

Daniel Immerman
Phil Mind

Reading Questions for February 10

These questions cover a reading by Ned Block called “Troubles with Functionalism.” The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to read more than once to get the answers.

Background:

This week we’re discussing functionalism, which is (roughly) the view that what makes something a mental state is its role or function. Today’s reading is by Ned Block, who is a critic of functionalism.

Questions:

1. (*) In the first paragraph of section 1.1 (Page 95) Block distinguishes between Functionalism and Psychofunctionalism. What is the difference between these two views? Which, if either, do you think is more plausible and why?
2. (*) In section 1.2 (Pages 96-7), Block introduces a couple of examples that he thinks cause a problem for functionalists. What are the examples and why does he think they cause a problem for functionalism? Is Block successful in critiquing functionalism? Why?