

Argument Analysis #5

PHI 370/SPM 370

Due February 21st, 2014

Please write approximately 2 pages stating, in your own words, the argument contained in the following passage and critically analyzing it.

The cases of John and the Tourette person do not show that moral accountability has something *special* to do with agent-autonomy any more than the case of Dr. P. shows that moral accountability has something special to do with the processing of optic signals. A defect in self-control, a defect in the visual processing centers, and the fact that one is extremely poor all act as excusing conditions, to the extent that they do, in exactly the same way—through the way they alter our assumptions that a person who did something bad did it out of a marked lack of moral concern. *Arpaly, pg. 153*

You should first reconstruct the argument in the passage. Make clear what you take the conclusion of the argument to be, and what you take the premises to be, both explicit and suppressed, by setting them off from surrounding text and labeling each premise and the conclusion. Premises and conclusions should not be quotes; they should be stated in your own words. They should not be questions. It is best to do this both in prose and in standard form. Below is an example of an argument in standard form (but you needn't have only two premises).

Premise 1: Every claim with a truth-value is either analytic or empirically verifiable.

Premise 2: No moral claim is either analytic or empirically verifiable.

Conclusion: No moral claim has a truth-value.

Explicit premises are premises the author explicitly states; suppressed premises are premises that he or she is assuming to be true without explicitly stating.

Next, critically analyze the argument. What is the best objection to the argument? Is it to one of the premises? Is the argument valid? Ultimately, can the argument be successfully defended against the objection?