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Reply to my Commentator - Krabbe

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Reply to my Commentator

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There is much in this commentary I do appreciate: for instance the stress my commentator puts upon there being two sub-senses of the benefit sense (the prize sense and the obtainment sense). These would have deserved more attention in my paper. Also, I largely agree with the last two sections of the commentary.

Two points, however, need rectification: the charge of arguing from a true premise to a false conclusion and the charge of having made a category mistake.

As to the first charge, it is easy to see that the premise my commentator ascribes to me is not my premise, but only a clause contained in my premise. My premise is “That only one of the parties can win in the victory sense of ‘winning’ does, also where theory is concerned, not exclude that *both parties may win in the benefit sense*,” but my commentator takes my premise to consist of just the part here highlighted. Therefore, the argument he criticizes is not my argument at all. Nevertheless, thanks to my commentator, I came to realize that the conclusion of that argument was stated rather loosely, which may have occasioned a misunderstanding (perhaps leading to the second charge). I would now put the conclusion thus: “The term ‘winning’ in the victory sense can, normally, also be applied in the case of those types of discussion that are cooperation-oriented.”

In order to defuse the second charge, I need to quote (with bracketed comments) a passage from the commentary. My commentator puts forwards the sentences (7) (“Hilary won the debate”) and (8) (“Indira won that argument”), and then continues: “Unless arguments or debates are themselves benefits that can be obtained [*generally not, I’d say*], the only plausible interpretation of these sentences is via the victory sense of ‘argument’ [*of ‘winning’? Yes!*]. But Krabbe’s claim that ‘winning’ can be applied to cooperation-oriented argumentative discussions requires applying the benefit sense of ‘win’ to argumentative discussions [*no! the victory sense*]. Such application is just a category mistake [*I plead non-guilty*]—arguments are not benefits that can be obtained as the result of competition or hard work [*mostly not, I agree; but in (7) and (8) ‘winning’ has the victory sense, not the benefit sense, so where is the category mistake?*].”

As to the third section of the commentary, I agree that disavowals of the concept of winning are reasonably to be interpreted as disavowals of the victory sense of winning and that the obtainment sense of winning can occur separately from competitive endeavours. And, yes, while there may be at most one winner *of* the argument, everyone

can win *in* the argument. Also, the fact that sense can be made of applying the notion of winning (in the victory sense) in the case of cooperation-oriented types of discussion does not imply that it always should be so applied.

Nevertheless, as stated at the end of my paper, there are advantages to such applications: enhancing the attractiveness of argumentative discussion and producing better arguments.

[Link to commentary](#)

[Link to paper](#)