



# THE SCIENCE BULLIES

**DR. JOHN SEARLE**

[skeptiko.com](http://skeptiko.com)

1  
00:00:10,310 --> 00:00:08,810  
on this episode of skeptic Oh Alex talks

2  
00:00:13,100 --> 00:00:10,320  
with renowned philosopher and

3  
00:00:15,770 --> 00:00:13,110  
consciousness researcher dr. John Searle

4  
00:00:17,990 --> 00:00:15,780  
the real kicker that we run across and

5  
00:00:20,779 --> 00:00:18,000  
keep pounding on because it just won't

6  
00:00:23,330 --> 00:00:20,789  
go away is near death experience science

7  
00:00:25,609 --> 00:00:23,340  
I mean here are these doctors and in

8  
00:00:28,550 --> 00:00:25,619  
hospital carefully controlled

9  
00:00:30,380 --> 00:00:28,560  
experiments over and over again the

10  
00:00:33,350 --> 00:00:30,390  
brain but you're talking about dr.

11  
00:00:36,380 --> 00:00:33,360  
Searle is gone is non functioning isn't

12  
00:00:38,540 --> 00:00:36,390  
there and yet some kind of conscious

13  
00:00:41,959 --> 00:00:38,550

experience that's able to be recalled

14

00:00:44,840 --> 00:00:41,969

and see what's going on continues that

15

00:00:47,029 --> 00:00:44,850

evidence is pretty overwhelming at this

16

00:00:49,279 --> 00:00:47,039

point what do you do with that I don't

17

00:00:52,220 --> 00:00:49,289

know the stuff that I know about this

18

00:00:54,350 --> 00:00:52,230

tends to be rather anecdotal now maybe

19

00:00:56,150 --> 00:00:54,360

there is some really systematic

20

00:00:57,709 --> 00:00:56,160

large-scale study of near-death

21

00:00:59,660 --> 00:00:57,719

experience that shows you and have

22

00:01:01,520 --> 00:00:59,670

consciousness without a brain there's a

23

00:01:03,260 --> 00:01:01,530

lot of published work on this you know

24

00:01:05,719 --> 00:01:03,270

the best compilation is probably the

25

00:01:08,149 --> 00:01:05,729

handbook of near-death experiences

26

00:01:10,010 --> 00:01:08,159

edited by Jan Holden that university of

27

00:01:12,230 --> 00:01:10,020

north texas we've interviewed her and of

28

00:01:14,539 --> 00:01:12,240

course Bruce Grayson at University of

29

00:01:16,520 --> 00:01:14,549

Virginia who is very well known in this

30

00:01:18,320 --> 00:01:16,530

area I don't know enough about this

31

00:01:21,100 --> 00:01:18,330

stuff to have an intelligent opinion and

32

00:01:23,149 --> 00:01:21,110

of course it might turn out now that the

33

00:01:25,219 --> 00:01:23,159

hundred years from now we'll have this

34

00:01:28,130 --> 00:01:25,229

conversation and in heaven or in my case

35

00:01:30,289 --> 00:01:28,140

more likely the other place idea that

36

00:01:31,910 --> 00:01:30,299

you had to have a brain in order to be

37

00:01:33,560 --> 00:01:31,920

conscious that was kind of silly idea

38

00:01:35,660 --> 00:01:33,570

that people had back in the 21st century

39

00:01:48,780 --> 00:01:35,670

AD might turn out that way I don't think

40

00:01:52,690 --> 00:01:51,010

welcome to skeptic oh where we explore

41

00:01:55,330 --> 00:01:52,700

controversial science with leading

42

00:01:57,969 --> 00:01:55,340

researchers thinkers and their critics

43

00:02:00,550 --> 00:01:57,979

i'm your host alex karras and on today's

44

00:02:03,609 --> 00:02:00,560

episode i have an interview with dr.

45

00:02:05,560 --> 00:02:03,619

john searle now before i get to the

46

00:02:07,510 --> 00:02:05,570

interview with dr. Cyril I want to tee

47

00:02:09,969 --> 00:02:07,520

up a question for you as you know i

48

00:02:12,640 --> 00:02:09,979

usually do this at the end of the show

49

00:02:15,100 --> 00:02:12,650

but since the question relates to the

50

00:02:17,230 --> 00:02:15,110

quote that you just heard and since the

51  
00:02:19,360 --> 00:02:17,240  
question relates to something else I

52  
00:02:20,830 --> 00:02:19,370  
want to talk about before I get into the

53  
00:02:24,160 --> 00:02:20,840  
interview I'm going to throw it out

54  
00:02:28,180 --> 00:02:24,170  
there now here's the question how do you

55  
00:02:32,290 --> 00:02:28,190  
explain dr. Searles willful ignorance of

56  
00:02:34,949 --> 00:02:32,300  
near-death experience science or over

57  
00:02:37,510 --> 00:02:34,959  
why is he so clueless about

58  
00:02:39,160 --> 00:02:37,520  
parapsychology hypnosis self-directed

59  
00:02:40,509 --> 00:02:39,170  
neural plasticity now I know I didn't

60  
00:02:42,640 --> 00:02:40,519  
get into those last couple of them with

61  
00:02:46,330 --> 00:02:42,650  
him but you know where he would go with

62  
00:02:49,720 --> 00:02:46,340  
those why does he think it's okay to

63  
00:02:52,330 --> 00:02:49,730

summarily dismiss any evidence that

64

00:02:55,960 --> 00:02:52,340

points to a model of consciousness other

65

00:02:58,180 --> 00:02:55,970

than the hopelessly obsolete mind equals

66

00:03:01,539 --> 00:02:58,190

brain clunker that we talked so much

67

00:03:04,360 --> 00:03:01,549

about so in order to pull this apart let

68

00:03:06,789 --> 00:03:04,370

me return to the near-death experience

69

00:03:10,650 --> 00:03:06,799

science regret because that to me is

70

00:03:13,900 --> 00:03:10,660

always the most dramatic example of an

71

00:03:18,039 --> 00:03:13,910

evidence-based kill shot to the already

72

00:03:21,310 --> 00:03:18,049

dead mind equals brain carcass I mean

73

00:03:23,410 --> 00:03:21,320

think about this here's this guy highly

74

00:03:26,410 --> 00:03:23,420

acclaimed internationally renowned

75

00:03:28,870 --> 00:03:26,420

expert on consciousness he gives TED

76

00:03:31,240 --> 00:03:28,880

talks and has invited the scholarly

77

00:03:35,229 --> 00:03:31,250

symposiums unconsciousness all over the

78

00:03:37,479 --> 00:03:35,239

world how can that guy be less informed

79

00:03:41,430 --> 00:03:37,489

about the published peer-reviewed

80

00:03:45,370 --> 00:03:41,440

literature a near-death experience than

81

00:03:47,289 --> 00:03:45,380

your average Oprah Winfrey fan I mean

82

00:03:50,500 --> 00:03:47,299

it's not like he doesn't understand

83

00:03:53,140 --> 00:03:50,510

what's at stake as you'll hear he gets

84

00:03:56,830 --> 00:03:53,150

that this survival of consciousness

85

00:03:59,530 --> 00:03:56,840

question is absolutely central to all

86

00:04:00,580 --> 00:03:59,540

other scientific assumptions that we

87

00:04:05,309 --> 00:04:00,590

could make about

88

00:04:09,490 --> 00:04:05,319

sciousness so why is dr. Cyril so

89

00:04:13,570 --> 00:04:09,500

shamelessly unapologetically ignorant of

90

00:04:16,360 --> 00:04:13,580

the science well that's the other thing

91

00:04:18,670 --> 00:04:16,370

I wanted to talk to you about before we

92

00:04:21,969 --> 00:04:18,680

get into this interview and that is

93

00:04:25,180 --> 00:04:21,979

science bullies you know back in March

94

00:04:27,879 --> 00:04:25,190

of this year 2013 Robert McLuhan

95

00:04:29,469 --> 00:04:27,889

published an article on his website and

96

00:04:32,830 --> 00:04:29,479

i'll link to it in the show notes about

97

00:04:36,730 --> 00:04:32,840

the organized effort of skeptics /

98

00:04:39,610 --> 00:04:36,740

atheists to rig wikipedia now these

99

00:04:41,980 --> 00:04:39,620

folks by organizing themselves into this

100

00:04:45,070 --> 00:04:41,990

tight-knit team and dedicating

101  
00:04:48,040 --> 00:04:45,080  
themselves to making literally thousands

102  
00:04:51,129 --> 00:04:48,050  
of these little rule-bending Wikipedia

103  
00:04:53,950 --> 00:04:51,139  
changes and by targeting it to a small

104  
00:04:56,860 --> 00:04:53,960  
number of pages by doing all that these

105  
00:05:00,550 --> 00:04:56,870  
self-described gorilla skeptics have had

106  
00:05:03,730 --> 00:05:00,560  
remarkable success for example if you go

107  
00:05:06,420 --> 00:05:03,740  
to parapsychology on Wikipedia and

108  
00:05:09,219 --> 00:05:06,430  
you've bounced to any of the links that

109  
00:05:12,430 --> 00:05:09,229  
parapsychology would lead you to I mean

110  
00:05:15,129 --> 00:05:12,440  
it's a lost cause I mean it's absolutely

111  
00:05:17,770 --> 00:05:15,139  
impossible to get anything close to a

112  
00:05:19,810 --> 00:05:17,780  
neutral point of view from Wikipedia on

113  
00:05:21,700 --> 00:05:19,820

any of those topics if you don't know

114

00:05:24,279 --> 00:05:21,710

what I mean and you have a strong

115

00:05:26,320 --> 00:05:24,289

stomach I'm pico de Wikipedia and find

116

00:05:27,969 --> 00:05:26,330

out for yourself if you listen to this

117

00:05:31,029 --> 00:05:27,979

show very much and you have a really

118

00:05:34,510 --> 00:05:31,039

strong stomach search for psychic

119

00:05:36,879 --> 00:05:34,520

detective and read that one and if after

120

00:05:39,879 --> 00:05:36,889

doing that you're appropriately outraged

121

00:05:42,159 --> 00:05:39,889

and you have this serious masochistic

122

00:05:44,830 --> 00:05:42,169

streak in you will then open up the

123

00:05:47,080 --> 00:05:44,840

wikipedia editor and try straightening

124

00:05:48,550 --> 00:05:47,090

out one of those pages I mean this is

125

00:05:50,969 --> 00:05:48,560

what you're supposed to be able to do

126  
00:05:53,740 --> 00:05:50,979  
right Wikipedia is an open source

127  
00:05:55,450 --> 00:05:53,750  
encyclopedia anyone with knowledge on

128  
00:05:57,310 --> 00:05:55,460  
the subject is supposed to be able to

129  
00:06:00,040 --> 00:05:57,320  
edit right well if that's what you think

130  
00:06:02,589 --> 00:06:00,050  
hold on I can save you a lot of time and

131  
00:06:04,690 --> 00:06:02,599  
a lot of frustration as a matter of fact

132  
00:06:07,060 --> 00:06:04,700  
as a primer before you go and do that

133  
00:06:08,980 --> 00:06:07,070  
let me point you to another blog post

134  
00:06:11,770 --> 00:06:08,990  
one that was just recently published on

135  
00:06:14,260 --> 00:06:11,780  
reality sandwich by Craig wheeler titled

136  
00:06:17,890 --> 00:06:14,270  
the Wikipedia battle

137  
00:06:20,410 --> 00:06:17,900  
Rupert sheldrick biography take a look

138  
00:06:22,960 --> 00:06:20,420

at that and then also take a look at

139

00:06:25,420 --> 00:06:22,970

Rupert sheldrick article on the same

140

00:06:27,640 --> 00:06:25,430

topic I have links to both of them in

141

00:06:30,700 --> 00:06:27,650

the show notes but take a look at that

142

00:06:33,250 --> 00:06:30,710

and see what these guys have done to

143

00:06:36,040 --> 00:06:33,260

shell drochs biography and to other

144

00:06:38,620 --> 00:06:36,050

pages and you really have a sense for

145

00:06:40,300 --> 00:06:38,630

what I'm talking about but before you

146

00:06:41,860 --> 00:06:40,310

get too worked up about that and I don't

147

00:06:44,410 --> 00:06:41,870

think you will get too worked up about

148

00:06:46,810 --> 00:06:44,420

that because as a listener to this show

149

00:06:49,510 --> 00:06:46,820

you know that the fundamentalist

150

00:06:51,160 --> 00:06:49,520

skeptics can rival any religious cult

151  
00:06:53,590 --> 00:06:51,170  
but what you may be surprised to

152  
00:06:56,470 --> 00:06:53,600  
discover from Craig's post and by going

153  
00:07:00,070 --> 00:06:56,480  
to Wikipedia is the zeal with which

154  
00:07:02,890 --> 00:07:00,080  
these groups are targeting science I

155  
00:07:05,860 --> 00:07:02,900  
mean take a step back Rupert sheldrick

156  
00:07:08,560 --> 00:07:05,870  
after all isn't a bible thumper he's not

157  
00:07:10,600 --> 00:07:08,570  
a creationist he hasn't taken a stance

158  
00:07:12,490 --> 00:07:10,610  
against a woman's right to choose or

159  
00:07:14,590 --> 00:07:12,500  
anything like that I mean he's a

160  
00:07:16,870 --> 00:07:14,600  
Cambridge biologist who wrote a book

161  
00:07:19,420 --> 00:07:16,880  
about dogs that know when their owners

162  
00:07:22,030 --> 00:07:19,430  
are coming home and he followed it up

163  
00:07:23,710 --> 00:07:22,040

with his recent book about how science

164

00:07:25,840 --> 00:07:23,720

might want to be a little bit less

165

00:07:28,720 --> 00:07:25,850

dogmatic about defending the

166

00:07:31,330 --> 00:07:28,730

materialistic status quo of course that

167

00:07:33,700 --> 00:07:31,340

book is science set free we dedicated a

168

00:07:36,340 --> 00:07:33,710

whole show to it a little bit back but

169

00:07:39,790 --> 00:07:36,350

at the end of the day the issue for me

170

00:07:42,130 --> 00:07:39,800

is not gorilla skeptics on wikipedia or

171

00:07:45,580 --> 00:07:42,140

itunes or reddit or any of the other

172

00:07:48,280 --> 00:07:45,590

places these people go to try and heal

173

00:07:50,080 --> 00:07:48,290

their meaningless by definition lives

174

00:07:52,510 --> 00:07:50,090

that is after all what these folks

175

00:07:53,890 --> 00:07:52,520

believe life is meaningless the universe

176

00:07:56,350 --> 00:07:53,900

is linked meaningless you are

177

00:08:00,790 --> 00:07:56,360

meaningless but the real problem I think

178

00:08:04,030 --> 00:08:00,800

is the impact they have on dr. John

179

00:08:07,420 --> 00:08:04,040

Searle because UC Berkeley philosophy

180

00:08:09,760 --> 00:08:07,430

professor dr. John Searle is not a

181

00:08:12,160 --> 00:08:09,770

professional skeptic he's not a

182

00:08:14,710 --> 00:08:12,170

fire-breathing you are a biological

183

00:08:17,500 --> 00:08:14,720

robot atheist in fact within the

184

00:08:20,170 --> 00:08:17,510

mainstream science community he's seen

185

00:08:22,510 --> 00:08:20,180

as a progressive because he's willing to

186

00:08:24,820 --> 00:08:22,520

reject the silliness of this

187

00:08:27,470 --> 00:08:24,830

consciousness is an illusion you don't

188

00:08:29,990 --> 00:08:27,480

really have any experiences kind of non

189

00:08:32,000 --> 00:08:30,000

sense that many still hold two but

190

00:08:34,550 --> 00:08:32,010

here's the thing when it comes to the

191

00:08:37,969 --> 00:08:34,560

really tough stuff the stuff that would

192

00:08:40,719 --> 00:08:37,979

truly set science free from the

193

00:08:44,210 --> 00:08:40,729

materialistic reductionistic atheistic

194

00:08:47,030 --> 00:08:44,220

dogma that cripples it Searle is

195

00:08:49,790 --> 00:08:47,040

willfully ignorant now is it an

196

00:08:51,710 --> 00:08:49,800

ignorance born out of a chummy academic

197

00:08:55,310 --> 00:08:51,720

life and a long list of accomplishments

198

00:08:59,210 --> 00:08:55,320

that he can rest on perhaps but i think

199

00:09:02,660 --> 00:08:59,220

this ignorance is also a byproduct of a

200

00:09:06,560 --> 00:09:02,670

materialistic science culture that has

201  
00:09:09,350 --> 00:09:06,570  
been traumatized into a complacency by

202  
00:09:12,500 --> 00:09:09,360  
these skeptical bullies who push and

203  
00:09:15,440 --> 00:09:12,510  
shove and spit insults at any free

204  
00:09:18,710 --> 00:09:15,450  
thinker in academia who dares to

205  
00:09:22,190 --> 00:09:18,720  
challenge their status quo it's not like

206  
00:09:24,980 --> 00:09:22,200  
Cyril is playing to the skeptics he's

207  
00:09:28,250 --> 00:09:24,990  
unwittingly absorbed their worldview

208  
00:09:31,130 --> 00:09:28,260  
into his own without forethought or

209  
00:09:34,910 --> 00:09:31,140  
deliberation and that's the greatest

210  
00:09:37,220 --> 00:09:34,920  
threat to science so let's hear from dr.

211  
00:09:40,430 --> 00:09:37,230  
John Searle it's a short interview I

212  
00:09:43,820 --> 00:09:40,440  
really just ran out of things to say to

213  
00:09:46,760 --> 00:09:43,830

a guy who thinks that parapsychology

214

00:09:49,910 --> 00:09:46,770

died with j-b Rhine back in nineteen

215

00:09:52,940 --> 00:09:49,920

eighty today we welcome esteemed

216

00:09:55,580 --> 00:09:52,950

Berkeley philosophy professor dr. John

217

00:09:57,920 --> 00:09:55,590

Searle to skeptic Oh dr. Searle has a

218

00:10:00,260 --> 00:09:57,930

worldwide reputation for his acclaimed

219

00:10:02,270 --> 00:10:00,270

work on the philosophy of mind and

220

00:10:04,430 --> 00:10:02,280

language he's the author of over a dozen

221

00:10:07,310 --> 00:10:04,440

books and hundreds of articles and

222

00:10:10,520 --> 00:10:07,320

papers exploring issues of consciousness

223

00:10:12,500 --> 00:10:10,530

and mind-body mysteries dr. Searle

224

00:10:15,650 --> 00:10:12,510

welcome to skeptic oh thanks so much for

225

00:10:17,360 --> 00:10:15,660

joining me well thanks for having me so

226

00:10:20,240 --> 00:10:17,370

first off dr. Scholl I have to say when

227

00:10:23,210 --> 00:10:20,250

i was doing this preparation for this

228

00:10:26,630 --> 00:10:23,220

show i saw here you are in do you still

229

00:10:29,870 --> 00:10:26,640

teach philosophy 132 philosophy of mind

230

00:10:32,090 --> 00:10:29,880

at berkeley absolutely in fact i'm just

231

00:10:33,530 --> 00:10:32,100

starting a new semester i teach full

232

00:10:35,600 --> 00:10:33,540

time and after i get through talking

233

00:10:36,950 --> 00:10:35,610

with you i'm going to meet my teaching

234

00:10:39,890 --> 00:10:36,960

assistants my graduate student

235

00:10:41,090 --> 00:10:39,900

instructors i got a class so it's gonna

236

00:10:41,330 --> 00:10:41,100

I'm gonna have at least three I might

237

00:10:44,210 --> 00:10:41,340

have

238

00:10:47,030 --> 00:10:44,220

at least 150 people in the class well I

239

00:10:49,540 --> 00:10:47,040

think it's fantastic that a kid can

240

00:10:52,670 --> 00:10:49,550

still go to a public university in

241

00:10:57,070 --> 00:10:52,680

California and walk into a class and

242

00:10:59,690 --> 00:10:57,080

there's a Rhodes Scholar PhD from Oxford

243

00:11:02,030 --> 00:10:59,700

teaching the class i mean that's that's

244

00:11:05,210 --> 00:11:02,040

kind of rare these days so that's that's

245

00:11:07,760 --> 00:11:05,220

really great terrific let's see on this

246

00:11:10,700 --> 00:11:07,770

show skeptic oh we've been banging away

247

00:11:13,280 --> 00:11:10,710

at this issue of consciousness and the

248

00:11:17,150 --> 00:11:13,290

nature of consciousness for quite some

249

00:11:19,730 --> 00:11:17,160

time this is right up your alley let me

250

00:11:22,130 --> 00:11:19,740

start with a two-part question if I

251

00:11:25,280 --> 00:11:22,140

could first off for those folks who

252

00:11:28,610 --> 00:11:25,290

don't know you were probably one of the

253

00:11:32,240 --> 00:11:28,620

first prominent academics to publicly

254

00:11:35,300 --> 00:11:32,250

take a stand on this consciousness is an

255

00:11:38,300 --> 00:11:35,310

illusion silliness if you will so the

256

00:11:42,140 --> 00:11:38,310

first question is are we past that are

257

00:11:44,540 --> 00:11:42,150

we past consciousness is an illusion and

258

00:11:47,750 --> 00:11:44,550

the second part that I want to throw in

259

00:11:50,210 --> 00:11:47,760

there before you respond is why the heck

260

00:11:52,460 --> 00:11:50,220

did it take so long I mean it seems

261

00:11:54,800 --> 00:11:52,470

pretty obvious I think the most people

262

00:11:58,100 --> 00:11:54,810

that consciousness isn't an illusion

263

00:12:00,170 --> 00:11:58,110

what's the answer okay well I don't

264

00:12:03,650 --> 00:12:00,180

think we're past it on the reason is

265

00:12:07,790 --> 00:12:03,660

that there is this a tradition that says

266

00:12:09,440 --> 00:12:07,800

I if consciousness exists well it

267

00:12:11,720 --> 00:12:09,450

couldn't be part of the physical world

268

00:12:13,940 --> 00:12:11,730

but the physical worlds the only world

269

00:12:15,950 --> 00:12:13,950

there is so consciousness doesn't exist

270

00:12:18,530 --> 00:12:15,960

it's an illusion now I think that's a

271

00:12:20,960 --> 00:12:18,540

silly argument but that's another way

272

00:12:23,870 --> 00:12:20,970

that it goes now there's a history

273

00:12:25,340 --> 00:12:23,880

behind this and the history is that the

274

00:12:27,860 --> 00:12:25,350

people who talked about consciousness

275

00:12:29,840 --> 00:12:27,870

often where people who did it for some

276

00:12:31,790 --> 00:12:29,850

religious reason that is they thought

277

00:12:35,090 --> 00:12:31,800

consciousness was part of God the soul

278

00:12:36,830 --> 00:12:35,100

and immortality and if if the only world

279

00:12:39,020 --> 00:12:36,840

that exists is the world described by

280

00:12:40,190 --> 00:12:39,030

physics and other natural sciences then

281

00:12:42,980 --> 00:12:40,200

it looks like it looks like

282

00:12:44,810 --> 00:12:42,990

consciousness cannot exist I think those

283

00:12:47,240 --> 00:12:44,820

use our silly consciousness is a

284

00:12:49,730 --> 00:12:47,250

biological phenomenon it's as real as

285

00:12:53,090 --> 00:12:49,740

any other biological phenomena however

286

00:12:55,190 --> 00:12:53,100

it is distinctive in that the way that

287

00:12:57,050 --> 00:12:55,200

you show that something is in

288

00:12:58,520 --> 00:12:57,060

illusion will work for consciousness so

289

00:13:00,620 --> 00:12:58,530

you can show that rainbows and sunsets

290

00:13:02,780 --> 00:13:00,630

are illusion because that there's a

291

00:13:06,080 --> 00:13:02,790

distinction between how things seem to

292

00:13:07,550 --> 00:13:06,090

you and how they really are it seems

293

00:13:09,500 --> 00:13:07,560

like there's an arch in the sky the

294

00:13:11,930 --> 00:13:09,510

rainbow but it isn't really it's just an

295

00:13:14,060 --> 00:13:11,940

illusion but where consciousness is

296

00:13:15,860 --> 00:13:14,070

concerned where the very existence of

297

00:13:17,900 --> 00:13:15,870

consciousness is concerned you can't

298

00:13:20,030 --> 00:13:17,910

make that distinction you can't make the

299

00:13:21,800 --> 00:13:20,040

distinction between it consciously

300

00:13:23,630 --> 00:13:21,810

seeming to you that you are conscious

301  
00:13:25,040 --> 00:13:23,640  
and whether or not you really are

302  
00:13:27,380 --> 00:13:25,050  
conscious because if it consciously

303  
00:13:29,660 --> 00:13:27,390  
seems to your conscious then you are

304  
00:13:31,880 --> 00:13:29,670  
conscious so really there are two parts

305  
00:13:34,490 --> 00:13:31,890  
to the answer to this one is there's a

306  
00:13:37,070 --> 00:13:34,500  
traditional confusion that suggests that

307  
00:13:39,170 --> 00:13:37,080  
if consciousness really exists it can't

308  
00:13:40,700 --> 00:13:39,180  
be part of the real physical world and

309  
00:13:42,740 --> 00:13:40,710  
I'm saying of course it is it's a

310  
00:13:44,900 --> 00:13:42,750  
biological phenomena like digestion or

311  
00:13:48,080 --> 00:13:44,910  
photosynthesis and then there's another

312  
00:13:50,780 --> 00:13:48,090  
confusion that fails whereby people fail

313  
00:13:52,310 --> 00:13:50,790

to see that you can't make the illusion

314

00:13:54,650 --> 00:13:52,320

reality distinction for the very

315

00:13:57,140 --> 00:13:54,660

existence of consciousness now I thought

316

00:13:58,970 --> 00:13:57,150

that I wiped out these mistakes 20 or 30

317

00:14:00,800 --> 00:13:58,980

years ago but they keep coming up again

318

00:14:03,800 --> 00:14:00,810

I don't I think it's going to keep out

319

00:14:06,740 --> 00:14:03,810

out for quite a while because we don't

320

00:14:09,080 --> 00:14:06,750

yet have a thoroughgoing account of how

321

00:14:10,880 --> 00:14:09,090

the brain causes consciousness and until

322

00:14:12,650 --> 00:14:10,890

we do that they're always going to be

323

00:14:16,100 --> 00:14:12,660

people to think well it's not part of

324

00:14:18,320 --> 00:14:16,110

the physical world okay but don't you

325

00:14:22,370 --> 00:14:18,330

think that this is partially responsible

326

00:14:24,350 --> 00:14:22,380

for the public distrust of science to a

327

00:14:26,270 --> 00:14:24,360

certain extent and let me go with this

328

00:14:28,820 --> 00:14:26,280

for a minute you know when we hear

329

00:14:31,010 --> 00:14:28,830

prominent philosophers but more

330

00:14:33,830 --> 00:14:31,020

importantly prominent scientists neuro

331

00:14:36,230 --> 00:14:33,840

scientists brain scientists promoting

332

00:14:38,030 --> 00:14:36,240

this idea and then people look back and

333

00:14:40,060 --> 00:14:38,040

go when they really think about it they

334

00:14:43,370 --> 00:14:40,070

go wait a minute this not only defies

335

00:14:46,100 --> 00:14:43,380

common sense but it's completely at odds

336

00:14:49,040 --> 00:14:46,110

with almost every aspect of our society

337

00:14:52,190 --> 00:14:49,050

our legal system our political system

338

00:14:55,160 --> 00:14:52,200

not to mention science and medicine is

339

00:14:58,340 --> 00:14:55,170

built on the idea that you are a

340

00:15:00,830 --> 00:14:58,350

conscious being and that your decisions

341

00:15:03,200 --> 00:15:00,840

make a difference you can decide you

342

00:15:04,670 --> 00:15:03,210

have free will it which is part I don't

343

00:15:07,130 --> 00:15:04,680

want to get too far into that whole

344

00:15:08,450 --> 00:15:07,140

thing but it's woven completely into our

345

00:15:10,480 --> 00:15:08,460

society don't

346

00:15:13,250 --> 00:15:10,490

think that kind of contributes for this

347

00:15:16,070 --> 00:15:13,260

underlying sense of distrust that a lot

348

00:15:18,410 --> 00:15:16,080

of people have for science well I think

349

00:15:20,390 --> 00:15:18,420

it does contribute I think that the

350

00:15:22,070 --> 00:15:20,400

leading intellectual problem in

351

00:15:25,460 --> 00:15:22,080

philosophy at least and maybe the

352

00:15:28,220 --> 00:15:25,470

leading problem overall is how do we

353

00:15:30,910 --> 00:15:28,230

give an account of our human reality of

354

00:15:34,460 --> 00:15:30,920

consciousness we think we have free will

355

00:15:36,500 --> 00:15:34,470

mental life we have society and ethics

356

00:15:38,540 --> 00:15:36,510

and aesthetics how do we give an account

357

00:15:41,690 --> 00:15:38,550

of that that shows that it's a part of

358

00:15:43,430 --> 00:15:41,700

physical and chemical reality and now so

359

00:15:45,560 --> 00:15:43,440

far we haven't succeeded in doing that

360

00:15:48,020 --> 00:15:45,570

and people aren't willing to give up on

361

00:15:50,030 --> 00:15:48,030

the common sense conception of life so

362

00:15:51,890 --> 00:15:50,040

sometimes this gives them an anti

363

00:15:54,740 --> 00:15:51,900

scientific attitude I don't think it

364

00:15:56,540 --> 00:15:54,750

happens some among professional

365

00:15:58,850 --> 00:15:56,550

intellectuals I don't doubt it as much

366

00:16:01,490 --> 00:15:58,860

of that in the better universities but

367

00:16:03,620 --> 00:16:01,500

certainly politically there's a mistrust

368

00:16:05,780 --> 00:16:03,630

of science and feeling a feeling some

369

00:16:07,790 --> 00:16:05,790

are other lived our human reality is

370

00:16:09,920 --> 00:16:07,800

being denied by science now I think

371

00:16:11,900 --> 00:16:09,930

that's a terrible mistake I think what

372

00:16:14,000 --> 00:16:11,910

we've got to do and this is one of the

373

00:16:15,530 --> 00:16:14,010

main task of philosophy is to give an

374

00:16:17,930 --> 00:16:15,540

account that shows that the human

375

00:16:19,790 --> 00:16:17,940

reality is not only consistent with

376

00:16:23,200 --> 00:16:19,800

scientific reality it's a natural

377

00:16:26,180 --> 00:16:23,210

consequence of it once you've got

378

00:16:29,240 --> 00:16:26,190

electrons and about protons and neutrons

379

00:16:31,520 --> 00:16:29,250

and subatomic particles then it's just a

380

00:16:34,070 --> 00:16:31,530

matter of time and random recombination

381

00:16:36,170 --> 00:16:34,080

until evolution gives you life God

382

00:16:37,970 --> 00:16:36,180

consciousness Sh society and all the

383

00:16:40,370 --> 00:16:37,980

rest of it now that's something that

384

00:16:42,350 --> 00:16:40,380

you've put forward both here a couple

385

00:16:45,280 --> 00:16:42,360

times about consciousness being

386

00:16:47,330 --> 00:16:45,290

biological consciousness being an

387

00:16:49,520 --> 00:16:47,340

evolutionary phenomena in the physical

388

00:16:52,190 --> 00:16:49,530

world and all that I've also heard

389

00:16:54,260 --> 00:16:52,200

quotes from you and I want to clarify on

390

00:16:57,050 --> 00:16:54,270

this that you are open to the

391

00:16:59,810 --> 00:16:57,060

possibility that consciousness is

392

00:17:02,660 --> 00:16:59,820

somehow fundamental and that our

393

00:17:05,920 --> 00:17:02,670

physical reality is somehow in some way

394

00:17:09,260 --> 00:17:05,930

we can't fully understand or explain a

395

00:17:11,960 --> 00:17:09,270

phenomena of consciousness any thoughts

396

00:17:14,620 --> 00:17:11,970

on that well I think it's very unlikely

397

00:17:16,880 --> 00:17:14,630

of course it might turn out that

398

00:17:19,579 --> 00:17:16,890

consciousness is one of the basic

399

00:17:21,020 --> 00:17:19,589

features of reality but as far as we

400

00:17:21,910 --> 00:17:21,030

know anything about how it actually

401  
00:17:25,390 --> 00:17:21,920  
works

402  
00:17:27,820 --> 00:17:25,400  
consciousness only exists in human and

403  
00:17:30,970 --> 00:17:27,830  
animal brains and not even all animals

404  
00:17:32,860 --> 00:17:30,980  
but in human and some animal brains but

405  
00:17:34,750 --> 00:17:32,870  
other than that there are no known cases

406  
00:17:36,760 --> 00:17:34,760  
of consciousness a plants aren't

407  
00:17:39,100 --> 00:17:36,770  
conscious mountains and rivers and

408  
00:17:42,160 --> 00:17:39,110  
waterfalls and planets are not conscious

409  
00:17:44,320 --> 00:17:42,170  
now we have to assume that consciousness

410  
00:17:46,660 --> 00:17:44,330  
exists in the universe outside our

411  
00:17:49,750 --> 00:17:46,670  
little earth because you know we're only

412  
00:17:52,600 --> 00:17:49,760  
one our little solar systems only one

413  
00:17:56,500 --> 00:17:52,610

star of a hundred billion stars in our

414

00:17:58,510 --> 00:17:56,510

galaxy and our galaxy is only one of a

415

00:18:00,760 --> 00:17:58,520

hundred billion galaxies so we have to

416

00:18:03,100 --> 00:18:00,770

assume that we're not the only place the

417

00:18:04,600 --> 00:18:03,110

universe has life and consciousness but

418

00:18:06,340 --> 00:18:04,610

we don't know about the other place and

419

00:18:09,130 --> 00:18:06,350

maybe they're totally unlike what we

420

00:18:11,230 --> 00:18:09,140

have well I think even that statement

421

00:18:13,270 --> 00:18:11,240

that you just made would draw a lot of

422

00:18:16,660 --> 00:18:13,280

controversy from some folks who say how

423

00:18:19,240 --> 00:18:16,670

do we know plants aren't conscious how

424

00:18:22,360 --> 00:18:19,250

do we know cells aren't conscious how do

425

00:18:25,990 --> 00:18:22,370

we know our DNA isn't conscious and it's

426

00:18:28,840 --> 00:18:26,000

not a serious I balances um I mean I if

427

00:18:30,100 --> 00:18:28,850

you take a let's say an amoeba why isn't

428

00:18:32,740 --> 00:18:30,110

it conscious well it hadn't got the

429

00:18:34,540 --> 00:18:32,750

right kind of machinery of course I

430

00:18:37,270 --> 00:18:34,550

don't know but that presupposes

431

00:18:39,370 --> 00:18:37,280

something we don't know that is you know

432

00:18:41,590 --> 00:18:39,380

what is the nature of consciousness how

433

00:18:43,180 --> 00:18:41,600

does consciousness arise when does

434

00:18:44,740 --> 00:18:43,190

consciousness begin when does it end

435

00:18:48,280 --> 00:18:44,750

doesn't it I mean it's kind of a loop

436

00:18:50,590 --> 00:18:48,290

look I can't prove to you that my shoes

437

00:18:52,840 --> 00:18:50,600

are not conscious okay maybe they're

438

00:18:55,420 --> 00:18:52,850

thinking I wish this bastard wouldn't

439

00:18:57,130 --> 00:18:55,430

walk on me all day long you know I can't

440

00:18:59,800 --> 00:18:57,140

prove that they're not conscious it's

441

00:19:02,260 --> 00:18:59,810

just not a serious hypothesis we know

442

00:19:04,320 --> 00:19:02,270

that consciousness exists in certain

443

00:19:07,090 --> 00:19:04,330

rather specific parts of the world and

444

00:19:09,190 --> 00:19:07,100

shoes and ships and sealing wax and

445

00:19:11,110 --> 00:19:09,200

mountains and molecules and tectonic

446

00:19:12,670 --> 00:19:11,120

plates just don't have the right kind of

447

00:19:15,190 --> 00:19:12,680

machinery to be conscious now of course

448

00:19:17,170 --> 00:19:15,200

I can't prove to you that my shoes

449

00:19:19,150 --> 00:19:17,180

aren't conscious but it's not a serious

450

00:19:21,610 --> 00:19:19,160

hypothesis it's not something I think

451  
00:19:23,650 --> 00:19:21,620  
well boy we only get busy in make sure

452  
00:19:27,370 --> 00:19:23,660  
that we prove the shoes unconscious it's

453  
00:19:29,590 --> 00:19:27,380  
just not serious yeah I think the hard

454  
00:19:32,590 --> 00:19:29,600  
part there is where we draw the line in

455  
00:19:35,260 --> 00:19:32,600  
terms of seriousness plants there's been

456  
00:19:37,750 --> 00:19:35,270  
some interesting research for a long

457  
00:19:40,270 --> 00:19:37,760  
long time suggesting that plants react

458  
00:19:42,040 --> 00:19:40,280  
to people in certain situations or there

459  
00:19:44,650 --> 00:19:42,050  
some kind of feel the fact that we don't

460  
00:19:46,810 --> 00:19:44,660  
understand but before we even ants have

461  
00:19:49,660 --> 00:19:46,820  
all kinds of sensitivities and reactions

462  
00:19:53,140 --> 00:19:49,670  
but I don't really think for a moment

463  
00:19:55,570 --> 00:19:53,150

that the grass under my feet is thinking

464

00:19:57,460 --> 00:19:55,580

gosh it's terrible the way this guy

465

00:20:00,040 --> 00:19:57,470

keeps walking on us and that awful

466

00:20:02,320 --> 00:20:00,050

lawnmower that he runs overseas of

467

00:20:04,180 --> 00:20:02,330

course I can't prove that the grass

468

00:20:05,520 --> 00:20:04,190

isn't conscious but again it's not

469

00:20:09,550 --> 00:20:05,530

something that's worth worrying about

470

00:20:12,760 --> 00:20:09,560

okay let's move on to maybe some topics

471

00:20:15,960 --> 00:20:12,770

that are worth worrying about and would

472

00:20:19,450 --> 00:20:15,970

would violate this notion that

473

00:20:20,920 --> 00:20:19,460

consciousness is purely biological and

474

00:20:22,960 --> 00:20:20,930

maybe would push us in the other

475

00:20:25,270 --> 00:20:22,970

direction that consciousness is somehow

476  
00:20:26,920 --> 00:20:25,280  
fundamental and let me go through a

477  
00:20:30,850 --> 00:20:26,930  
couple of these and tell me if you think

478  
00:20:32,830 --> 00:20:30,860  
they have any potential to violate or

479  
00:20:36,370 --> 00:20:32,840  
challenge that in any way so I just

480  
00:20:39,940 --> 00:20:36,380  
start with hypnosis does hypnosis in any

481  
00:20:43,420 --> 00:20:39,950  
way violate the idea that consciousness

482  
00:20:45,820 --> 00:20:43,430  
is purely biological and the mind is not

483  
00:20:48,130 --> 00:20:45,830  
an active agent that can do anything

484  
00:20:50,440 --> 00:20:48,140  
well not as far as I know anything about

485  
00:20:52,360 --> 00:20:50,450  
hypnosis that what you do is you get to

486  
00:20:54,730 --> 00:20:52,370  
people who are susceptible to certain

487  
00:20:56,770 --> 00:20:54,740  
kinds of suggestions and they're very

488  
00:20:59,050 --> 00:20:56,780

they tend to be rather cooperative and

489

00:21:01,240 --> 00:20:59,060

they'll go along with the what they

490

00:21:03,460 --> 00:21:01,250

happen to suggest I'm not sure everybody

491

00:21:05,410 --> 00:21:03,470

can be hypnotized I'm not sure I could

492

00:21:07,480 --> 00:21:05,420

be hypnotized I'm naturally very

493

00:21:10,480 --> 00:21:07,490

realistic resistant anything like that

494

00:21:12,370 --> 00:21:10,490

but hypnosis definitely exists and it

495

00:21:16,000 --> 00:21:12,380

exists like all forms of consciousness

496

00:21:18,280 --> 00:21:16,010

in human brains and I think we ought to

497

00:21:20,560 --> 00:21:18,290

study it more I think it's a phenomenon

498

00:21:23,560 --> 00:21:20,570

that's worthy of more curiosity than I

499

00:21:25,690 --> 00:21:23,570

have given it so let me just be clear as

500

00:21:29,220 --> 00:21:25,700

I kind of go through this little laundry

501  
00:21:33,700 --> 00:21:29,230  
list here you're of the opinion that

502  
00:21:37,360 --> 00:21:33,710  
consciousness is ontologically distinct

503  
00:21:39,670 --> 00:21:37,370  
from the brain yes or no I mean business

504  
00:21:42,610 --> 00:21:39,680  
a different is consciousness different

505  
00:21:44,380 --> 00:21:42,620  
and can act differently because then I

506  
00:21:45,610 --> 00:21:44,390  
think you could fit hypnosis into that

507  
00:21:47,590 --> 00:21:45,620  
category hey there's this thing called

508  
00:21:48,760 --> 00:21:47,600  
consciousness we don't understand and it

509  
00:21:50,620 --> 00:21:48,770  
kind of works differently

510  
00:21:53,170 --> 00:21:50,630  
and then it can cause blisters on your

511  
00:21:55,420 --> 00:21:53,180  
hand and do all this stuff that you may

512  
00:21:57,970 --> 00:21:55,430  
not be consciously aware of but it's

513  
00:22:00,790 --> 00:21:57,980

kind of doing it consciousness is a

514

00:22:02,980 --> 00:22:00,800

feature of the brain it is a feature of

515

00:22:06,100 --> 00:22:02,990

the brain that's caused by the behavior

516

00:22:08,470 --> 00:22:06,110

of lower level elements neurons as far

517

00:22:10,690 --> 00:22:08,480

as we know and it's realized in the

518

00:22:13,930 --> 00:22:10,700

brain as a higher level feature an

519

00:22:16,540 --> 00:22:13,940

analogy I like to use is water liquidity

520

00:22:19,630 --> 00:22:16,550

is not an extra juice squirted out by

521

00:22:21,790 --> 00:22:19,640

the water it's just a condition that the

522

00:22:23,890 --> 00:22:21,800

system is in when the molecules are

523

00:22:25,540 --> 00:22:23,900

behaving in a certain way get the

524

00:22:27,940 --> 00:22:25,550

molecules to slow down and it stops

525

00:22:30,250 --> 00:22:27,950

being liquid it becomes ice but the

526

00:22:33,610 --> 00:22:30,260

solidity and the liquidity are not

527

00:22:36,340 --> 00:22:33,620

separate things they're features of the

528

00:22:37,960 --> 00:22:36,350

whole system in the same way my brain

529

00:22:39,940 --> 00:22:37,970

goes from consciousness to

530

00:22:42,100 --> 00:22:39,950

unconsciousness when I fall asleep and

531

00:22:43,720 --> 00:22:42,110

then becomes conscious again but the

532

00:22:45,880 --> 00:22:43,730

consciousness and the unconsciousness

533

00:22:48,250 --> 00:22:45,890

are not separate entities they are

534

00:22:50,950 --> 00:22:48,260

features of the brain their conditions

535

00:22:53,260 --> 00:22:50,960

or states that the brain is in so

536

00:22:56,260 --> 00:22:53,270

roughly speaking consciousness is to the

537

00:22:58,180 --> 00:22:56,270

brain as liquidity is to water and and

538

00:23:00,310 --> 00:22:58,190

the system can go from being liquid to

539

00:23:02,020 --> 00:23:00,320

being solid the same way that conscious

540

00:23:05,740 --> 00:23:02,030

brain can go from being conscious to

541

00:23:08,470 --> 00:23:05,750

being unconscious okay I get that I hear

542

00:23:10,870 --> 00:23:08,480

that what we've been exploring i think

543

00:23:12,520 --> 00:23:10,880

is some of the evidence that suggests

544

00:23:15,100 --> 00:23:12,530

that maybe that's not true and we really

545

00:23:17,950 --> 00:23:15,110

started with parapsychology and folks

546

00:23:20,080 --> 00:23:17,960

like Rupert Sheldrake from Cambridge or

547

00:23:22,410 --> 00:23:20,090

Dean Radin who used to be at Bell Labs

548

00:23:24,880 --> 00:23:22,420

and as at ions and if not all these

549

00:23:27,250 --> 00:23:24,890

precognition experiments and telepathy

550

00:23:29,320 --> 00:23:27,260

experiments highly suggestive that

551  
00:23:31,630 --> 00:23:29,330  
that's going on but put all that aside

552  
00:23:34,090 --> 00:23:31,640  
because the real kicker that we run

553  
00:23:36,100 --> 00:23:34,100  
across and keep pounding on because it

554  
00:23:38,350 --> 00:23:36,110  
just won't go away is near death

555  
00:23:41,530 --> 00:23:38,360  
experience science I mean here are these

556  
00:23:43,630 --> 00:23:41,540  
doctors and in the hospital carefully

557  
00:23:46,510 --> 00:23:43,640  
controlled experiments over and over

558  
00:23:49,330 --> 00:23:46,520  
again the brain but you're talking about

559  
00:23:52,270 --> 00:23:49,340  
dr. Searle is gone is non functioning

560  
00:23:54,520 --> 00:23:52,280  
isn't there and yet some kind of

561  
00:23:56,700 --> 00:23:54,530  
conscious experience that's able to be

562  
00:23:59,970 --> 00:23:56,710  
recalled and see what's going on

563  
00:24:01,960 --> 00:23:59,980

continues that evidence is pretty

564

00:24:02,570 --> 00:24:01,970

overwhelming at this point what do you

565

00:24:04,430 --> 00:24:02,580

do with

566

00:24:06,710 --> 00:24:04,440

how does that fit in a higher I don't

567

00:24:09,649 --> 00:24:06,720

know the stuff that I know about this

568

00:24:11,750 --> 00:24:09,659

tends to be rather anecdotal now maybe

569

00:24:13,580 --> 00:24:11,760

there is some really systematic

570

00:24:15,110 --> 00:24:13,590

large-scale study of near-death

571

00:24:17,360 --> 00:24:15,120

experience that shows you and have

572

00:24:19,970 --> 00:24:17,370

consciousness without a brain but I

573

00:24:22,490 --> 00:24:19,980

don't know of any such study and what

574

00:24:24,769 --> 00:24:22,500

I've heard is largely anecdotal now the

575

00:24:26,419 --> 00:24:24,779

mistake that people made is now that

576

00:24:29,180 --> 00:24:26,429

they tend to make is they think well

577

00:24:31,850 --> 00:24:29,190

look either these people are lying or

578

00:24:34,399 --> 00:24:31,860

there's a miracle and of course it

579

00:24:36,259 --> 00:24:34,409

bothers are probably wrong if people are

580

00:24:39,320 --> 00:24:36,269

perfectly sincere who reported

581

00:24:41,389 --> 00:24:39,330

near-death experiences but is it I it

582

00:24:43,279 --> 00:24:41,399

doesn't follow that you can have a

583

00:24:44,930 --> 00:24:43,289

consciousness completely separated from

584

00:24:46,909 --> 00:24:44,940

the brain that they have that this

585

00:24:48,529 --> 00:24:46,919

miracle has actually taken place I'd

586

00:24:50,509 --> 00:24:48,539

have to know a whole lot more about it

587

00:24:52,159 --> 00:24:50,519

and see more systematic studies as I

588

00:24:54,409 --> 00:24:52,169

said that the counts that I've heard

589

00:24:56,509 --> 00:24:54,419

tend to be anecdotal they tell a story

590

00:24:59,180 --> 00:24:56,519

about a guy who has some unusual

591

00:25:01,129 --> 00:24:59,190

experiences well there's a lot of

592

00:25:03,620 --> 00:25:01,139

published work on this you know the best

593

00:25:06,129 --> 00:25:03,630

compilation is probably the handbook of

594

00:25:08,990 --> 00:25:06,139

near-death experiences published by

595

00:25:10,820 --> 00:25:09,000

edited by Jan Holden that university of

596

00:25:13,009 --> 00:25:10,830

north texas we've interviewed her and of

597

00:25:15,259 --> 00:25:13,019

course Bruce Grayson at the University

598

00:25:17,240 --> 00:25:15,269

of Virginia who is very well known in

599

00:25:19,940 --> 00:25:17,250

this area but i'll just give you a taste

600

00:25:22,039 --> 00:25:19,950

for what they've done I mean this is I

601  
00:25:24,850 --> 00:25:22,049  
think one of the simplest in those

602  
00:25:28,370 --> 00:25:24,860  
convincing experiments is in hospital in

603  
00:25:30,980 --> 00:25:28,380  
cardiac arrest ward they take people

604  
00:25:33,560 --> 00:25:30,990  
they have a cardiac arrest they die

605  
00:25:34,879 --> 00:25:33,570  
they're resuscitated and then they go

606  
00:25:37,279 --> 00:25:34,889  
when they interview these people and

607  
00:25:39,649 --> 00:25:37,289  
they say okay tell us about your

608  
00:25:42,379 --> 00:25:39,659  
resuscitation and then of a control

609  
00:25:44,810 --> 00:25:42,389  
group that is people that didn't claim

610  
00:25:47,090 --> 00:25:44,820  
to have a near-death experience and then

611  
00:25:48,980 --> 00:25:47,100  
they have their study group people who

612  
00:25:51,620 --> 00:25:48,990  
did have a near-death experience and

613  
00:25:54,560 --> 00:25:51,630

then they compare it's pretty simple

614

00:25:56,930 --> 00:25:54,570

kind of protocol compare the amount of

615

00:25:58,730 --> 00:25:56,940

hits they get in recounting their

616

00:26:01,009 --> 00:25:58,740

resuscitation when they were dead they

617

00:26:02,899 --> 00:26:01,019

didn't have a brain compared the control

618

00:26:04,730 --> 00:26:02,909

group who didn't report an NDE with the

619

00:26:07,190 --> 00:26:04,740

group that did even ND and there's a

620

00:26:08,720 --> 00:26:07,200

significant difference that experiments

621

00:26:11,360 --> 00:26:08,730

been repeated over and over again

622

00:26:13,250 --> 00:26:11,370

published in peer-reviewed journals and

623

00:26:15,139 --> 00:26:13,260

it should have a brain what does that

624

00:26:16,070 --> 00:26:15,149

mean I'm my impression as these people

625

00:26:18,769 --> 00:26:16,080

are in the hospital

626  
00:26:21,169 --> 00:26:18,779  
and they're lying there on the hospital

627  
00:26:23,710 --> 00:26:21,179  
bed but this is during resuscitation so

628  
00:26:26,570 --> 00:26:23,720  
we're asking them to recall their

629  
00:26:30,560 --> 00:26:26,580  
experience during resuscitation as you

630  
00:26:33,440 --> 00:26:30,570  
know within 10 to 15 seconds after you

631  
00:26:35,240 --> 00:26:33,450  
have cardiac arrest you're EG is flat I

632  
00:26:38,029 --> 00:26:35,250  
mean that's just that's just the way

633  
00:26:40,909 --> 00:26:38,039  
that it is and people are and another

634  
00:26:42,950 --> 00:26:40,919  
guy a prominent cardiologist in the

635  
00:26:46,100 --> 00:26:42,960  
Netherlands dr. PIM van Lommel who's

636  
00:26:48,980 --> 00:26:46,110  
published in the lancet about this as he

637  
00:26:51,080 --> 00:26:48,990  
tells you will tell anyone you know in

638  
00:26:53,450 --> 00:26:51,090

the modern hospital resuscitation

639

00:26:56,870 --> 00:26:53,460

doesn't begin until at least a minute

640

00:26:59,600 --> 00:26:56,880

after that cardiac arrest has happened

641

00:27:02,090 --> 00:26:59,610

and and there's no there's no brain

642

00:27:04,250 --> 00:27:02,100

function during resuscitation that we

643

00:27:06,019 --> 00:27:04,260

know of I don't know enough about this

644

00:27:08,779 --> 00:27:06,029

stuff to have an intelligent opinion and

645

00:27:10,820 --> 00:27:08,789

of course it might turn out now that the

646

00:27:12,919 --> 00:27:10,830

hundred years from now we'll have this

647

00:27:15,649 --> 00:27:12,929

conversation and in heaven or in my case

648

00:27:18,110 --> 00:27:15,659

more likely the other place like the

649

00:27:19,490 --> 00:27:18,120

idea that you had to have a brain in

650

00:27:21,200 --> 00:27:19,500

order to be conscious that was kind of

651

00:27:23,210 --> 00:27:21,210

silly idea that people had back in the

652

00:27:25,700 --> 00:27:23,220

21st century I'd might turn out that way

653

00:27:27,529 --> 00:27:25,710

I don't think it will I think it you got

654

00:27:29,750 --> 00:27:27,539

to have a brain or some equivalent

655

00:27:32,029 --> 00:27:29,760

mechanism now we we don't know how to

656

00:27:34,789 --> 00:27:32,039

create consciousness artificially but I

657

00:27:37,039 --> 00:27:34,799

don't see any obstacle in theoretically

658

00:27:38,419 --> 00:27:37,049

to doing it if the brain can do it then

659

00:27:40,700 --> 00:27:38,429

you might be able to do it with some

660

00:27:42,350 --> 00:27:40,710

other kind of mechanism but the idea

661

00:27:44,810 --> 00:27:42,360

that it could just sort of speak float

662

00:27:46,610 --> 00:27:44,820

around freely without being realized in

663

00:27:49,310 --> 00:27:46,620

anything that does not seem to me a very

664

00:27:52,310 --> 00:27:49,320

serious possibility yeah I'm always

665

00:27:54,440 --> 00:27:52,320

reluctant to go too far with what it

666

00:27:56,870 --> 00:27:54,450

might be or how it might work i just

667

00:27:59,350 --> 00:27:56,880

think to me I approach it from the

668

00:28:03,080 --> 00:27:59,360

standpoint of can we falsify the

669

00:28:05,600 --> 00:28:03,090

existing hypothesis that it is

670

00:28:07,190 --> 00:28:05,610

biological I don't know I you know

671

00:28:09,049 --> 00:28:07,200

there's a lot of people on that site oh

672

00:28:10,730 --> 00:28:09,059

that's okay some of this stuff but I

673

00:28:12,080 --> 00:28:10,740

said the stuff that I've seen press

674

00:28:14,240 --> 00:28:12,090

accounts and so on tend to be rather

675

00:28:16,279 --> 00:28:14,250

anecdotal and not systematic science

676

00:28:18,889 --> 00:28:16,289

incidentally we keep going through this

677

00:28:22,580 --> 00:28:18,899

you're not old enough to remember and

678

00:28:25,170 --> 00:28:22,590

the parapsychology experiments of JB

679

00:28:26,880 --> 00:28:25,180

Ryan and all those people at Duke and

680

00:28:28,260 --> 00:28:26,890

we heard all this over and over that

681

00:28:30,750 --> 00:28:28,270

while these experiments keep being

682

00:28:32,370 --> 00:28:30,760

repeated they go over and over and it

683

00:28:35,130 --> 00:28:32,380

turned out it that was really nothing

684

00:28:36,960 --> 00:28:35,140

there under serious examination so they

685

00:28:39,240 --> 00:28:36,970

and of course we knew I guess that they

686

00:28:40,650 --> 00:28:39,250

would that parapsychology would become

687

00:28:42,900 --> 00:28:40,660

resuscitated I don't hear much about

688

00:28:47,040 --> 00:28:42,910

Ryan anymore in his group but there are

689

00:28:49,200 --> 00:28:47,050

other groups yeah boy that's a long long

690

00:28:51,570 --> 00:28:49,210

tail to to kind of pull into this

691

00:28:53,730 --> 00:28:51,580

conversation why don't you tell us this

692

00:28:57,410 --> 00:28:53,740

to kind of wrap things up what do you

693

00:29:01,050 --> 00:28:57,420

see as the the most interesting future

694

00:29:03,900 --> 00:29:01,060

research areas that kind of piqued your

695

00:29:06,390 --> 00:29:03,910

interest in terms of wrestling some of

696

00:29:08,550 --> 00:29:06,400

this stuff to the ground okay to me the

697

00:29:10,800 --> 00:29:08,560

most exciting question in the sciences

698

00:29:13,680 --> 00:29:10,810

today and that's anywhere in the

699

00:29:16,680 --> 00:29:13,690

sciences is how exactly do brain

700

00:29:19,170 --> 00:29:16,690

processes cause consciousness and how

701  
00:29:21,420 --> 00:29:19,180  
exactly is consciousness realized and

702  
00:29:23,970 --> 00:29:21,430  
how does it function in the brain I woke

703  
00:29:26,130 --> 00:29:23,980  
up this morning and I went from being in

704  
00:29:29,190 --> 00:29:26,140  
a state of unconsciousness to a state of

705  
00:29:31,650 --> 00:29:29,200  
consciousness what exactly happened in

706  
00:29:34,890 --> 00:29:31,660  
my brain that enabled that to take place

707  
00:29:37,260 --> 00:29:34,900  
and then how is it exactly that that

708  
00:29:40,070 --> 00:29:37,270  
consciousness with a specific location

709  
00:29:42,810 --> 00:29:40,080  
specific biochemical electrical chemical

710  
00:29:45,600 --> 00:29:42,820  
processes in the brain can then a

711  
00:29:47,730 --> 00:29:45,610  
function in such a way as to cause me to

712  
00:29:49,260 --> 00:29:47,740  
get up have breakfast come to the campus

713  
00:29:52,620 --> 00:29:49,270

and engage in this conversation with you

714

00:29:54,600 --> 00:29:52,630

so what exactly is the role of a

715

00:29:58,470 --> 00:29:54,610

consciousness in our life and how does

716

00:30:01,530 --> 00:29:58,480

it lock into all of these lower level

717

00:30:03,120 --> 00:30:01,540

neurobiological processes that enable it

718

00:30:05,820 --> 00:30:03,130

to function so for example if I now

719

00:30:08,070 --> 00:30:05,830

raise my arm I know it can only raise my

720

00:30:11,010 --> 00:30:08,080

arm because the brain is secreting

721

00:30:13,980 --> 00:30:11,020

acetylcholine at the end plates of the

722

00:30:16,290 --> 00:30:13,990

motor neurons and that means that the

723

00:30:18,570 --> 00:30:16,300

conscious decision to raise my arm has

724

00:30:21,120 --> 00:30:18,580

also have to level of description where

725

00:30:22,440 --> 00:30:21,130

it's got neurobiological properties now

726

00:30:24,090 --> 00:30:22,450

what I think is the most fascinating

727

00:30:25,980 --> 00:30:24,100

question in those science is how the

728

00:30:28,410 --> 00:30:25,990

hell does all of that work how does the

729

00:30:31,110 --> 00:30:28,420

brain create consciousness and then how

730

00:30:33,030 --> 00:30:31,120

does the complex system containing a

731

00:30:34,770 --> 00:30:33,040

level of description which is conscious

732

00:30:36,690 --> 00:30:34,780

and other levels of description which

733

00:30:38,909 --> 00:30:36,700

are straightforward biochemical and

734

00:30:41,849 --> 00:30:38,919

neural biological and physiological

735

00:30:43,769 --> 00:30:41,859

how does that operate in in the behavior

736

00:30:46,619 --> 00:30:43,779

of the whole system those to me are

737

00:30:49,379 --> 00:30:46,629

exciting questions dr. soul you have a

738

00:30:53,220 --> 00:30:49,389

number of interesting well done videos

739

00:30:54,840 --> 00:30:53,230

out there that a TED talk you have a

740

00:30:56,849 --> 00:30:54,850

number of other videos people can find

741

00:30:58,229 --> 00:30:56,859

on youtube tell us a little bit about

742

00:30:59,639 --> 00:30:58,239

what's coming up for you you have any

743

00:31:01,529 --> 00:30:59,649

presentations I know you're in the

744

00:31:03,029 --> 00:31:01,539

school year so probably not what's

745

00:31:04,649 --> 00:31:03,039

coming up for you in terms of

746

00:31:06,599 --> 00:31:04,659

presentations or books or anything like

747

00:31:08,789 --> 00:31:06,609

that I'm writing a couple of books i'm

748

00:31:11,340 --> 00:31:08,799

finishing a book on perception and

749

00:31:13,139 --> 00:31:11,350

that's a tough one to do but i'm making

750

00:31:14,489 --> 00:31:13,149

progress without i think i've got some

751

00:31:17,249 --> 00:31:14,499

of that figured out and that i should

752

00:31:19,049 --> 00:31:17,259

have finished before Christmas and i'm

753

00:31:20,310 --> 00:31:19,059

going to be given various lectures at

754

00:31:22,529 --> 00:31:20,320

various place i'm giving a lecture in

755

00:31:23,729 --> 00:31:22,539

new york at the end of sep tember about

756

00:31:26,310 --> 00:31:23,739

speech act theory about the philosophy

757

00:31:28,019 --> 00:31:26,320

of language and of course i continue to

758

00:31:29,970 --> 00:31:28,029

give lectures on this other question

759

00:31:33,779 --> 00:31:29,980

that fascinating and that is how do we

760

00:31:36,090 --> 00:31:33,789

create a reality which is exists only

761

00:31:37,649 --> 00:31:36,100

because we think it exists and i'm

762

00:31:39,330 --> 00:31:37,659

thinking things like money and property

763

00:31:41,879 --> 00:31:39,340

and government and marriage and

764

00:31:43,799 --> 00:31:41,889

universities and cocktail parties and i

765

00:31:45,210 --> 00:31:43,809

have an account of how that works how is

766

00:31:47,549 --> 00:31:45,220

it that people get together and

767

00:31:51,769 --> 00:31:47,559

cooperate and create this very powerful

768

00:31:54,060 --> 00:31:51,779

social and institutional reality I'm and

769

00:31:56,340 --> 00:31:54,070

according to me according to my account

770

00:31:58,349 --> 00:31:56,350

of this language is crucial we use

771

00:32:01,139 --> 00:31:58,359

language not just to describe reality

772

00:32:03,989 --> 00:32:01,149

but language is used to create a a

773

00:32:05,489 --> 00:32:03,999

social and institutional reality show

774

00:32:07,470 --> 00:32:05,499

all those are questions I'm working on

775

00:32:09,419 --> 00:32:07,480

well it sounds like fascinating and

776  
00:32:11,159 --> 00:32:09,429  
important work we look forward to seeing

777  
00:32:13,229 --> 00:32:11,169  
it all it's been great having you on

778  
00:32:14,789 --> 00:32:13,239  
thanks for joining me okay well great

779  
00:32:17,399 --> 00:32:14,799  
talking to you and I really appreciate

780  
00:32:19,889 --> 00:32:17,409  
it thanks again to dr. Searle for

781  
00:32:22,080 --> 00:32:19,899  
joining me today on skeptic oh I do

782  
00:32:24,119 --> 00:32:22,090  
appreciate him coming on and I did have

783  
00:32:26,399 --> 00:32:24,129  
a little bit of a follow-on email with

784  
00:32:27,629 --> 00:32:26,409  
him along the lines that we've talked

785  
00:32:29,460 --> 00:32:27,639  
about here but it really didn't go

786  
00:32:32,399 --> 00:32:29,470  
anywhere so I don't need to share any of

787  
00:32:34,830 --> 00:32:32,409  
that with you I have as you know Twp a

788  
00:32:36,539 --> 00:32:34,840

question or two from this interview at

789

00:32:39,720 --> 00:32:36,549

the beginning of this so we'll just kind

790

00:32:42,419 --> 00:32:39,730

of believe that as it stands but I am

791

00:32:45,629 --> 00:32:42,429

looking forward to the dialogue that we

792

00:32:48,659 --> 00:32:45,639

might have about this interview and

793

00:32:49,590 --> 00:32:48,669

about the skeptical bullies and their

794

00:32:52,669 --> 00:32:49,600

attack

795

00:32:55,740 --> 00:32:52,679

Rupert sheldrick suika pedia page and on

796

00:32:58,740 --> 00:32:55,750

Wikipedia in general and on Reddit and

797

00:33:02,159 --> 00:32:58,750

on iTunes and everywhere else that these

798

00:33:04,529 --> 00:33:02,169

folks seem to congregate and focus their

799

00:33:06,990 --> 00:33:04,539

attention look forward to talking with

800

00:33:09,150 --> 00:33:07,000

you about that of course the place to

801  
00:33:14,370 --> 00:33:09,160  
connect with me on that is through the

802  
00:33:15,600 --> 00:33:14,380  
skeptical website at ske pti KO kaam can

803  
00:33:17,760 --> 00:33:15,610  
leave me a comment right there on the

804  
00:33:19,799 --> 00:33:17,770  
website bounce over to our forum and

805  
00:33:22,080 --> 00:33:19,809  
join the discussion or drop me a note on

806  
00:33:23,909 --> 00:33:22,090  
facebook or through email well i have a

807  
00:33:26,549 --> 00:33:23,919  
number of interesting shows coming up

808  
00:33:28,740 --> 00:33:26,559  
i'm trying to get to this small

809  
00:33:31,130 --> 00:33:28,750  
collection of interviews that I've done

810  
00:33:34,289 --> 00:33:31,140  
on some of the outer limits of

811  
00:33:36,240 --> 00:33:34,299  
consciousness but other stuff just seems

812  
00:33:38,419 --> 00:33:36,250  
to keep popping up and I never get to

813  
00:33:40,740 --> 00:33:38,429

publish these other interviews but I

814

00:33:43,110 --> 00:33:40,750

promise I'll get around to them just as

815

00:33:45,240 --> 00:33:43,120

soon as I can in the meantime I thank

816

00:33:47,220 --> 00:33:45,250

you again for listening please reach out

817

00:33:49,169 --> 00:33:47,230

to anyone else who you think would be

818

00:33:50,899 --> 00:33:49,179

interested in this show or who would

819

00:33:54,720 --> 00:33:50,909

like to come along on this little

820

00:33:57,060 --> 00:33:54,730

skeptical journey we're all on so then