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**Animism**

1  
00:00:08,890 --> 00:00:03,160  
so help people understand animism

2  
00:00:12,970 --> 00:00:08,900  
compared to let's say Pan psychism or

3  
00:00:15,589 --> 00:00:12,980  
compared to materialism or compared to

4  
00:00:17,540 --> 00:00:15,599  
idealism without getting too much into

5  
00:00:20,090 --> 00:00:17,550  
the philosophical kind of part of that

6  
00:00:22,670 --> 00:00:20,100  
but just at a really kind of quick level

7  
00:00:24,019 --> 00:00:22,680  
the people who are saying animism when

8  
00:00:25,790 --> 00:00:24,029  
they throw it in that same sentence with

9  
00:00:28,630 --> 00:00:25,800  
idealism and apparently you know what

10  
00:00:30,650 --> 00:00:28,640  
are they talking about okay yeah well

11  
00:00:32,330 --> 00:00:30,660  
again going back to what I was saying

12  
00:00:34,940 --> 00:00:32,340  
about spirits and stuff that was kind of

13  
00:00:36,680 --> 00:00:34,950

an old I kind of like an outdated way of

14

00:00:39,170 --> 00:00:36,690

thinking about things it was implicitly

15

00:00:41,600 --> 00:00:39,180

loaded with assumptions about the people

16

00:00:43,069 --> 00:00:41,610

who were animists so suggesting that the

17

00:00:44,810 --> 00:00:43,079

people who are animists were kind of

18

00:00:47,150 --> 00:00:44,820

primitive and that their way of thinking

19

00:00:49,330 --> 00:00:47,160

was was useless so right from the very

20

00:00:51,979 --> 00:00:49,340

beginning anthropology is kind of like

21

00:00:54,470 --> 00:00:51,989

it's been interested in animism but

22

00:00:57,350 --> 00:00:54,480

again it's kind of bracketed out it's

23

00:00:58,580 --> 00:00:57,360

it's kind of ontological truth value if

24

00:01:06,260 --> 00:00:58,590

you can if you can talk about such a

25

00:01:08,539 --> 00:01:06,270

thing beliefs relative what happened and

26

00:01:10,039 --> 00:01:08,549

see see if you see if this is true or

27

00:01:12,050 --> 00:01:10,049

not because sometimes me coming as a

28

00:01:13,520 --> 00:01:12,060

total novice might might help but you

29

00:01:15,770 --> 00:01:13,530

got to correct me because it's totally

30

00:01:17,899 --> 00:01:15,780

wrong so the anthropologist walks into

31

00:01:19,280 --> 00:01:17,909

the forest of New Guinea and he goes and

32

00:01:22,160 --> 00:01:19,290

talks to the shaman and the shaman says

33

00:01:26,240 --> 00:01:22,170

that tree just talk to me and that rock

34

00:01:28,280 --> 00:01:26,250

is is also is wise in this way and the

35

00:01:29,780 --> 00:01:28,290

water is this and the guy's taking his

36

00:01:32,390 --> 00:01:29,790

notes he goes okay this guy's really

37

00:01:34,429 --> 00:01:32,400

kind of has this really weird belief

38

00:01:37,069 --> 00:01:34,439

system because he thinks all these

39

00:01:41,450 --> 00:01:37,079

things are alive and have this spiritual

40

00:01:43,789 --> 00:01:41,460

quality to them right so that's the is

41

00:01:46,370 --> 00:01:43,799

is that what originally they thought

42

00:01:48,350 --> 00:01:46,380

animism was from it yeah then they

43

00:01:51,530 --> 00:01:48,360

thought a was a belief system because

44

00:01:53,600 --> 00:01:51,540

they implicitly understood that again

45

00:01:56,179 --> 00:01:53,610

the Western materialist scientific

46

00:01:59,420 --> 00:01:56,189

ontology was the only one that's

47

00:02:03,440 --> 00:01:59,430

actually true the only one that's

48

00:02:05,630 --> 00:02:03,450

actually real so yeah eventually though

49

00:02:08,749 --> 00:02:05,640

through more and more ethnographic

50

00:02:10,699 --> 00:02:08,759

engagement with people so more and more

51  
00:02:12,830 --> 00:02:10,709  
anthropologists going out over the years

52  
00:02:15,320 --> 00:02:12,840  
and living with people and interact

53  
00:02:17,930 --> 00:02:15,330  
with them learning their life ways we

54  
00:02:21,290 --> 00:02:17,940  
begin to realize that animism isn't just

55  
00:02:24,470 --> 00:02:21,300  
a belief system the animism is actually

56  
00:02:27,170 --> 00:02:24,480  
a mode of engaging with the world so

57  
00:02:28,970 --> 00:02:27,180  
it's a way of living in the world it's

58  
00:02:32,180 --> 00:02:28,980  
not just about beliefs it's about

59  
00:02:35,449 --> 00:02:32,190  
practice and experience and

60  
00:02:38,630 --> 00:02:35,459  
participation in the world and this is

61  
00:02:42,530 --> 00:02:38,640  
now animism is often referred to as a

62  
00:02:45,650 --> 00:02:42,540  
kind of as a relational ontology so the

63  
00:02:47,809 --> 00:02:45,660

foundational components of animism the

64

00:02:51,170 --> 00:02:47,819

foundational elements are there are to

65

00:02:53,750 --> 00:02:51,180

do with relationships between persons

66

00:02:56,390 --> 00:02:53,760

and we say that not all persons are

67

00:02:59,150 --> 00:02:56,400

human so in anthropology we talk about

68

00:03:02,569 --> 00:02:59,160

other than human persons as well so

69

00:03:04,819 --> 00:03:02,579

these could be rocks plants animals and

70

00:03:06,770 --> 00:03:04,829

all of the other kinds of spirits and

71

00:03:09,890 --> 00:03:06,780

gods and deities as well but the

72

00:03:12,589 --> 00:03:09,900

important thing is the situation

73

00:03:15,350 --> 00:03:12,599

the situating of societies within a

74

00:03:17,270 --> 00:03:15,360

network of relationships so this is

75

00:03:20,840 --> 00:03:17,280

where the this is where the ontology

76

00:03:22,670 --> 00:03:20,850

differs from materialist ontology zand

77

00:03:24,620 --> 00:03:22,680

you know all the other kinds of Western

78

00:03:27,259 --> 00:03:24,630

mainstream anthologies is that we're

79

00:03:29,300 --> 00:03:27,269

realizing through animism that we're

80

00:03:31,819 --> 00:03:29,310

embedded in this bigger network of

81

00:03:33,949 --> 00:03:31,829

interactions with different kinds of

82

00:03:36,050 --> 00:03:33,959

minds different kinds of intelligences

83

00:03:37,879 --> 00:03:36,060

and that they're the front these

84

00:03:41,030 --> 00:03:37,889

relationships are the fundamental kind

85

00:03:45,520 --> 00:03:41,040

of building blocks of reality and then

86

00:03:47,960 --> 00:03:45,530

add to that flood that with our

87

00:03:49,970 --> 00:03:47,970

understanding our gradual understanding

88

00:03:52,520 --> 00:03:49,980

of the paranormal and someone goes out

89

00:03:54,830 --> 00:03:52,530

in encounters spirits or our

90

00:03:58,789 --> 00:03:54,840

understanding through parapsychology of

91

00:04:01,940 --> 00:03:58,799

medium research or of other encounters

92

00:04:03,949 --> 00:04:01,950

with the paranormal that now eat away at

93

00:04:06,979 --> 00:04:03,959

the underlying assumption that was

94

00:04:09,170 --> 00:04:06,989

originally made that not only is it a

95

00:04:11,420 --> 00:04:09,180

belief system but it's an incorrect

96

00:04:13,159 --> 00:04:11,430

belief system so you're you're crushing

97

00:04:15,050 --> 00:04:13,169

the idea that it's a belief system it's

98

00:04:18,469 --> 00:04:15,060

not a belief system it's a total

99

00:04:20,990 --> 00:04:18,479

engagement with reality but then add to

100

00:04:23,659 --> 00:04:21,000

that that there is a reality to that

101  
00:04:26,510 --> 00:04:23,669  
reality and that my presuppositions

102  
00:04:29,450 --> 00:04:26,520  
about how the world works and the crazy

103  
00:04:32,240 --> 00:04:29,460  
nests of this spiritual realm and I'll

104  
00:04:33,860 --> 00:04:32,250  
begun to crumble with the the

105  
00:04:35,600 --> 00:04:33,870  
parapsychologists in the paranormal

106  
00:04:38,240 --> 00:04:35,610  
people right so I mean all these things

107  
00:04:40,760 --> 00:04:38,250  
are happening kind of that once in real

108  
00:04:42,559 --> 00:04:40,770  
time and having these different effects

109  
00:04:44,409 --> 00:04:42,569  
and forces on the whole process right

110  
00:04:46,550 --> 00:04:44,419  
yeah yeah definitely

111  
00:04:48,409 --> 00:04:46,560  
and then so we should add to that

112  
00:04:50,210 --> 00:04:48,419  
conversation then and I want you to pick

113  
00:04:52,279 --> 00:04:50,220

this up because I think this is what

114

00:04:55,149 --> 00:04:52,289

throws people sometimes too and it's

115

00:04:59,300 --> 00:04:55,159

it's a lot to deconstruct is that

116

00:05:01,610 --> 00:04:59,310

animism is now being reintroduced into

117

00:05:06,290 --> 00:05:01,620

these conversations like with you and

118

00:05:10,189 --> 00:05:06,300

Gordon as an alternative to idealism as

119

00:05:12,920 --> 00:05:10,199

an alternative to materialism and I

120

00:05:15,770 --> 00:05:12,930

think we've just give given people an

121

00:05:19,670 --> 00:05:15,780

idea of why that conversation goes on

122

00:05:23,330 --> 00:05:19,680

but maybe we need to add to that a

123

00:05:24,469 --> 00:05:23,340

little bit in explain how those kind of

124

00:05:27,020 --> 00:05:24,479

are now put on

125

00:05:28,850 --> 00:05:27,030

oh yeah pants psychism is basically like

126

00:05:31,459 --> 00:05:28,860

animism and that's different than

127

00:05:33,379 --> 00:05:31,469

idealism and materialism II do have any

128

00:05:34,360 --> 00:05:33,389

thoughts in terms of helping people kind

129

00:05:40,570 --> 00:05:34,370

of understand that

130

00:05:43,399 --> 00:05:40,580

well yeah it's it's kind of like a murky

131

00:05:45,140 --> 00:05:43,409

territory I know that Gordon for example

132

00:05:48,830 --> 00:05:45,150

Gordon doesn't like the idea of Pam

133

00:05:50,600 --> 00:05:48,840

psychism and he's like you like talking

134

00:05:52,790 --> 00:05:50,610

about Dean things that Pam psychism is

135

00:05:54,469 --> 00:05:52,800

kind of like a backdoor materialism

136

00:05:58,279 --> 00:05:54,479

again at the end of the day it's a

137

00:06:01,459 --> 00:05:58,289

crutch yeah what do you think that's a

138

00:06:03,379 --> 00:06:01,469

Gordon's crash no no no I think I think

139

00:06:05,659 --> 00:06:03,389

it's a I think it's a crutch I think

140

00:06:10,339 --> 00:06:05,669

it's the you know it's the last bastion

141

00:06:12,379 --> 00:06:10,349

of materialism whole holdouts you know

142

00:06:14,839 --> 00:06:12,389

one foot on the dock one foot in the

143

00:06:18,140 --> 00:06:14,849

boat kind of thing mixing metaphors but

144

00:06:20,209 --> 00:06:18,150

yeah it's on the is it's on the way

145

00:06:24,649 --> 00:06:20,219

towards animism but it's not willing to

146

00:06:27,050 --> 00:06:24,659

go all the way and when we talk about

147

00:06:28,999 --> 00:06:27,060

Pam psychism for example we're talking

148

00:06:31,999 --> 00:06:29,009

about some kind of like a fundamental

149

00:06:34,519 --> 00:06:32,009

kind of consciousness or a fundamental

150

00:06:36,589 --> 00:06:34,529

awareness that isn't you know it's not

151  
00:06:38,719 --> 00:06:36,599  
consciousness as we understand it it's

152  
00:06:40,370 --> 00:06:38,729  
just it's the basis of awareness

153  
00:06:43,220 --> 00:06:40,380  
whereas when we're coming from anomie

154  
00:06:45,680 --> 00:06:43,230  
perspective that other consciousness has

155  
00:06:47,870 --> 00:06:45,690  
just as much agency and intention in the

156  
00:06:49,580 --> 00:06:47,880  
world as we do they just express

157  
00:06:51,590 --> 00:06:49,590  
themselves in them in different kinds of

158  
00:06:53,510 --> 00:06:51,600  
ways so the consciousness of a rock

159  
00:06:55,400 --> 00:06:53,520  
isn't necessarily just some kind of like

160  
00:06:57,320 --> 00:06:55,410  
a flat flat lines background

161  
00:06:59,960 --> 00:06:57,330  
consciousness but actually it possesses

162  
00:07:03,020 --> 00:06:59,970  
its own agency and intention in the same

163  
00:07:05,090 --> 00:07:03,030

way that that we do but it expresses its

164

00:07:07,040 --> 00:07:05,100

agency and intention in the world in a

165

00:07:09,680 --> 00:07:07,050

very different way perhaps over like

166

00:07:12,590 --> 00:07:09,690

vast vast time scales or things like

167

00:07:15,980 --> 00:07:12,600

that okay yeah and this is fun because

168

00:07:17,660 --> 00:07:15,990

this is now an opportunity to take the

169

00:07:20,690 --> 00:07:17,670

conversation one step further because

170

00:07:22,580 --> 00:07:20,700

I'm listening to you and Gordon and all

171

00:07:24,410 --> 00:07:22,590

your cool thoughts on enemas and I'm

172

00:07:27,470 --> 00:07:24,420

thinking but guys you've missed the

173

00:07:31,310 --> 00:07:27,480

point in the same way it's on the way

174

00:07:33,380 --> 00:07:31,320

towards what again I mean it take these

175

00:07:35,840 --> 00:07:33,390

different wisdom traditions and I've

176

00:07:39,160 --> 00:07:35,850

always been interested in yoga and in

177

00:07:42,530 --> 00:07:39,170

the east and in particular the Vedanta

178

00:07:45,200 --> 00:07:42,540

non-dual kind of thing hey man all those

179

00:07:47,710 --> 00:07:45,210

people there saying sure it's spirits of

180

00:07:51,610 --> 00:07:47,720

hares parents they're spirits everywhere

181

00:07:55,460 --> 00:07:51,620

on the way towards what it's about

182

00:07:59,030 --> 00:07:55,470

transcending that spiritual reality and

183

00:08:01,910 --> 00:07:59,040

getting to what's next so it does seem

184

00:08:04,910 --> 00:08:01,920

to me to be somewhat of an arbitrary

185

00:08:07,760 --> 00:08:04,920

stopping point to say ah we've got it

186

00:08:09,470 --> 00:08:07,770

we've arrived it's animism you know it's

187

00:08:13,430 --> 00:08:09,480

like this discussion you're having about

188

00:08:17,450 --> 00:08:13,440

does animism sassoon idealism and it's

189

00:08:20,210 --> 00:08:17,460

like no of course not because idealism

190

00:08:24,230 --> 00:08:20,220

is really saying that it's all it's

191

00:08:28,580 --> 00:08:24,240

closer to that that non-dual vedantic

192

00:08:32,330 --> 00:08:28,590

kind of it all goes into one there the

193

00:08:34,730 --> 00:08:32,340

wave in the ocean are just separate only

194

00:08:36,890 --> 00:08:34,740

because we imagined them to be separate

195

00:08:40,850 --> 00:08:36,900

so I've teed it up enough there let's

196

00:08:43,580 --> 00:08:40,860

start that discussion yeah well I agree

197

00:08:45,980 --> 00:08:43,590

with you because I don't think I'm well

198

00:08:49,579 --> 00:08:45,990

I don't think the animism is is the

199

00:08:51,650 --> 00:08:49,589

place to stop necessarily but again like

200

00:08:54,420 --> 00:08:51,660

you're saying is with one step closer to

201

00:08:58,320 --> 00:08:54,430

whatever the ultimate thing is

202

00:09:01,570 --> 00:08:58,330

but I think it's a particularly useful

203

00:09:03,880 --> 00:09:01,580

way of thinking about the world given

204

00:09:06,910 --> 00:09:03,890

that we have for the past 150 years

205

00:09:10,390 --> 00:09:06,920

being literally destroying our our

206

00:09:12,790 --> 00:09:10,400

planet it gives us kind of like a

207

00:09:15,550 --> 00:09:12,800

framework to rebuild our relationship

208

00:09:19,360 --> 00:09:15,560

with live kind of like the ground of our

209

00:09:21,910 --> 00:09:19,370

being here do you see what I mean it's

210

00:09:24,100 --> 00:09:21,920

thinking in terms of relationships shows

211

00:09:25,840 --> 00:09:24,110

that we are part of this wider network

212

00:09:29,950 --> 00:09:25,850

of things whether it turns out to be an

213

00:09:33,100 --> 00:09:29,960

an idealist universe or multiverse or

214

00:09:36,520 --> 00:09:33,110

whether animism teaches us that we have