

*Morten Tolboll*

## **My Work as a Paranormal Investigator**

Pseudoskepticism is an important concept in my work as a paranormal investigator, because pseudoskepticism usually is used in opposition to an assortment of questionable claims (from UFOs and paranormal phenomena to alternative medical practices to religious ideas). Pseudoskepticism refers to arguments which use scientific sounding language to disparage or refute given beliefs, theories, or claims, but which in fact fail to follow the precepts of conventional scientific skepticism.

The term “pseudoskepticism” has gradually been expanded to include any unsubstantiated invalidation of a theory.

The term was coined by professor in sociology, Marcello Truzzi. Truzzi attributed the following characteristics to pseudosceptics:

- 1) The tendency to deny, rather than doubt.
- 2) Double standards in the application of criticism
- 3) Tendency to discredit, rather than investigate
- 4) Presenting insufficient evidence or proof
- 5) Assuming criticism requires no burden of proof
- 6) Making unsubstantiated counter-claims
- 7) Counter-claims based on plausibility rather than empirical evidence
- 8) Suggesting that unconvincing evidence is grounds for completely dismissing a claim

Truzzi characterized true skepticism as:

- 1) Doubt rather than denial; nonbelief rather than belief
- 2) An agnostic position, one that says the claim is not proved rather than disproved

3) Maintains that science need not incorporate every extraordinary claim as a new “fact.”

4) As a result, has no burden to prove anything

5) Discovering an opportunity for error should make such experiments less evidential and usually unconvincing. It usually disproves the claim that the experiment was “air tight” against error, but it does not disprove the anomaly claim.

Pseudoskepticism is often building on scientism; that is: it overestimates the importance of science, for example by claiming:

1) that philosophy and religion need to be founded in science

2) that certain single branches of science can give an explanation of everything

3) that certain single branches of science are self-sufficient and that philosophy and religion are superfluous.

Personally, I am supporting true skepticism within science, but my method is not itself building on science, but on philosophy. I consider myself as a philosophical investigator and spiritual practitioner, who is using critical thinking, and not a scientific investigator, who have to follow the precepts of conventional scientific skepticism. This is due to, that I have experienced spiritual crises and paranormal phenomena (therefore I can't be an agnostic), but at the same time I am critical towards how to describe and behave in relation to such phenomena.

The goal of critical thinking (rationality) is to arrive at the most reasonable beliefs and take the most reasonable actions. We have evolved, however, not to seek the truth, but to survive and reproduce. Critical thinking is, seen in that connection, an unnatural act (seen from a deeper perspective it is the opposite: here critical thinking is natural and irrationality is unnatural). Anyway, by nature, it seems, we're driven to confirm and defend our current beliefs, even to the point of irrationality. We are prone to reject evidence that conflicts with our beliefs and to attack those who offer such evidence.

The spiritual practice has in fact three aspects:

1) Critical thinking (spotting thought distortions, created by dualistic unbalance, both in yourself and in others - see my book [A Dictionary of Thought Distortions](#), which is a manual in critical thinking - free download).

2) Investigating the shadow (ignorance, the unconscious, the painbody, the cause of suffering, your own dark side, the Ego - see my articles [The Emotional Painbody and why Psychotherapy can't Heal it](#), [The Ego-inflation in the New Age and Self-help Environment](#), and [Suffering as an Entrance to the Source](#)).

3) The spiritual practice (going beyond all ideas and images – see my book [Sūnyatā Sutras](#) – free download).

A central inspiration in my work as a paranormal investigator, is Sherlock Holmes. In his article, [Sherlock Holmes, Paranormal Investigator](#), the paranormal investigator Joe Nickell is describing how Holmes, in many of his cases, actually worked as a paranormal investigator.

In her book, [Mastermind – How to think like Sherlock Holmes](#), Maria Konnikova shows that Holmes' genius was based on an ability for neutral observation and passive listening presence; that is: meditation.

Another source of inspiration is my own concept of [The Matrix Conspiracy](#). Here I see myself as a Matrix rebel, who helps people out of the labyrinth of the Matrix, by investigating and exposing the strange beliefs, amusing deceptions, and dangerous delusions of the Matrix agents and sophists.

**Cases: See [The Matrix Dictionary](#)**

*All articles and books referred to are available in free PDF Versions. Links can be found on my blog: [www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com](http://www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com)*

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