Response to my commentator

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Response to my Commentator

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In his thoughtful comments Scott reads me as holding an “ecumenical epistemic theory of argument” on two fronts.

First, from the fact that I formulate the issues that arise in epistemic approaches to argument in terms of the concept “reasonable” rather than in terms of “epistemic justification” he concludes I hold that

the contentious issue of the nature of epistemic justification needn't be inherited by [my] epistemic theory of argument.

Such a reading of my view is, I think, misleading. Much of what I’ve written in the last 7 years has been devoted to spelling out in detail when and why it is reasonable to adopt one or another cognitive attitude toward a propositional content – a task that is quite analogous to that of addressing “the contentious issue of the nature of epistemic justification.” For example, Pinto (2006) attempts to develop a detailed account of argument evaluation and of the warrants to which such evaluation must revert: it defends a qualitative version of evidence proportionism that does not to my knowledge repeat anything else that has appeared in the epistemological literature to date. Again, Pinto (2009) is an extended account of what makes something a reason, and suggests (p. 291) that that, if we can deal with the threat of an infinite regress of reasons, we might equate its being reasonable to adopt an attitude A toward a propositional content with having a good reason all things considered to adopt that attitude. Moreover, the paper suggests (in notes 26 and 27 on p. 290) how certain “internalist” moves suggested in Pollock (1995) and Pryor (2005) might enable us to deal with the threat of infinite regress.

Secondly, Aiken suggests my view is “is ecumenical with the other theories of argument”. He writes:

Given that argument may have a variety of goals and our evaluation of it may take on the breadth of that variety, epistemic objectives with argument are the ones Pinto holds are “most interesting” but are nevertheless [just one] among other objectives.

Aikin is quite correct that my view is “ecumenical” in this respect.
REFERENCES