PHIL 255
Week 4: Idealism & Panpsychism
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Please turn off and put away all electronics.
Please avoid the last 2 rows.
Idealism
Panpsychism

Identity Theory
Can a thermostat have beliefs? Can a robot?
Restricted mind-brain identity theory: All human mental processes are brain process.

Alternatives
Solipsism: Only I exist.
Response: inference to the best explanation justifies belief in the existence of the external world and other people.
Idealism: Everything is mental.
Panpsychism: Everything has something mental to it.
Consciousness belongs to everything.

Idealism
Subjective idealism (Berkeley): Everything is mind-dependent, because I can’t think of anything that isn’t dependent on my mind.
Objective idealism (Hegel): The development of reality is the development of mind.
Response: Inference to the best explanation supports the existence of a world that minds cannot control.
Panpsychism

Everything in the world has a mental aspect to it.
Everything has a bit of consciousness.
Tononi, Koch: Consciousness is information integration.
Argument: Consciousness in humans is too different from physical processes to be explained physically.
Response: Consciousness emerges from neural mechanisms.

Discussion Question

How plausible are solipsism, idealism, and panpsychism as solutions to the mind-body problem?

Emergence

Emergent properties are possessed by the whole, not by the parts, and are not simple aggregates of the properties of the parts because they result from interactions of parts.