

Patterns Modulo Epsilon

The frequency (and consistency) of reported "ghost sightings", the idea of a god, spirits, devils and angels etc, shouldn't be that surprising, considering the fact that the human brain seems to be somewhat overeager (visual) recognition machine. In general it is an overeager sensory recognition machine, by which I mean that it is quick to identify "objects" within the ostensible patterns it observes in its sensory input. Indeed, this overeagerness seems to be causally related to the relative success of homo sapiens on this planet. But in such a paradigm, and it certainly seems to be the (or very close to the) paradigm which requires the fewest number of axioms, the whole question as to a meaning or purpose of life (and indeed most of the "fundamental" questions of life) become irrelevant; vacuously true. For just as the human brain is quick to recognise shapes, faces and other forms in the patterns of the clouds, so to might it be quick (and by quick I mean *too* quick) to recognise any other kind of form. Just because there seems to be a highly structures sequence of sensory input coming from your direction doesn't mean there's actually anything going on there. I can explain the existence of you (and by extension anything) simply as a "cloud-formation" in the swarm of subatomic particles of which you and I and our surroundings are made. The electrons on your face are constantly trying to push free by the laws of inertia, then get held back electrostatically and just sort of sit there quivering. But to be so arrogant as to conclude their coincidental arrangement constitutes something so highly structured as a "face" or a "human" or that vibrating air molecules carry "meaningful sounds" let alone "words" across great distances seems to be a dubious claim at best; an utter fallacy at worst. In psychology they call it "projection" I think - when a child (or adult..) becomes attached to an inanimate object, or when we say the sun is smiling, the overeager pattern recognition algorithms whirring in our brains put "meaning" where there is none. Taking this to the next logical, and seemingly final, step - thoughts (and the existence consciousness as a whole) seems to be a rather self-centred assumption. The human brain is a cloud of electrical activity in a complicated chemical neural weather system and a "thought" is just a cloud-formation therein-nothing but a slowly varying subsequence of data structures which gets collapsed by some kind of inverse limit into a "thought" labeled "thought," a pattern modulo epsilon, but the epsilon makes all the difference. If you're thinking, oh this is just a different way of saying "everything you experience is an illusion," you've misunderstood the approach. The concept of an illusion has been rejected. What this viewpoint suggests is that your experiences as a human are equivalent to the experiences of a rock.