

Eliminative Materialism

Post by “Don” of January 5, 2025 at 10:29 AM

"An example of this sort of thing would be a flock of sheep. A flock of sheep is a real entity, but it is nothing above and beyond the group of sheep gathered together."

<https://youtu.be/b8drxafsHiA?si=Q7jrdo-K9Nz13qQY>

I see this as illustrating the points at hand, maybe a little ham-handed but analogous nonetheless. The sheep** are the atoms; the field, the void. But there is a real thing called a "flock" that has its own qualities and movements. I'm seeing the real qualities and phenomena that we deal with in this way. The individual elementary particles and molecules of the sweetener I put in my tea are not "sweet," but I experience a real sensation of sweetness in my tea. I sense that, it influences my experience of the tea, and that experience is real and has a causal effect on how I respond to the tea. Likewise, the mind. Taking a leap, I realize, but it's still applicable to me. The individual "atoms" allowing me to reason and to even write these words are not individually capable of reason; and yet I can experience my mind as existing and having causal impact on the universe (and if I play my cards right, influence on other beings' minds). Our minds emerge temporarily in the cosmic flow of atoms, *really* exist, but will eventually get recycled over and over like they did before I was born.

***PS: I'm also including the sheepdogs as essential parts of the "flock." I do NOT want anyone to analogize the sheep as the atoms and the dogs as some kind of non-physical cause of the flock's behavior. They're all part of what I am calling the "flock." The sheep and dogs act in concert giving rise to the emergent phenomena I'm referring to as the "flock."*