

# RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY



MIXED PERSPECTIVES

(SPIRITUALISM, PARAPSYCHOLOGY)



# SCIENCE

1  
00:00:08,790 --> 00:00:03,750  
the scientific search for spirit

2  
00:00:12,390 --> 00:00:08,800  
this is a sociology of science project

3  
00:00:14,910 --> 00:00:12,400  
i am interested in how knowledge about

4  
00:00:18,230 --> 00:00:14,920  
consciousness and survival is

5  
00:00:21,830 --> 00:00:19,510  
i've been doing this work for about a

6  
00:00:24,070 --> 00:00:21,840  
year now including last fall when i was

7  
00:00:26,790 --> 00:00:24,080  
on sabbatical

8  
00:00:28,470 --> 00:00:26,800  
and uh this wasn't partly supported by a

9  
00:00:32,069 --> 00:00:28,480  
grant from gettysburg college

10  
00:00:35,910 --> 00:00:32,079  
so far i've interviewed 21 people

11  
00:00:38,709 --> 00:00:35,920  
mostly scientists or academics

12  
00:00:40,790 --> 00:00:38,719  
who are interested in survival i've also

13  
00:00:42,790 --> 00:00:40,800

done participant observation

14

00:00:44,069 --> 00:00:42,800

at research organizations and

15

00:00:46,630 --> 00:00:44,079

professional conferences

16

00:00:48,709 --> 00:00:46,640

like this one and there's a lot of

17

00:00:53,270 --> 00:00:48,719

literature to review

18

00:01:04,469 --> 00:00:56,830

the complete idiot's guide to near-death

19

00:01:08,149 --> 00:01:05,990

now the kinds of things that we could

20

00:01:11,590 --> 00:01:08,159

group under consciousness and survival

21

00:01:13,350 --> 00:01:11,600

i have on this slide although of course

22

00:01:15,190 --> 00:01:13,360

many parapsychologists will talk about

23

00:01:16,230 --> 00:01:15,200

overlap between the two categories so

24

00:01:18,950 --> 00:01:16,240

for example

25

00:01:21,030 --> 00:01:18,960

ndes might provide evidence for survival

26

00:01:24,830 --> 00:01:21,040

and spirit mediumship

27

00:01:27,910 --> 00:01:24,840

might just be psy among the living or

28

00:01:29,350 --> 00:01:27,920

clairvoyance here are some handy

29

00:01:32,149 --> 00:01:29,360

concepts for looking

30

00:01:33,749 --> 00:01:32,159

at this in terms of sociology of science

31

00:01:35,749 --> 00:01:33,759

so that thomas kuhn talking about

32

00:01:38,630 --> 00:01:35,759

paradigms and irving goffman

33

00:01:41,350 --> 00:01:38,640

frames those are nice ways of of seeing

34

00:01:42,149 --> 00:01:41,360

these things as people processing data

35

00:01:44,789 --> 00:01:42,159

through a certain

36

00:01:45,990 --> 00:01:44,799

perspective and i have the tinkertoy

37

00:01:48,550 --> 00:01:46,000

house on the left

38

00:01:49,429 --> 00:01:48,560

to illustrate social construction

39

00:01:52,149 --> 00:01:49,439

whereas

40

00:01:52,550 --> 00:01:52,159

my amino acid molecule glycine on the

41

00:01:55,749 --> 00:01:52,560

right

42

00:01:57,830 --> 00:01:55,759

that's real that's objectively real

43

00:01:59,270 --> 00:01:57,840

now of course i tell my students all the

44

00:02:01,030 --> 00:01:59,280

time that

45

00:02:03,270 --> 00:02:01,040

the map is not to territory there's no

46

00:02:03,670 --> 00:02:03,280

such thing as a model or a concept which

47

00:02:06,069 --> 00:02:03,680

has

48

00:02:07,190 --> 00:02:06,079

an absolute one-to-one correspondence

49

00:02:10,550 --> 00:02:07,200

with reality

50

00:02:12,390 --> 00:02:10,560

language games jean-francois leotard

51  
00:02:13,990 --> 00:02:12,400  
one of the language games played in

52  
00:02:17,030 --> 00:02:14,000  
science is to talk about

53  
00:02:20,550 --> 00:02:17,040  
anecdotal in the sense of merely

54  
00:02:23,110 --> 00:02:20,560  
anecdotal evidence so that if you set up

55  
00:02:23,750 --> 00:02:23,120  
a linguistic frame in which elite

56  
00:02:26,710 --> 00:02:23,760  
science

57  
00:02:27,750 --> 00:02:26,720  
is replicable controlled laboratory

58  
00:02:30,390 --> 00:02:27,760  
experiments

59  
00:02:30,869 --> 00:02:30,400  
and everything else is just anecdotal

60  
00:02:33,830 --> 00:02:30,879  
then

61  
00:02:35,589 --> 00:02:33,840  
of course that marginalizes humanities

62  
00:02:36,710 --> 00:02:35,599  
as a way of knowing anything it also

63  
00:02:39,750 --> 00:02:36,720

marginalizes

64

00:02:41,030 --> 00:02:39,760

social science in which laboratory

65

00:02:44,150 --> 00:02:41,040

methodology

66

00:02:47,990 --> 00:02:44,160

is rarely appropriate

67

00:02:51,190 --> 00:02:48,000

also stanley aranowitz in sciences power

68

00:02:53,509 --> 00:02:51,200

talks about how science uses an ideology

69

00:02:57,030 --> 00:02:53,519

to protect itself

70

00:02:59,030 --> 00:02:57,040

protect its interests now one of the

71

00:03:01,910 --> 00:02:59,040

the main cultural splits here that's

72

00:03:05,509 --> 00:03:01,920

relevant for talking about

73

00:03:07,750 --> 00:03:05,519

spirituality survival and consciousness

74

00:03:09,830 --> 00:03:07,760

is the split between religion and

75

00:03:10,550 --> 00:03:09,840

science which most people don't realize

76

00:03:12,470 --> 00:03:10,560

actually got

77

00:03:13,670 --> 00:03:12,480

a whole lot wider after darwin than it

78

00:03:16,470 --> 00:03:13,680

was before darwin

79

00:03:17,990 --> 00:03:16,480

and by the end of the 1800s the

80

00:03:21,190 --> 00:03:18,000

professionalization of science

81

00:03:24,390 --> 00:03:21,200

made it very difficult for spiritualists

82

00:03:25,830 --> 00:03:24,400

to claim that their seances i mean they

83

00:03:26,630 --> 00:03:25,840

didn't have university degrees so how

84

00:03:27,830 --> 00:03:26,640

could they claim

85

00:03:29,750 --> 00:03:27,840

that they were providing in their

86

00:03:31,990 --> 00:03:29,760

seances evidence

87

00:03:34,070 --> 00:03:32,000

for survival or consciousness

88

00:03:36,470 --> 00:03:34,080

consciousness after so-called death

89

00:03:37,670 --> 00:03:36,480

also serious scientists even ones with

90

00:03:39,589 --> 00:03:37,680

nobel prizes

91

00:03:41,350 --> 00:03:39,599

in london who wanted to test spirit

92

00:03:43,190 --> 00:03:41,360

mediums were ignored

93

00:03:46,229 --> 00:03:43,200

because their research was in a taboo

94

00:03:49,270 --> 00:03:46,239

area it was too close to science

95

00:03:49,750 --> 00:03:49,280

i mean that's a slip i guess too close

96

00:03:52,390 --> 00:03:49,760

to

97

00:03:53,030 --> 00:03:52,400

religion now what's my role in all of

98

00:03:54,710 --> 00:03:53,040

this

99

00:03:56,710 --> 00:03:54,720

i think i'm doing a kind of applied

100

00:03:58,070 --> 00:03:56,720

sociology it actually just dawned on me

101  
00:04:00,390 --> 00:03:58,080  
while i was preparing this talk

102  
00:04:02,789 --> 00:04:00,400  
this is applied sociology now as you can

103  
00:04:05,030 --> 00:04:02,799  
see i tend to lean a little toward the

104  
00:04:08,149 --> 00:04:05,040  
social constructionist perspective

105  
00:04:10,470 --> 00:04:08,159  
however i'm not a radical postmodernist

106  
00:04:12,309 --> 00:04:10,480  
i don't claim that science is impossible

107  
00:04:14,309 --> 00:04:12,319  
i don't say that truth is only what we

108  
00:04:16,789 --> 00:04:14,319  
all say it is

109  
00:04:17,590 --> 00:04:16,799  
i i'm kind of a moderate and i actually

110  
00:04:19,590 --> 00:04:17,600  
think

111  
00:04:21,830 --> 00:04:19,600  
that i can look i'm probably kidding

112  
00:04:22,550 --> 00:04:21,840  
myself right probably i think that i can

113  
00:04:25,430 --> 00:04:22,560

look

114

00:04:26,870 --> 00:04:25,440

at all these frames and use a kind of

115

00:04:29,749 --> 00:04:26,880

sociological filter

116

00:04:30,390 --> 00:04:29,759

take a holistic look of all these things

117

00:04:35,189 --> 00:04:30,400

and

118

00:04:37,749 --> 00:04:35,199

together we'll see in a few years

119

00:04:38,950 --> 00:04:37,759

i'm sure you're all aware that the

120

00:04:41,030 --> 00:04:38,960

biggest stumbling block

121

00:04:41,990 --> 00:04:41,040

in this kind of research is the normal

122

00:04:44,070 --> 00:04:42,000

science decision

123

00:04:46,310 --> 00:04:44,080

that certain topics are okay to study

124

00:04:49,270 --> 00:04:46,320

and others are not

125

00:04:49,990 --> 00:04:49,280

robert k merton a sociologist talked

126  
00:04:52,790 --> 00:04:50,000  
about

127  
00:04:53,430 --> 00:04:52,800  
how the scientific ideal the ethos in

128  
00:05:00,310 --> 00:04:53,440  
science

129  
00:05:01,189 --> 00:05:00,320  
and objectivity he was really dreaming i

130  
00:05:04,070 --> 00:05:01,199  
think but that was

131  
00:05:06,150 --> 00:05:04,080  
a nice try in reality see i go with

132  
00:05:07,670 --> 00:05:06,160  
stanley toronto what's being a radical

133  
00:05:10,550 --> 00:05:07,680  
leftist myself

134  
00:05:11,430 --> 00:05:10,560  
stanley aranowitz talks about science as

135  
00:05:14,469 --> 00:05:11,440  
power

136  
00:05:17,590 --> 00:05:14,479  
in which in actually establishment

137  
00:05:19,590 --> 00:05:17,600  
establishment science has an ideology

138  
00:05:20,710 --> 00:05:19,600

that claims objectivity when it's really

139

00:05:23,350 --> 00:05:20,720

not and

140

00:05:23,990 --> 00:05:23,360

i like when aranowitz says that the

141

00:05:25,909 --> 00:05:24,000

ideology

142

00:05:27,430 --> 00:05:25,919

of science is that science has no

143

00:05:29,670 --> 00:05:27,440

ideology

144

00:05:30,790 --> 00:05:29,680

we're the experts it's only a method you

145

00:05:32,469 --> 00:05:30,800

don't where's your degree

146

00:05:34,390 --> 00:05:32,479

where's your nsf grant to study

147

00:05:39,350 --> 00:05:34,400

mediumship you don't count

148

00:05:42,870 --> 00:05:39,360

end of story

149

00:05:44,230 --> 00:05:42,880

so it shouldn't be that certain subjects

150

00:05:46,230 --> 00:05:44,240

are just

151  
00:05:47,749 --> 00:05:46,240  
not allowed just completely deviant to

152  
00:05:51,029 --> 00:05:47,759  
even ask questions about

153  
00:05:52,710 --> 00:05:51,039  
but that's what happens and as jl and

154  
00:05:56,309 --> 00:05:52,720  
heineck the astronomer

155  
00:05:59,590 --> 00:05:56,319  
and ufo research researcher said science

156  
00:06:01,110 --> 00:05:59,600  
is not always what scientists do he also

157  
00:06:02,230 --> 00:06:01,120  
said that ridicule is not part of the

158  
00:06:04,870 --> 00:06:02,240  
scientific method

159  
00:06:06,790 --> 00:06:04,880  
but ridicule is a strong aspect of

160  
00:06:09,909 --> 00:06:06,800  
social control

161  
00:06:12,070 --> 00:06:09,919  
in normal science i use the word normal

162  
00:06:15,430 --> 00:06:12,080  
science to talk about the control system

163  
00:06:17,670 --> 00:06:15,440

of science so what i hope to do is to

164

00:06:19,670 --> 00:06:17,680

transcend any one frame

165

00:06:22,390 --> 00:06:19,680

unconsciousness and survival and attempt

166

00:06:24,710 --> 00:06:22,400

to see what it all means i like to do a

167

00:06:26,230 --> 00:06:24,720

sympathetic reading of all these things

168

00:06:28,870 --> 00:06:26,240

the kind of reading you don't get when

169

00:06:30,390 --> 00:06:28,880

you submit your article to a journal

170

00:06:32,230 --> 00:06:30,400

you know what i mean i would like to get

171

00:06:33,990 --> 00:06:32,240

a sympathetic reading

172

00:06:35,510 --> 00:06:34,000

actually try to understand from all

173

00:06:38,629 --> 00:06:35,520

these perspectives

174

00:06:39,270 --> 00:06:38,639

in the true spirit of science and uh by

175

00:06:41,909 --> 00:06:39,280

the way

176

00:06:43,749 --> 00:06:41,919

if you let it leak out as a sociologist

177

00:06:44,870 --> 00:06:43,759

that you're not just interested in how

178

00:06:46,950 --> 00:06:44,880

scientists

179

00:06:48,790 --> 00:06:46,960

look at survival but admit that you

180

00:06:50,070 --> 00:06:48,800

actually care if there is such a thing

181

00:06:52,469 --> 00:06:50,080

as survival

182

00:06:53,990 --> 00:06:52,479

you're in the sociological dog house and

183

00:06:57,350 --> 00:06:54,000

that's me in the dog house

184

00:06:58,790 --> 00:06:57,360

losing my religion i'm used to being in

185

00:07:00,469 --> 00:06:58,800

the dog house

186

00:07:03,510 --> 00:07:00,479

because of other things that i've done

187

00:07:06,629 --> 00:07:03,520

other studies i've done

188

00:07:07,670 --> 00:07:06,639

such as my study of ufo researchers in

189

00:07:10,230 --> 00:07:07,680

which i

190

00:07:11,350 --> 00:07:10,240

i interviewed 91 ufo researchers and i

191

00:07:14,150 --> 00:07:11,360

read the literature

192

00:07:15,029 --> 00:07:14,160

to try to figure out how and why this

193

00:07:17,270 --> 00:07:15,039

subject

194

00:07:19,029 --> 00:07:17,280

was labeled as deviant science and also

195

00:07:21,909 --> 00:07:19,039

to find out the subcultures of

196

00:07:24,710 --> 00:07:21,919

of different frames that various

197

00:07:28,309 --> 00:07:24,720

ufologists used

198

00:07:31,909 --> 00:07:28,319

so that you could say that there is a

199

00:07:34,309 --> 00:07:31,919

subculture of nuts and bolts ufologists

200

00:07:36,550 --> 00:07:34,319

and a new age wing of ufology

201  
00:07:38,070 --> 00:07:36,560  
and this is hemmed in on two sides by

202  
00:07:41,029 --> 00:07:38,080  
normal science debunkers

203  
00:07:42,230 --> 00:07:41,039  
and ufl ufo cults on the other and

204  
00:07:45,270 --> 00:07:42,240  
there's a similar

205  
00:07:46,869 --> 00:07:45,280  
parallel in red down here with

206  
00:07:48,550 --> 00:07:46,879  
subcultures that have something to do

207  
00:07:51,749 --> 00:07:48,560  
with consciousness

208  
00:07:55,270 --> 00:07:53,830  
let me give you some examples of what i

209  
00:07:59,670 --> 00:07:55,280  
found so far in my

210  
00:08:02,790 --> 00:07:59,680  
interviews and observations

211  
00:08:05,189 --> 00:08:02,800  
this one institute that i observed

212  
00:08:06,390 --> 00:08:05,199  
is strongly applied now they do do

213  
00:08:08,629 --> 00:08:06,400

research

214

00:08:10,230 --> 00:08:08,639

and they are science based and they want

215

00:08:13,350 --> 00:08:10,240

to avoid any particular

216

00:08:15,670 --> 00:08:13,360

religious tag but

217

00:08:16,550 --> 00:08:15,680

they assume the existence of

218

00:08:19,110 --> 00:08:16,560

consciousness

219

00:08:20,230 --> 00:08:19,120

and survival and do applied workshops so

220

00:08:21,189 --> 00:08:20,240

people are having out-of-body

221

00:08:23,749 --> 00:08:21,199

experiences and

222

00:08:24,790 --> 00:08:23,759

doing spirit rescues and so on and the

223

00:08:26,790 --> 00:08:24,800

one former

224

00:08:29,110 --> 00:08:26,800

director of research that i talked to

225

00:08:31,110 --> 00:08:29,120

said yes i've spent many years

226

00:08:32,790 --> 00:08:31,120

researching what i already know to be

227

00:08:34,550 --> 00:08:32,800

true in other words

228

00:08:36,389 --> 00:08:34,560

experience is primary i'm just looking

229

00:08:37,829 --> 00:08:36,399

at the clock i guess you look at my

230

00:08:39,350 --> 00:08:37,839

watch

231

00:08:41,350 --> 00:08:39,360

experience is primary and he had

232

00:08:42,709 --> 00:08:41,360

experiences as a child that

233

00:08:45,829 --> 00:08:42,719

gave him no doubt that there was

234

00:08:48,310 --> 00:08:45,839

consciousness apart from the body

235

00:08:49,190 --> 00:08:48,320

i interviewed one philosophy professor

236

00:08:53,110 --> 00:08:49,200

who is

237

00:08:55,350 --> 00:08:53,120

truly exquisite in the way he discusses

238

00:08:56,949 --> 00:08:55,360

the various perspectives on survival

239

00:08:57,829 --> 00:08:56,959

it's the best stuff that i've read

240

00:08:59,750 --> 00:08:57,839

actually

241

00:09:01,990 --> 00:08:59,760

and then he threw me for a loop when i

242

00:09:03,750 --> 00:09:02,000

asked him about quantum physics

243

00:09:05,110 --> 00:09:03,760

and how it might apply and he said it's

244

00:09:07,509 --> 00:09:05,120

just irrelevant

245

00:09:08,949 --> 00:09:07,519

and i i'm still processing this and

246

00:09:10,710 --> 00:09:08,959

trying to understand his perspective but

247

00:09:13,269 --> 00:09:10,720

basically what's going on here

248

00:09:14,389 --> 00:09:13,279

is that he thinks that that issues of

249

00:09:17,190 --> 00:09:14,399

mediumship

250

00:09:18,870 --> 00:09:17,200

or whatever is apparent survival it's a

251

00:09:20,710 --> 00:09:18,880

behavioral science question

252

00:09:22,389 --> 00:09:20,720

basically although i'm oversimplifying

253

00:09:25,110 --> 00:09:22,399

his point of view and that to

254

00:09:26,230 --> 00:09:25,120

reduce that down to a physics problem is

255

00:09:28,070 --> 00:09:26,240

reductionism

256

00:09:29,750 --> 00:09:28,080

so you could say that this is an example

257

00:09:33,509 --> 00:09:29,760

of disciplinary differences

258

00:09:37,990 --> 00:09:35,910

one lab scientist i interviewed said

259

00:09:39,910 --> 00:09:38,000

that there is a tendency

260

00:09:43,590 --> 00:09:39,920

for people in interested in remote

261

00:09:45,269 --> 00:09:43,600

viewing when you ask them about survival

262

00:09:46,949 --> 00:09:45,279

possible survival cases like in spirit

263

00:09:49,509 --> 00:09:46,959

mediumship to apply

264

00:09:51,030 --> 00:09:49,519

a psy explanation not to mention any

265

00:09:54,389 --> 00:09:51,040

names here

266

00:09:56,470 --> 00:09:54,399

but that people who