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Reply to my Commentator - Champagne

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York University

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Reply to my Commentator

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1. INTRODUCTION

I want to thank Dr. Plumer for carefully attending to my text. True, I could barely recognize my authorship after the (very liberal) reconstructive surgery. But he rightly encapsulates my theme by writing that “a main issue, if not the main issue, discussed in the paper is the alleged claim by analytic philosophers ‘that what sets their camp apart from long-time rivals is a shared adherence to ‘proper’ norms of argumentation’.” That is indeed a main issue, though the claim of professional superiority itself is *not* taken at face-value (as captured by Plumer’s use of “alleged”).

2. “ARGUMENT” VS. “ARGUMENTATION”

Needless to say, no single group can commandeer a necessary logical form like the *modus ponendo ponens*—it’s Platonic common-property. Accordingly, it should come as no surprise that I brought to the fore a host of contingent features which, as Plumer fittingly observes, cannot “with any plausibility be seen as representing norms of argumentation.” This is not, however, to be glossed as some sort of failing; on the contrary, *that was the whole point of the exercise*. Dr. Plumer is therefore entirely correct in his recognition that “the different norms identified are not paradigmatically norms of *argument*” (his emphasis). Indeed, the very intent was to bring this fact to the light of day.

At any rate, Plumer does an admirable job of cataloguing what *would be* the essential traits distinguishing analytic from continental philosophy *if* we took the former at its word. In this regard, I especially liked his quoting Glock (2008, p. 211) to the effect that “just as theists should not be allowed to define God into existence, analytical philosophers should not be allowed to define themselves into excellence.”

Plumer presents his main query as a neat disjunction: “Do these features represent norms of argumentation? Do they represent norms of argument?” Without putting too much stock in the distinction invoked, my answer would be to agree wholeheartedly with Plumer that “Many of the features seem to be better described as representing general prescriptions of intellectual methodology that need not have anything to do with argument *per se* since they apply to any sort of discourse within the discipline.” So—trivially perhaps—I get the feeling Plumer’s misgivings would suddenly lose their

traction should I switch to “*argumentation*” in my subtitle (although I’m far less convinced about the explanatory usefulness of those terms).

But much of the impact of Plumer’s grievance fizzles away when we consider that, even if we grant this terminological amendment, my treatment remains germane to this organisation for the study of *argumentation*, which moreover has seen fit to make a broad notion like “culture” the focus of its central gathering.

3. CONCLUSION

So my overall sense is that mister Plumer got my point—so well that maybe he lost sight of it. He criticizes my scope as “too wide-ranging.” Too wide—*by what standard*: analysis or synthesis? Well, *analysis*, of course.

I wish to thank my commentator for so eloquently proving me right.

[Link to commentary](#)

[Link to paper](#)

REFERENCE

Glock, H.-J. (2008). *What is Analytic Philosophy?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.