

Argument Analysis #6

PHI 375/SPM 375

Due October 20, 2013

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

Both CVR and CVRA involve confused notions of reasons and their relation to action. While we can give reasons which explain why an event (that was an action) occurred, it is deeply misleading to call such reasons 'reasons *for* action', for it makes no sense to talk of events having reasons *to* occur. To put the point a slightly different way: there are reasons *why* things occur, and these things are sometimes said to occur for reasons—e.g. the reason why the process of sweating occurs is to cool the body down, yet the process of sweating does not occur for a reason any more than the setting of the sun does. We may well imagine a situation in which we have reason to make ourselves sweat, but that would be a reason *for our doing* something (namely causing ourselves to sweat), and not a reason for our sweating to occur. We do, of course, offer teleological explanations of certain natural occurrences but to say, for example, that the body's reason for sweating is to keep its temperature at a certain level (to cool it) is just a disguised way of saying that sweating causes the body to cool. The reason here is not the cause but the *effect* of the sweating. Sandis, *The Things We Do and Why We Do Them*, pg. 27

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?