touches its own body, enabling it to distinguish

between the 'I' and the 'non-I.' This stage is genetically determined and considered necessary for psychic development. However, proprioception has recently been discovered in plants (Bastien *et al.*, 2013). It is not unique to humans or animals. This function is, therefore, a general attribute of the living world. Consequently, it cannot be contested. Anyone who challenged it would himself be a living being and would be thinking thanks to the proprioception he was challenging. In other words, he would be challenging himself.

Jean Pierre Roll describes the role of human proprioception:

The body itself, because it is endowed with its own sensitivities (proprioceptive sensitivities), is able to constantly "describe" itself to the brain so that awareness of the actions in which it is engaged emerges. This awareness of action seems to find its source in the motor apparatus itself and in particular in the proprioceptive sensitivity with which it is equipped. More than a "sixth sense," proprioceptive sensitivity could be a primary sense essential to the emergence of self-awareness as a being capable of action. (Roll & Roll, 1996, p. 74)

Alternatively, we could paraphrase the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre:

This means that man first exists, encounters himself, arises in the world, and then defines himself. (Sartre, 1946, p. 16)

Surprisingly, this definition of "existentialism" is also the definition of the proprioception of consciousness. The consciousness of the 'Ego' is a posteriori construction that begins with the discovery of the body, then of action, and ends with the awareness of existing in the world. However, unlike the philosophical method, which is contingent, the proprioceptive construction is necessary, unconscious, and genetically predetermined.

8) Consequences of Unconsciousness of the Body

The construction of the self-image is a long process of ideation of existence. However, as only a small proportion of discoveries reach consciousness, the vast majority of self-knowledge feeds into the individual's unconscious. In the course of its quest, the child enriches its unconscious by depositing its structuring discoveries, called archetypes, which are necessarily found in all human beings. There is no more collective unconscious than a collective noosphere. An individual's entire psychic content is the result of all his own empiric discoveries and nothing but his own ones.

It is easy to conclude that evoking a higher, transcendent Spirit like the Noosphere of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and V. Vernadsky, or of a global planetary Consciousness like Roger Nelson, or of a Collective Unconscious like Carl Jung, is closely linked to the mysterious (unconscious) and unlimited (non-'I') nature of the body's knowledge of itself:

a) Roger Nelson's Global Consciousness

Each human consciousness is the result of all the personal experiences of each individual and nothing else. It is impermanent by nature. It is not possible to conceive of a global consciousness that has the same attributes as human consciousness but has a different, transcendent, and superior nature. This supposition is unnatural, and it is legitimate to consider that it does not exist and that it is not.

b) Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's Noosphere

Since neurons are the necessary condition for creating ideas, and since consciousness is an idea, then consciousness cannot be located elsewhere than in the neurons of each individual. It cannot exist on its own, outside any substratum, because that would be against its impermanent and necessary nature.

c) Carl Jung's Collective Unconscious

The psychoanalyst corresponded with Wolfgang Pauli for more than 20 years (until 1950). He collected 1,300 dreams of his famous patient, which formed the scientific basis for the development of the theory of the Collective Unconscious. He even discussed at length with his client the interpretation of his dreams and the resulting psychoanalytical theories, the analysed subject becoming his co-analysed. There has been much criticism of the scientific method, not least from Wolfgang Pauli himself:

Pauli was a sceptic at heart. He critically examined all dogma, including that of Jung. For example, he complained to Bohr about certain quirks in Jung's approach: "Jung's school is broader-minded than Freud's, but consequently less clear. The most unsatisfactory seems to me to be Jung's emotional and vague use of the concept of 'Psyche,' which is not even logically coherent. (Halpern, 2020)

Apart from a method of analysis, psychic synchronicity has not been of interest to many researchers. Hence it is legitimate to think that they do not exist and that the simultaneity of two events in no way proves that they are a single event. The simultaneity of a memory and a chance event is not demonstrable either and is very probably contingent and without theoretical value. Moreover, Sigmund Freud did not subscribe to this idea of the collective. Jacques Arènes states:

It is not necessary to have recourse to a notion of collective unconscious, added to the individual unconscious, since the unconscious is, in any case, collective. If the theory of the correspondence between psyche and society is not always thorough, this correspondence appears to Freud to be epistemologically self-evident, almost natural. (Juillerat, 1995, p. 37)

Consequently, the unconscious is the result of the body taking control of itself. Each individual possesses his own individual unconscious. The unconscious is, therefore, impermanent in nature. What is impermanent cannot become transcendent, so a universal Unconscious is unnatural and cannot exist.

4. DISCUSSION

On the Ontogenesis of the 'Ego'.

In 1893, Freud published an article on the unconscious mechanisms of hysteria (Hyttenhove, 2016) in the journal *Proceeding of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR)* in London, which specialised in the study of Spiritualism. He was, therefore, interested in paranormal phenomena and Spirit. He was a member of this society from 1911 until his death. In 1902, Carl Jung also published an article about a young spirit girl: "A case of somnambulism in a girl of poor origin (medium spirit)" (Charlier, 2021). He wrote his medical thesis on spiritualism. Later, he wrote:

The psyche, which we tend to take as a subjective fact, extends beyond us, beyond time, beyond the mind. The deeper and more obscure the layers, the more they lose their individual originality. The deeper they are, in other words, the closer they are to autonomous functional systems, the more collective they become and end up becoming universal and extinguished in the materiality of the body, in other words in chemical bodies. (Collot, 2016, p. 9)

Psychoanalysis was, therefore, born as the daughter of spiritualism, in search of a Spirit. However, this extract from Carl Jung shows his sense of clinical observation. The deeper the memories analysed, the more similar they become. There are two possible explanations here:

- a) Either these unconscious memories do not belong to the patient being analysed, or are external to him. This hypothesis assumes a superior, transcendent Spirit that interferes with the human brain. It would modify the psyche, in this case, the personal unconscious of individuals. Although it has no human origin, it would nevertheless be capable of interfering with human thoughts, like the electric current described above. The nature of electricity is material and natural. This distinguishes it entirely from an immaterial, transcendent, and infinite Spirit.
- b) Or do these memories belong exclusively to the patient, knowing that the process of creating ideas is the same for all human beings? Memories all look alike, like Walt Disney cartoons. They look the same because they are created in the same way. The same causes, the same effects.

Our memories are the result of neuronal learning, which is predetermined by the genetic code. All human beings are born with one nose and two eyes. But all human beings are different. Having one nose and two eyes is not due to the fact that we are all the children of the same father. The same is true of what the psyche regards.

In their article on the personal construction of the ego, Persoons and Bryde (2021) drew up a diagram of the genesis of the 'Ego' in utero (see Fig. 3). On the left are the advocates of the transcendent Higher Spirit and on the right are the advocates of the individual search for 'Ego' Consciousness. On the left is a 'cloud' called the Noosphere, and on the right, each fetus is linked to its own placenta and then, after birth, to its own consciousness.

As the mechanisms are all identical, the construction of the 'Ego' is very similar from one individual to another, but it remains strictly individual. The genetic code determines the way in which the psyche is structured in all human beings. As a corollary, the construction of the human psyche needs neither a collective Unconscious nor a collective Spiritus, nor a collective Global Consciousness to explain its uniformity. According to the data of contemporary neuroscience, the hypothesis of a transcendent Spiritual cloud is not necessary to explain that our deep memories are similar or that we think the same things in identical circumstances. The individual impermanence of the 'Ego' also makes it possible

to explain the mysterious and infinite attribute of consciousness by the fact that it is unconscious or subconscious in nature. This hypothesis offers the advantage of explaining the human psyche without recourse to a non-natural and purely alien (extra-human) entity.

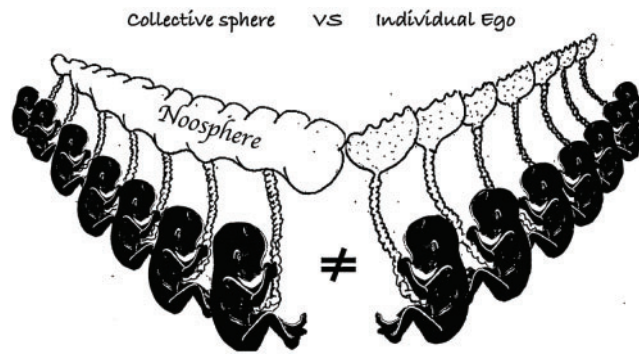


Fig. 3. The neurological analysis pleads for an individual induction of consciousness by the fetus, which makes the idea of a collective psyche impossible (Source: Persoons & Bryde, 2021). All fetuses have their own proprioceptive experiences (e.g., they float in the water, they have a cord). Each fetal process is quite similar to another. This may give the impression of a unique global Consciousness (Noosphere) while remaining essentially an individual experience.

5. CONCLUSION

The search for the origin of human consciousness is not a philosophical process that seeks to study thought itself but rather its nature.

If we accept that the child creates his consciousness, this neurological construction does not require the intervention of a higher Being, be it Spiritus, Noosphere, Global Consciousness, or Collective Unconscious.

Admittedly, this artifice would offer the advantage of being Transcendent and Universal. However, it is necessary to come to terms with the creation of the 'Ego,' a normal function of every human brain, programmed by its genetic code. Its nature is necessarily individual and impermanent. Self-awareness is an attribute of neuronal activity because neurons produce all thought. Since 'Ego' Consciousness is a thought, it is impermanent and necessary because it is a determined process (by the genetic code).

Being impermanent, however, it contains its justification. It doesn't need and cannot produce a universal, collective, and supra-human Consciousness because it would be non-human and transcendent. An impermanent principle cannot engender a transcendent principle because it would be opposed to its nature.

Consequently, it is legitimate to claim that a universal consciousness does not exist and cannot exist since it would be contrary to the nature of individual consciousness. Individual consciousness is necessary to objectify all forms of consciousness, even global ones. What would be the point of a universal Higher Intelligence if Man could not perceive it?

The power that enables singular things, and therefore man, to retain their being, is the very power of God, that is, of Nature (Deus sive natura, in Latin) (Garett, 2018, p. 478).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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