

Daniel Immerman
Phil Mind

Reading Questions for March 14

These questions cover a chapter titled “Overview” from a book by Anita Avramides called *Other Minds*. The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to read more than once to get the answers.

Background:

Now we’re focusing on the questions: “Can we know that others have minds? If so, how?” Today we’ll look at a book chapter by Anita Avramides that discusses a number of positions and arguments in this debate. Avramides is not entirely neutral; she thinks that typical approaches to this question are problematic and that they arise from a mistaken view of what counts as a mind.

Questions:

1. (*) What are Avramides’s key points in her first section (pages 1-4) How does defend them? Is she right and why?
2. (*) On page 5, Avramides introduces one answer to the epistemological problem of other minds that is alleged to come from J. S. Mill, viz. the argument from analogy. What is this argument? Is it plausible and why?
3. (*) On page 7, Avramides introduces another answer to this problem that comes from Thomas Reid, an answer the involves first principles. What is this answer? Is it plausible and why?
4. (*) On page 16, Avramides introduces an answer defended by Jerry Fodor to the problem, viz. an answer involves inference to the best explanation. What is this answer? Is it plausible and why?
5. (*) On pages 16-8, Avramides very briefly outlines the answer she will give to the problem in the rest of the book, viz. an answer involving behavior. What is her answer, as best you can tell? Is it plausible and why?