

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324683360>

# A New Theory of Consciousness: Understanding The All-Integrating Field

Preprint · April 2018

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.14315.03360

---

CITATIONS

0

READS

129

1 author:



**Rob Harle**

Independent Researcher

119 PUBLICATIONS 134 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



None at present [View project](#)



Virtual Worlds [View project](#)

# A New Theory of Consciousness: Understanding The All-Integrating Field

Robert Maddox-Harle (*Writer, Artist, Independent Scholar*)  
[harle@robharle.com](mailto:harle@robharle.com) <https://www.robharle.com>

## Abstract

This essay explores the notion that the fundamental ontology of the universe is an all-integrating field. The process of chaos operates within this field as do other phenomena such as gravity and electromagnetic force. I argue that there are “no objects only events”, that is, dynamic continual process is the basic building block of all existence. I explore the phenomenon of the conscious and non-conscious mind and its relationship to this all-integrating field, showing Freud’s theories to be untenable. Jung’s archetypes and artificial intelligence, and Quantum Mechanics are also discussed.

## Keywords

all-integrating field, process philosophy, archetypes, conscious mind, non-conscious mind, Jung, Chaos, Quantum Mechanics, zero-point field.

## Introduction:

This essay is an attempt to understand human existence and our place in the universe - free from dogmatic, mythical ‘belief systems’. It is cross-disciplinary, holistic and unashamedly speculative in parts. The work is based on my understanding that the fundamental ontology of the universe the *prima materia* is an all-integrating field. There have been many approaches to describing such a field which I will detail shortly. The all-integrating field which I describe combines aspects of all these explanations and in a sense subsumes them to provide a coherent theory based on the notion of *process*. There are *no objects only events*, and as such there are no fundamental building blocks of matter of the kind that the scientific reductionists have been trying to find since at least the time of Democritus.

I believe our existence as part of and absolute immersion within an *all-integrating field* is essential to understanding our relationship with the universe. This all-integrating field - omnipresent and all pervasive - is the fundamental basis of reality. Different proposals for such fields have been offered since antiquity - Plato’s - Form of the Good. The Occultist’s - Akashic Record (and more recently Laszlo’s A-Field (Laszlo, 2007)). Sheldrake’s - Morphogenetic Field. Jung’s – Collective Unconscious. Gibson’s (fictional) – Matrix. Science’s - Zero Point Field. The Vedic - Field of Consciousness. Chardin’s – Noosphere. The Chinese, Taoist’s Way – Cosmological Resonance and The Alchemist’s - *Prima Materia* (Albertus, 1978).

Many of these “field” proposals have been seen in a sense, as separate to our apparent material existence. This has had the effect of adding support

to the Platonic and Cartesian bifurcation of existence and perpetuating the so-called mind-body problem. Further to this, the real confusion over the mind-body dichotomy is not so much the separate existence of the two, but how it is possible for a subjective consciousness to arise from matter which up until recently was thought of as dead or inert? In an attempt to satisfactorily solve this *real* problem, we must understand matter and consciousness as processual *events* which constitute the all-integrating field.

The “ten thousand things” manifest within this field, such as myself and the pen I am writing these words with. However, as process philosophy, quantum physics and Buddhism insist, neither myself nor my pen are *really* solid, static, unchanging material objects - they are “occasions of experience”, *events* (adventures) in process (Whitehead, 1978). Some “things” process faster than others, this is simply a temporal facet of their existence but it has the illusory effect of indicating a fixed, stable object.

### **Process Philosophy and Its Partners:**

The Chinese worked out a process metaphysic, generally entitled Taoism, just before Heraclitus was challenging the atomistic beliefs of philosophers such as Democritus and Parmenides in about (500 B.C.). Heraclitus declared we should avoid, “...the fallacy of substantializing nature into perduring things (substances) because it is not stable things but fundamental forces and the varied and fluctuating activities which they produce that make up this world of ours” (Stanford, 2002). This is so close to the two fundamental aspects of the Chinese system “ch’i” and “li”, and later, the representation of inexorable change in the universal symbol of Yin-Yang, to be seemingly uncanny (de Quincey, 2002, p. 253). Li is the universal organizing principle, while ch’i refers to what we might call “matter-energy”. These two concepts from neo-Confucian Chinese thought always go together like the yin and yang of all things. I contend that this coincidence or synchronicity is not uncanny at all when we consider the possibility of a universal field that enables preconscious communication, nonlocally. A brief look at the crucial elements of process philosophy and Taoism will help make this clear.

One of the key concepts in this area is “acausal or nonlocal effects”. This acausality is a fundamental part of process philosophy, Taoism and the mysterious phenomenon, perhaps *artefact*, of Quantum physics known as nonlocality. David Bohm first used this term to describe the “...synchronistic, causality violating quantum connection” (Wolf, 1989, p. 117).

*The essential new quality implied by the quantum theory is nonlocality; i.e. that a system cannot be analysed into parts whose basic properties do not depend on the ... whole system ... This leads to the radically new notion of unbroken wholeness*

*of the entire universe* (Wolf, 1989, p. 117).

The idea of “unbroken wholeness of the entire universe” was hardly new in the early 1950s - after all, the Taoist, Vedic and process philosophy of Whitehead (1927) – all embraced this concept. What was new was a scientific, mathematically sound basis for such a concept.

Carl Jung coined the term “synchronicity” from his pioneering work in psychoanalysis and his contact with Chinese philosophy, especially Taoism and the I Ching. “Time and time again I encountered amazing coincidences which seemed to suggest the idea of an acausal parallelism (a synchronicity, as I later called it)” (Coward, 1996, p. 477) Chinese Taoist philosophy is partly based on “correlative thinking”.

*It assumes that these related orders [nature, the human and the divine] as a whole are homologous, that they correspond with one another in some basic respect, even in some cases that their identities are contained one within the other. Underlying “correlative thinking” is the notion of cosmological resonance (kan-ying). Correlations, it is held, can interact at a distance by virtue of a mutual sympathy, an idea based on music theory of harmonics” (Coward, 1996, p. 478).*

Many aspects of Quantum mechanics are closely related to both process philosophy and Taoism. One of the most striking parallels between Taoism and Quantum physics is the concept of harmonic resonance.

Schroedinger thought of the atom as analogous to the vibrating string of a violin. This analogy together with de Broglie’s “wave patterns” allowed Schroedinger to develop an equation which “...provided a continual *mathematic description*” of atomic harmonics (Wolf, 1989, p. 94). This was just what was needed to explain the observed frequency of the light waves or *photons* emitted when the electron in the atom undergoes a change from one orbit to the other. (Wolf, 1989, p. 94).

The fairly recent mathematical proof by Reuda *indicating “...the existence of a background sea of light known as **the electromagnetic zero-point field of the quantum vacuum**”* (Haisch, 2001) fits in perfectly with the atomic and subatomic harmonic proofs mentioned above. “**The solid, stable world of matter appears to be sustained at every instant by an underlying sea of quantum light**” (Haisch, 2001).

### **Human Psyche – Conscious and Unconscious:**

*Perhaps **absolute reality** is that instant in the psychotherapeutic process of living where conscious and non-conscious merge?* Like Max Ernst I have been searching for an alchemical formula in which the great perturbations of the conscious and the unconscious are reconciled....**it occurs at the instant of this merging!** At this instant we become one with the all-integrating field - through the “process” of harmonic resonance

we have access to all knowledge; transcend space and time; can be in two places at once; function non-locally and acausally; and have access to such mysterious phenomena as the Shamanic and occultists realms.

As I have discussed elsewhere **the conscious mind and the non (or) unconscious mind are not separate units but one entity flowing backward and forward so as to allow us to operate functionally in the material world characterised by duality.** Freud's theory of the unconscious is well known so I will not go into details here except to remind the reader that he insisted that the unconscious was 'a distinct entity operating under its own volition'. Rather than understanding the unconscious as, "...an intrinsic aspect of the mind/brain system" Freud believed the unconscious depended upon the external world for its energy and information. (Hobson 1984: 98) He believed the unconscious was primal, libidinal drives and repression which dynamically caused a person to act and dream the way they did. The unconscious did not just contain forgotten information which could be retrieved or remembered at will. The actual contents of the unconscious, Freud insisted, "*was impossible to be directly recalled*", it was permanently excluded from consciousness. I have shown elsewhere the three fundamental aspects of Freud's theory: (a) manifest content of dreams; (b) repressed sexual desires; and (c) a dynamic, deterministic unconscious to be untenable. (Harle 2000)

My theory of the unconscious is a synthesis of the work of Hobson, Gelernter and States, (Hobson 1994; Gelernter 1994; States 1988) this is based primarily on the brain's chemical system known as the aminergic system. Amines governs our waking state and the cholinergic (acetylcholine) system governs our dreaming state. These systems are in dynamic equilibrium and neither one is ever totally inactive. The ratio of these chemicals can now account for many previously mysterious states of the conscious mind such as hypnosis, dementia and fantasy. As we approach sleep the cholinergic chemical increases and maintains dominance whilst asleep. As we wake up normally, the reverse happens and the aminergic system becomes dominant. (Hobson 1994: 14-16)

An interesting correlation to these scientific research findings is the work of Gelernter. He believes mental focus moves from high to low. At the high focus end we are most alert, logical and deal with step-by-step problem solving. At the low focus end, that is as we move down the spectrum, we do not think logically and our minds move easily from one unrelated subject to another. Creative solutions to problems *occur at this level*, ones that have previously defied logical solution. It is at this level that inspiration suddenly hits us. (Gelernter 1994: 109)

Again this description of mental states fits in perfectly with the action of the aminergic-cholinergic system. The most important aspect of this research is the way memory ties in with high-low focus mentation. Gelernter believes young children's dominant focus mode is low. As they mature they gradually replace their daydreaming, fantasy, stream of consciousness style explanations with the cold hard logic needed to survive in the world. To sum up this necessarily brief outline I use

nonconscious to replace unconscious. Most of our mind-brain's information is nonconscious most of the time, consciousness is the momentary awareness of some of that information. When the two **merge** they have transcended duality and entered a zone sometimes known as the *Hidden Third* – the liminal zone between subjectivity and objectivity, the state/space between binary oppositions.

An interesting point to consider regarding this description of conscious and non-conscious states is how this relates to the creation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) - (cyborgs, robots, androids, non-DNA biologically based intelligent entities) – an entirely new species? If Freud's notion of the subconscious is correct then anything more than pseudo-AI is impossible, because we could never give (program) an AI to have a "true" subconscious. If my theory is correct, that is, *the conscious mind and the non-conscious mind are not separate units but one flowing entity*, then with 'seek, find and realise' functioning, truly human-like AI maybe possible.

### **Chaos and Archetypes**

I think Van Eenwyk has established fairly soundly that Jung's notions of archetypes, symbols and the process of individuation are clearly described and expanded by Chaos Theory. "If his [Jung] and chaos theory are describing the same thing, it should be possible to find examples of chaotic dynamics in folk tales and myths. In fact, this appears to be the case. Iteration, sensitive dependence on initial conditions, fractal dimension and self-similarity across scale are all present in symbols" (Van Eenwyk, 1997, p. 113). Further, "The symmetry-building ability of chaotic dynamics; the self-similarity, scale invariance, and fractal dimensions of fractal attractors; the stable and unstable branches of a manifold as portrayed by Hopf bifurcations, saddle points, and homoclinic orbits – these resemble Jung's descriptions of the activity of archetypes, complexes and symbols" (Van Eenwyk, 1997, p. 65). The notion that perhaps all sentient life, including newly evolved forms, all arise from the *prima materia* (all-integrating field) through a simple mathematical expression, clearly defined by Chaos Theory is vitally important. I return to this further on when discussing "spontaneous" arising of new information.

If my theory of an all-integrating field which allows non-local and spontaneous communication is correct, then all humans may access these archetypes which transcend specific local languages and customs. These archetypes are "the deposits of constantly repeated experiences of humanity" (Van Eenwyk, 1997, p. 117) and as such, concentrated in the all-integrating field. Whilst certain symbols and archetypes resonate with all, for example the archetype of the nurturing mother, we cannot say that this archetype has remained *exactly* the same since the dawn of consciousness. I think this is an important point to keep in mind if we are to correlate chaos theory with Jung's theories of psychic growth and individuation. Further, other species sometimes called "aliens", because they are also part of the all-integrating field could access these above

mentioned archetypes. This clearly transcends local parochial language, cultures and so on.

It is interesting to note that the axiom “as above so below” is an amazingly accurate description of fractal geometry and theory, in that self-similar, scale invariance is a major feature of Chaos Theory, “...elements of the attractor seem to know about each other over distances far in excess of the ranges of the forces between them” (Van Eenwyk, 1997, p. 54). The all-integrating field is not something out there that we are separate from but *an omnipresent and all-pervasive dynamic process* which is scale invariant and self-similar. Therefore it seems the fundamental basis of reality is this field animated, or driven as it were, by the dynamics of chaos.

If we picture a calm, meditative person we realise how self-reflection is a necessity to be a conscious individual. Gradual development of conscious self-awareness takes place over time. Just as a one day old human infant is not self-aware in the sense that a twenty year old is, I cannot believe ancient humans were nonconscious, then suddenly, through either *punctuated equilibria* or spontaneous emergence of dynamic information processing, suddenly had full blown consciousness. The development of self-awareness has been shown conclusively through developmental psychology studies to be a gradual process. Herein lies a significant problem for developers of Artificial Intelligent entities.

This presents us with an interesting paradox. As Langton has shown “*information processing can emerge spontaneously and come to dominate the dynamics of a physical system*” (Langton, 1991). The relationship of consciousness to the all-integrating field is becoming clearer. This has lead to the important conclusion that “*phase transitions figure “critically” in the origin and evolution of life and intelligence*” (Langton, 1991) It seems our mental capabilities are apparently only possible in the vicinity of this phase transition between periodic and chaotic neural dynamics. Clearly there is much scope for further investigation into the spontaneous emergence of information (and the critical phase transition of chaotic systems) and its relationship to consciousness with the development of self-awareness.

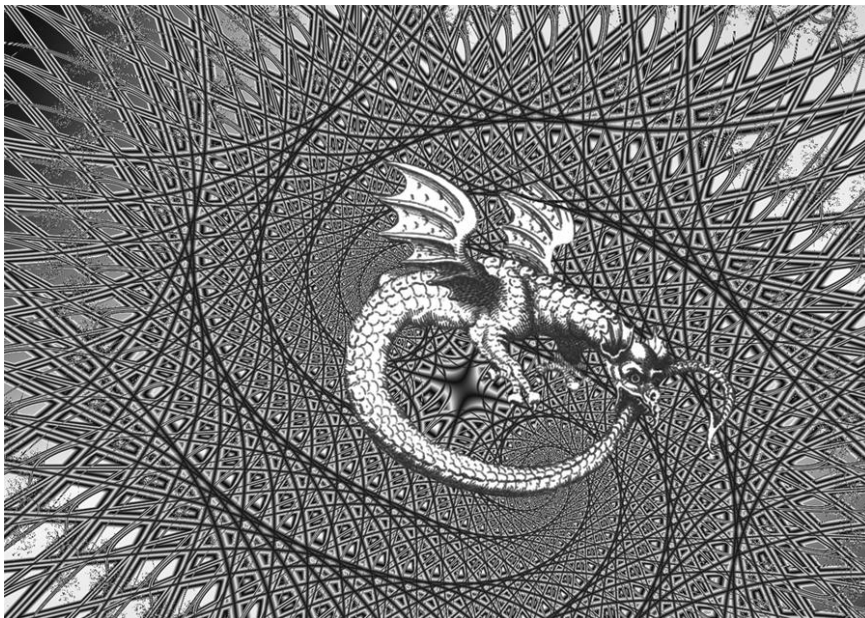
Picture a photon in the **electromagnetic zero-point field of the quantum vacuum** - this is a strange attractor which pushes the diachronic evolution of the *first spark* of consciousness into a higher-dimensional phase space which will repeat itself over and over again, not in a stagnant repetition, but in an ever evolving deterministic chaotic manner. When we labour under the illusion of physically permanent objects, scale is important, however, when we realise there are “no objects only events” scale takes on a very different meaning. One thought can be as immense as the universe. So when conscious and nonconscious **merge** scale, time and space are irrelevant.

As mentioned earlier, Langton, drawing on results of empirical

experimentation has shown that “*information processing can emerge spontaneously and come to dominate the dynamics of a physical system*”. To serve an illustration my artwork below features a beautiful, complex fractal (Spinnennetz) (Pfungstl, 1997-2004), which for me closely resembles what I see as the all-integrating process field. The fractal has reached a “critical phase transition” and from this state a spontaneous “dynamics of information” has emerged as a symbol, *The Ouroboros*. This symbol is perhaps one of the oldest symbols known to us and occurs in all cultures. Sometimes known as the *Wheel of Time* it refers to constant recreation, that is, creation out of destruction ... which of course is exactly what Chaos Theory describes as [a system] reaching equilibrium, returns to chaos after a critical phase transition and then back to equilibrium. This symbol through psychic recognition becomes one of the most transformative and powerful archetypes we can engage with in the process of individuation.

When I use the term psychic I do not mean some mysterious unknowable force but simply the unintentional, non-conscious understanding of something, that is, the understanding occurs in the non-conscious unified mind-brain system as previously described.

This Ouroboros, taken from an engraving by Jennis in the alchemical treatise *De Lapide Philisophico* ” (Jennis, 1625) was specifically used because it is not swallowing its tail in a perfect circle as do some Ouroboros’, which indicates a cyclic return, but not to the exact place it started from.



In conclusion, I believe the atomistic view of the universe, with objects reducible to *isolated islands*, as it were, is no longer tenable. Every *thing* that exists, from rocks, to thoughts, to gravity, to extremely complex entities like a sentient psycho-physical organism, are *part of and have absolute immersion within an all-integrating field*. The coming into and



fading away from *form* is a never-ending dynamic process, not a stagnant building of objects from basic building blocks. This system of *process* contains within it all the so called laws and theories of the universe, of which Chaos is clearly one. I hope the above discussion provides a plausible account of consciousness, non-consciousness and how they interact with the all-integrating field.

## REFERENCES

- Albertus, F. (1978). *The Alchemist's Handbook (Manual For Practical Laboratory Alchemy)* New York: Samuel Weiser.
- Adler, S.L. (2004). *Quantum Theory as an Emergent Phenomenon*. Cambridge.
- Coward, H. (1996). "Taoism and Jung: Synchronicity and the Self." *Philosophy East and West* 46, no. 4 477
- de Quincey, C. (2002). *Radical Nature: Rediscovering the Soul of Matter*. Montpelier, VT: Invisible Cities Press. 253
- Gelernter, D. *The Muse In The Machine: Computerizing the Poetry of Human Thought*. New York: Free Press, Macmillan., 1994
- Gleick, J. (1987). *Chaos Making a New Science* London: Cardinal. 119-154
- Haisch, B. (2001) "Brilliant Disguise: Light, Matter and the Zero-Point Field." *Science and Spirit Magazine* [http://www.science-spirit.org/printerfriendly.php?article\\_id=126](http://www.science-spirit.org/printerfriendly.php?article_id=126)
- Jennis, L. (1625). Originally published in Latin by Frenchman Nicholas Barnaud under the title *De Lapide Philosophico Triga Chemicum* in Prague, 1599, it does not appear to be an original work, but rather an edited collection of manuscripts that had been passed around for at least twenty years previous. Later, Lucas Jennis published the work in full in Frankfurt, 1625. Though the Christian Church burned most of the copies over the centuries, there are still a few copies of the original remaining intact. One of them (Ms 16752) is in the National Museum of Nuremberg, and another is in the University of Leiden
- Jung, C. J. (1990). *Man and His Symbols* London: Arkana.
- Jung, C. J. (1991). I have misplaced the exact location of this quote, I think it is in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Collective Works of C.G. Jung). Routledge,
- Kellert, S.H. (1993). *In the Wake of Chaos Unpredictable Order in Dynamical Systems* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kraus, E. M. (1998). *The Metaphysics of Experience: A Companion to Whitehead's Process and Reality*. New York: Fordham University Press: 42
- Langton, C. G. (et. al) (1991). *Life At The Edge Of Chaos*. Artificial Life 11, SFI Studies in the Sciences of Complexity, vol. X, edited by Langton, C. G. (et. al).
- Laszlo, E. (2007). *Science and the Akashic Field An Integral Theory of Everything* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Vermont: Inner Traditions.
- Pfingstl, M. (2004). The fractals used in my artwork are created using two software applications (a) *ChaosPro* ver. 3.2 Pfingstl, M. 1997-2004 [www.chaospro.de](http://www.chaospro.de) (b) *ManpWin* ver. 10d 19/ 4/2008 Paul de Leeuw

www.deleeuw.com.au

Prigogine, I. & Stengers, I. (1984). *Order Out Of Chaos Man's New Dialogue With Nature* Glasgow: Fontana.

Sheldrake, R. (1995). *The Presence of the Past: Morphic Resonance & the Habits of Nature* Park Street Press.

Stanford. (2002). *Philosophy, Stanford Encyclopedia of. "Process Philosophy."* (1) Historical Aspects. <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

States, B.O. *The Rhetoric Of Dreams*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.

Teilhard de Chardin, P. (1971). *Activation of Energy*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Van Eenwyk, J. R. (1997). *Archetypes & Strange Attractors. The Chaotic World of Symbols*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books.116.

Whitehead, A.N. (1978). *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology. Corrected Edition*. Edited by D. R. Griffin and D. W. Sherburne. New York: The Free press,

Wolf, F. A. (1989). *Taking the Quantum Leap*. Cambridge: Harper & Row, p.177