

Chapter 6

Extended Reasoning: the Basics

Moving beyond Sub-skills

This chapter is a turning point in the book. So far, I have been running through some basic sub-skills and some basic logical theory; let's briefly review that.

We distinguished merely *asserting* a point from providing an *argument* for it. Arguments are the basic building blocks of an enquiry. We noted that any argument is comprised of propositions providing *premises* and a *conclusion*.

We distinguished three basic *types of propositions* (moral, descriptive and conceptual) and a couple of more complicated ones (mixed and ambiguous).

We observed that most attempts at portraying arguments were pretty rough and ready and learned how to portray such 'feral' attempts in a structured form and then to methodically deploy a checklist to '*tame*' such structures and '*working definitions*' to clarify them (and remember that you would want the same assigned meaning for some term or phrase to be consistent within an argument and, indeed, a whole enquiry, or muddle is the result).

We then moved from argument portrayal to argument *appraisal*. As repeatedly noted, only two things can go wrong with an argument – its starting points, the premises, or the (hopefully logical) *move* from them to its finishing point, the conclusion. The first possible problem that we considered was the issue of the *logical validity* of arguments. Some common logical errors were outlined, a technique for general *logic criticism* introduced (the invalidity test) and the point was made that there wasn't much sense in simply pointing out the logical holes in an argument. Of more use in an enquiry is fixing up the faults found – 'patching the holes' as we put it.

I suggested that any argument that was advanced in an enquiry at any point should be *automatically* made *tame* and *logical* and *clear* as a standard tidy up. So, criticizing an argument's reasoning (and patching up logical holes) would be part of this automatic 'TLC' suite of checks.

The other possible focus for criticism is one or other of an argument's premises. Accordingly, you have been introduced to the skills of *premise criticism* and, as a counterpart activity in the broader task of premise appraisal, *premise defence*.

And that takes us to the end of the last chapter.

While it is good to be able to competently perform the above tasks, such competence is but a fragment of the competence required to pursue an enquiry profitably. An *enquiry* is a whole edifice and the above tasks are at the individual 'brick' level or, at most, the level of a couple of bricks. The business of this chapter is to begin exploring how to string a bunch of such arguments together to constitute

an in-depth enquiry that investigates in a *sustained* way some particular topic of a professional ethical sort. To continue our metaphor, the task now is putting the bricks together to make a ‘cathedral of learning’ (with apologies to the University of Pittsburgh). It gets quite involved, so be prepared to have to pause periodically to go back and ‘find your feet’ before moving on again. Also, be prepared to read and reread the chapter. Sometimes you’ll see a bit of exposition bracketed by the lead in: ‘An aside’ and the closure: ‘End of aside’. I use these when I don’t want to leave the impression that things mightn’t be more complex than the simpler track that we are following but don’t really want you to fuss too much about it at this stage if it diverts you from the main flow. My advice is to skip these asides initially if you are struggling to keep track of what becomes rather complicated as we go through the chapter and return to them later. However, if you are happily enough following the unfolding story and feel that you wouldn’t be ‘thrown’ by reading them, you might want to read them as you go just for completeness of the picture.

A Little Bit of Scene-setting

As just noted, a thoughtful investigation of almost any topic is more than just the advancing of an argument (or even several) in favour of your position, however competently crafted they are. Moreover, if you are in critic mode, then that involves more than the mounting of a single critical argument, no matter how ably that is carried out. A thoughtful investigation involves a quite elaborate ‘to and fro’ of argumentation as you think your way through a labyrinth of intertwined and competing arguments. As you might expect, there are better and worse ways of working your way through these complexities. As you might also expect, given what has gone before, the best way of doing it is with a great deal of rather self-conscious thought. The best way of having high-quality thinking is to *think about your thinking* as you are carrying it out and to very explicitly and deliberately *plan your enquiry* as you work your way through it. All of which raises the question: *how* does one think about one’s thinking in this way? There is no set recipe; however there are some useful guidelines and it is the task of this chapter to briefly introduce them to you.

It’s worth making clear from the very beginning that two enquirers of equal logical skill, each thinking about the same topic, and even with each starting off with exactly the same initial tamed argument structure on the topic, might diverge wildly as the investigation of that topic unfolds. Just how this might occur will emerge as we work through the chapter; I mention it now merely to disabuse you of any idea that there is anything *mechanical* in the employment of our techniques in the pursuit of your enquiries. Also at this stage, I wish to introduce one term that I’ll be employing frequently in what follows. The term is: ‘metacognition’ (and others in its word family: ‘metacognitive’, ‘metacognize’ etc.). Cognition is the process of knowing and ‘meta’ is a prefix meaning ‘above or beyond’.

The thinking that you will be carrying out (the arguments, the criticisms and so forth) amounts to your acts of (attempted) cognition on the topic under investigation. It is that argumentation that (eventually) leads you to know your position on the topic. But as well as doing that cognizing, you should periodically metacognize as well, that is, stand back from your thinking and reflect upon just what is going on. Doing this allows you to keep track of what has happened and to work out what the appropriate next move is in your enquiry. And what the appropriate next move should be depends in large part upon the enquirer; two enquirers reflecting upon the same enquiry history to date can decide to move the enquiry forward in different directions. Why? – because of the different mix of beliefs and values and priorities in their heads. So, where a given enquiry goes next is not automatically determined, it depends upon the enquirer; there is usually a best direction *for a given enquirer*, but not one for *every* enquirer. Your job as enquirer is to learn how to manage a complicated enquiry in a manner that gives you *your* best answer on the matter at hand. The sub-skills already covered give you the basic tools to use, competent *metacognitive controlling* of the enquiry tells you when to use which tool. So let's proceed to discuss that in more detail.

As I said above, enquiries will take different paths depending on the enquirer's choices at various points and I can't possibly illustrate all of these possibilities. So, what I will do is illustrate the process with just one enquiry with the enquirer making particular choices as to how it goes and pass comment on other possibilities by the way (sometimes detached as 'an aside'). I will also assume that, although I speak of 'author' and 'critic', they are both *you*. That is, you are an enquirer trying to think an issue through thoroughly and, as part of that, critically probing *your own* thinking – being, if you like, in dialogue with yourself as you try to explore and resolve conflicts in your thinking by being a self-critic. Of course you might also be in dialogue with another person but, if so, I'll assume that the task is the same – working out the best answer (as opposed to beating the opposition) and most of what I'll say applies straight across.

Key Ideas

An extended ethical enquiry is more than a single argument; it is a disciplined and metacognitively thoughtful affair in which a succession of unfolding argumentative moves are connected in a deliberate way.

Getting Started

Any enquiry in professional ethics begins with a problem, one probably best put in the form of a question. So, one might, for instance, ask: 'Is it ever legitimate for a nurse to lie to a patient?'

Clearly, there are many arguments that might be advanced to directly support ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers to this question. Clearly also, a thorough treatment of the issue probably means that you will end up investigating quite a spread of such arguments. But it is a bad idea to try to raise them all at once. By all means ‘brainstorm’ so that you get a feeling for the spread of ‘for and against’ arguments directly on the issue under examination but you can’t talk about them all at once. A rigorous enquiry has to start *somewhere*, but it can’t start *everywhere*!

So, having brainstormed a few feral arguments, it will probably strike you that some seem more central and important than others. My suggestion is to choose one of the lines of thinking that seem right at the core of things (at least, for *you* – others may differ). This may be a ‘for’ or an ‘against’ argument. So, take one such argument and portray it properly (using our full automatic ‘TLC’ suite of checks and adjustments).

Concerning the question about the propriety of nurses lying that was raised above, say that a key issue was considered to be patient welfare and this led to the following argument:

A1

MP1 All nurses’ primary professional obligation is to maximize the welfare of each of their patients.

DP1 Sometimes, in order to maximize a patient’s welfare, it is necessary for a nurse to lie to them about their medical condition.

So,

MC1 On such occasions, nurses should lie to their patients about their medical condition.

Of course, you would have to clarify that the obligation meant was moral, not legal, and also say what counted as a patient’s *welfare*. Say that you gave a working definition of this along the lines of equating their welfare with their physical health. So, maximizing their welfare would amount to acting so as to have them as physically healthy as possible (over their remaining lifespan).

Key Ideas

Enquiries into a topic can’t be entered everywhere but have to be entered somewhere – this best occurs with an initial argument that seems to lie at the heart of the issues.

Now, what happens next?

What Next? – Some Metacognition Following an Initial Argument

So far, this is all familiar sub-skill stuff from previous chapters. What next? How to go from stating one argument, however central and important, to developing an extended *enquiry* that goes beyond that? It is just conceivable that an initial argument (say, our above one) is so undeniably wonderful that you are ‘bowled over’ by it and think that *of course* nurses should be primarily focused on patient welfare and thus, assuming that the rest of the argument is OK, lying *is* indeed sometimes warranted. I put it to you that such early acceptance of an argument puts you in danger of prematurely closing off an enquiry that, had you bothered to pursue it, might have unsettled your complacent acceptance of the merits of the initial argument. Almost all topics in professional ethics are rather more complex than that (despite regrettably widespread simplistic sloganizing about them). Your first thought on the topic is unlikely to be your last thought, so you’re almost always advised to resist the temptation to such early closure.

Back to our question then: What next?

As you have advanced an argument that you think to be pretty central and pretty sound, yet you want to investigate it a bit more (on pain of premature closure), an obvious candidate next move is to subject it to critical examination, to critically probe it to see if it is as sound as you had hoped. And, as you have (automatically) been at pains to ensure that it is logical (as part of the ‘TLC’ suite), this amounts to proceeding to premise criticism. Might there be something wrong with one or more of the argument’s premises? Given that we have two premises in A1, that would generate two such possible options at this point.

Mounting such a *premise criticism* is indeed one possibility at this point and, at this early stage when there is only one argument ‘on the table’, it is *usually the best* thing to be doing – the sooner your initial thoughts get a critical probing, the better.

There is another possibility though: *defending* some premise or other. But why would one bother to do this (given what I have just said about the merits of critically probing ideas)? Let’s talk about our above two premises in turn, both as to criticism of them and defence of them.

MPI

For a *moral* premise, the only motivation for *not* criticizing, but defending, would be that, when you look at the initial argument, it is so shallow, or superficial, in some way, that its MP is not ready for critical attention. In effect, to proceed to criticism is sometimes premature, the author’s argument hasn’t said enough yet to be worth such critical attention.

An Aside

Our ‘lying nurses’ initial argument is *not* shallow like this but to illustrate what I mean, try this argument on another topic:

MPa All students should have life skills.

DPa The best way of having all students having life skills is for all schools to teach those skills to all students.

So,

MCa All schools should teach life skills to all students.

Technically speaking, this argument is not in bad shape (tame, logical and so on although I would want the idea of ‘life skills’ pinned down a bit and keep in mind that ‘best’ is just our shorthand for ‘most efficient and effective’). In particular, it is not circular in that the MP and MC do say different things (MPa concerns desired *student* qualities and MCa concerns what *schools* should do). Yet look at them. If an MP is supposed to be giving a ‘deeper’ motivating value in support of that expressed in the MC, then, although technically sound enough, this argument is a bit feeble. It has an MP that hardly counts as giving much of a *deeper* story. Both are expressions of the author’s enthusiasm for life skills. It might be profitable to challenge MPa but it is likely to be even more profitable to wait and allow some more distinct, deeper again, value to emerge that gives us more of an idea as to why the author values life skills, what he values life skills *for*. Getting that deeper value out into the open is the task of a defence of MPa. Once it is out into the open, it might be worthier of a critical probing (with a premise criticism) than his MPa is. So, we might defend MPa as follows:

MPb All students should be able to cope with problems facing them in day-to-day life.

DPb Only if all students have life skills, will all students be able to cope with problems facing them in day-to-day life.

So,

MPa All students should have life skills.

Again, some clarification would be in order (what precisely is meant by being able to cope with problems facing one in day-to-day life?) but note that, with the introduction of MPb, we are now one step *deeper* down the author’s set of values and have got to something *distinct* from the life skills commitment that was present, not just in MCa, but in MPa. We now have an idea of what those life skills are considered to be good *for*. Of course there would no doubt be a yet deeper story again (in answer to the query: ‘why is it so important that students be able to cope with such problems?’) but, with the emergence of MPb, we probably have enough of the author’s case for it to be profitably critically responded to.

We are probably better off not hearing that ‘yet deeper story’ *yet*; better to get critical interplay happening. So we would then mount a criticism of MP*b*.

Contrast this ‘life skills’ argument with the ‘lying nurse’ argument structure that we had earlier. As remarked above, there is no such superficiality about that argument and MP1 is already sufficiently deep and distinct from MC1 to be ripe for criticism if we so chose.

End of Aside

After that small digression, let’s return to the main flow.

DPI

Apart from that MP, the only other premise in the ‘lying nurse’ argument is the *DP*. This seems to me to be obviously true so it seems to me that, in this case, any exercise in its defence is a waste of time and any exercise of criticism is doomed to failure and thus also a waste of time.

But conceivably you might not be persuaded of that, or might be curious as to what grounds can be advanced in support of it, or in challenge to it. (After all, sometimes what *seems* to be obviously true turns out not to be – for instance, an example from the history of science is the proposition that the earth is at rest.)

Anyway, if you were to be *criticizing* it, then you would be presenting evidence to the effect that it was false. Note that all that DP1 says is that *sometimes* such lying is the only way to maximize a patient’s welfare. To challenge this, one would have to provide evidence that such welfare maximization would *never* require lying. This is a big task. If you were to be *defending* it, then such a defence would strictly only have to show at least one case where this was so. Either way, presumably you would be appealing to some sort of relevant research literature on the matter. As I said though, DP1 seems so obviously true that a criticism is futile and a defence is pointless. So, with this particular beginning argument, our focus for the next move is back on MP1 and on criticism of it, in particular. With other arguments, in other contexts, the *DP* might well be what you feel should be defended, or criticized; in this case, however, I think not.

So, in this case, our choice out of our four options (criticize MP1, defend MP1, criticize DP1, defend DP1) is: ‘criticize MP1’. Our *tactical thinking* is that DP1 is obviously true so it is pointless to defend it: and, given its obvious truth, it is futile to try a criticism (we are confident that it is not *over-confidently* held). As for MP1, it seems not to be too close to MC1 in its level of value (A1 isn’t superficial in the manner of the ‘life skills’ argument in our aside) and so we have no reason to delay ‘letting the critic in’. Accordingly, the tactically soundest next move is: *criticize MP1*.

So, how might this go?

Remember that mounting a criticism might not be motivated by vehement opposition to the author’s premise (something that is especially unlikely if, as we are here assuming, it is *your* argument and you are engaging in the useful practice

of self-criticism). Rather, it might be the sort of ‘probing criticism’ that is carried out in the interest of thoroughness. (Then again, you might well be vehemently opposed to a premise offered as part of someone *else’s* argument.)

The general tactic of *moral* premise criticism, you should recall, is to find some *other* value that is possibly more important than the target one and, at least sometimes, is *in clash* with it. In the ‘lying nurse’ example, this might seem to be difficult. What could be more important for a nurse than patient welfare? This seems like such a ‘motherhood and apple pie’ style value that it would be immune to challenge. If that is your thinking, then it is unusually important for you to jolt your complacency and have a good ‘go’ at thinking up a criticism of MP1 – one that seems at least halfway plausible to you. So, let’s try that.

What else is it important for nurses to do (or be) that might clash with, and outweigh, patient welfare?

One thing that might work is a view about nurse–patient relationships. Perhaps part of having a proper respect for another person’s status as a *person* – an autonomous moral agent – is treating them in a certain way. In particular, *not* treating them in a paternalistic way might be important (by ‘being paternalistic’ I mean something like ‘knowing what’s best for them’ and deciding for them without being honest with them about what’s going on). Indeed, not being paternalistic might be more important on some occasions than patient welfare and might conflict with it. Let’s portray this feral intuition as a formal structured criticism of MP1.

CA1

CMP1 All nurses should treat all patients with respect for their status as persons.

CDP1 Sometimes maximizing a patient’s welfare entails treating her without respect for her status as a person.

So,

CMC1 On those occasions, it is not a nurse’s primary responsibility to maximize his patient’s welfare.

You might care to refer back to the last chapter to confirm that this generally has the features which I spoke of as ones that a moral premise criticism argument should have. The only thing that would be worth the effort would be some sort of working definition clarification of what counts as respecting someone for their status as a person. I won’t do this but I shall warn you that CMP1 is murkier in its meaning than you might at first think.

Before pressing on, I just want to pause briefly to recap the key ideas from our discussion so far.

Key Ideas

In the face of an initial argument (one that is tame, logical and clear) you have two broad options open to you. One is to further develop the author's case by *defending* one or other of her argument's premises. The other is to *critically probe* one or other of those premises.

Generally speaking, one should try to *let the 'critic' in* as soon as possible (which might be you as self-critic). Given their centrality in driving ethical judgements, MPs, in particular, are deserving of critical scrutiny although some may be too shallow to be worth it and a prior defence might be wise. Remember that choosing an option as the path forward is a *tactical* decision, the key question is: 'Which option looks best suited to progressing my thoughts on the merits of this argument and thus on the topic?'

Thinking back over our 'lying nurse' argument, we had an argument in favour of some such lying that was based on it being, at least sometimes, the price of maximizing patient welfare. Having outlined that argument (A1) and noting that it had two premises, we had four possible options – defend or criticize each of the premises. In this particular case, after some thought and discussion, it was decided that the tactically soundest way forward was to mount a critical challenge against the MP1 commitment to nurses maximizing patient welfare. Having decided on this option, we crafted such a criticism (although MP1 looked like a hard value to criticize). And CA1 was the result – which is where we are at.

I find it useful to diagrammatically chart the progress of an enquiry, especially when it becomes rather long and involved. It is a good way of keeping track of what is happening and seeing various features of the enquiry 'at a glance'. Such charting is simple at this early stage of an enquiry but later it would be more complex as more 'moves' occur. There are many ways of doing this and here are two that I favour.

One can think of the enquiry as having two distinct sorts of things happening in it: some substantive arguments on the topic (like A1 and CA1) and some metacognitive thinking about where we are at and where to go next (our 'tactics discussions' of our options), with that metacognition linking the unfolding substantive arguments together. In the *first* of my charting suggestions, I portray these two sorts of thing as different columns in a flowchart and represent the flow of the unfolding enquiry by a series of arrows that go back and forth between these two different sorts of activities. I recommend 'portrait' display of this first sort of chart.

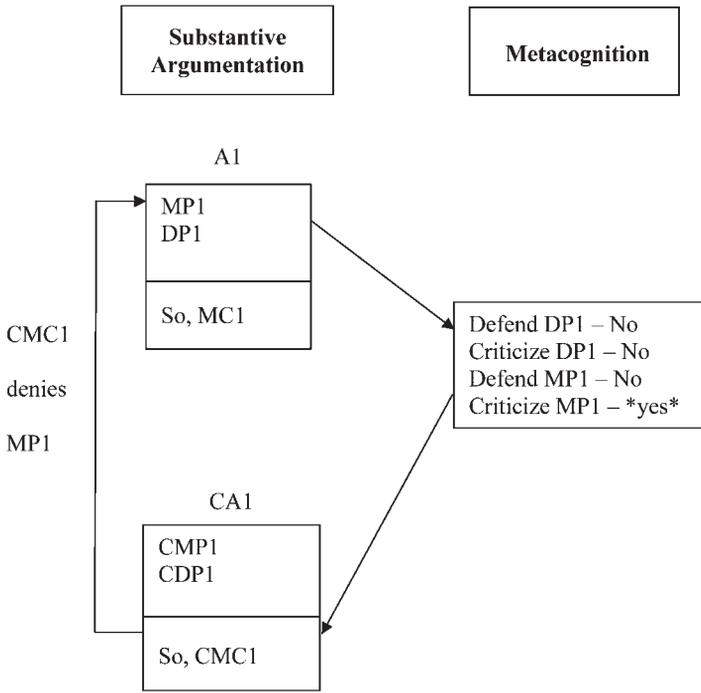


Diagram 1

The above flowchart lets you see the sequenced flow of moves in the enquiry (follow the zig-zag of arrows) and highlights the role that metacognition is playing. If you look carefully at the Metacognition column, then you will see that all of the options are listed and I also signal which ones are rejected and which one is selected as the path forward. If you look at the Substantive Argumentation column, you will see that I just list the proposition names and, with the vertical linking arrows, the relationships among those arguments. Useful although this style of diagram is for seeing the sequenced flow of the enquiry, it is less satisfactory as a device for keeping track of the relationships among the component *substantive* arguments of an enquiry and, as the enquiry goes on and becomes more complicated with more such substantive arguments being offered, it can be a good thing to have another way of doing things that focuses more on portraying those relationships and downplays the metacognition. Generally, I find it easier to do this in ‘landscape’ mode although it won’t much matter at this early stage of this particular enquiry; later, the diagram grows sideways in a way that is awkward to accommodate in ‘portrait’ mode.

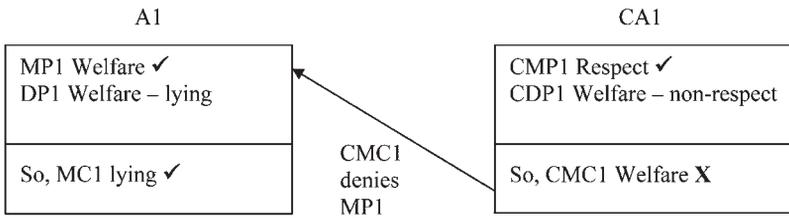


Diagram 2

Note the absence of the metacognitive element and note that, within any given argument box, I give a very abbreviated indication of what that argument was talking about (the dashes in the descriptive premises just signal an unspecified link of some sort between the two key ideas picked out and the ticks and crosses signal moral endorsement or rejection). Unless the boxes are going to become very cluttered, these entries are very much in ‘shorthand’ form and are really doing nothing more than triggering your memories as to what the fuller propositions might have been about. There is nothing particularly prescriptive about the detail of what I have inserted here, choose your own way of doing things – whatever helps you to recall ‘at a glance’ what the individual arguments were on about so that you can see their interrelationships. Later down the track, in more complicated diagrams, you will see me just not bother to fill anything in on some lines. This is because the key elements of our example enquiry as it unfolds are the moral premises and conclusions. Again, this is your shot to call; write in as much or as little as helps you to keep track of things without excess clutter.

So, so far we have a challenge to the original MP sitting on the table, *where next?*

More on Metacognition: Metacognitive Reviews and Metacognitive Deliberation

If you look at Diagram 1 in the last section you can see that, even in the somewhat short history of this ‘lying nurse’ enquiry, there is a sort of a pattern emerging. A substantive initial argument, A1, was presented (the patient-welfare motivated one) then a bit of metacognitive thinking occurred in which the available options were considered and one of them chosen as the best next move (‘criticizing MP1’ as it happened). That path forward having been chosen, it was proceeded down and another substantive argument, CA1, one critical of MP1, portrayed. So, ‘argument then metacognition then argument’ is the emergent pattern – and, as we will see, this pattern continues as the enquiry builds complexity.

The task at this point is metacognitive: to *decide what to do in the face of this criticism*. Partly this is a business of getting straight about the options that are possible at this stage of the enquiry and working out which one is best and why.

But before starting to think about where to go next, it is a good idea to be very clear about *where one has got to so far*; and making an appraisal of that is what I will talk of as carrying out a *Metacognitive Review*. What do I mean by this?

Key Ideas

Enquiries tend to have two alternating types of things going on: the substantive arguments themselves and the metacognitive thinking in between which keeps track of what has gone on so far and then chooses the nature and direction of the next move in the enquiry, its tactical job, if you like.

Metacognitive Review

Look at the two substantive arguments we have had so far (author's and critic's) and they are clearly in disagreement in a direct way on the acceptability or otherwise of MP1's commitment to patient welfare. After all, this was the direct target for the CMC of the critic's argument (I will speak of 'author' and 'critic' as a convenient device even though, for many enquiries, both will be you – performing different roles – as is the assumption in this enquiry). So, that is one disagreement that has emerged so far in this dispute. But the critic hasn't just *asserted* the opposing CMC1, she has given *reasons* for CMC1 (and thus against MP1). Her reason for not wishing to endorse the sweeping 'patient-welfare' value is its clash (on occasions) with her 'respect' value. Given this, the best way of characterizing the focus of the *deepest* level of disagreement is as a dispute between CMP1 and MP1. The clash can be put in the manner of a question:

'Should nurses' primary responsibility be patient welfare even in situations where fulfilling that responsibility has, as its cost, treating patients without respect for their status as persons?'

My suggestion is that you always try to express the dispute (in this case, a *deep moral value clash*) that constitutes the newly emerged focus at a given point in an enquiry in this manner, as a sort of challenging question.

This question sets the focal issue *at this point* in this particular enquiry. We are no longer *directly* addressing the issue of the legitimacy of nurses sometimes lying (although you should be able to see the connections back to that issue from where the enquiry has got to). As a result of us defending such lying in the author's argument and then criticizing the basis of the defence (MP1) in the critic's argument by appeal to the critic's own motivating value (CMP1), the enquiry has *moved* focus to a dispute at a deeper level of valuing than that of the original topic. In effect, there is a shift in the 'topic of the moment' from the issue of lying to that of a priority dispute between valuing patient welfare and valuing treating patients

with respect for their status as persons. Sorting such deeper priority disputes (or *deep moral clashes*, as I will talk of them) out in your mind is a pre-requisite for having an ethical framework of values that is in good enough shape for you to be able to confidently apply it to the topic at hand (lying nurses in this case). Professional ethics is a sub-branch of applied ethics and for you to *apply* your ethical views to professional problems, those ethical views had better not be a conflicted mess.

An Aside

Of course, although the focus of conflict is moral (at least in this case, because we challenged an MP) it could have been a different sort of conflict if we had challenged DP1. Moreover, some arguments will have conceptual premises in them and, if such a premise had been challenged, then it would be a different sort of conflict yet again. If, say, we had challenged a descriptive premise, then the issue at hand would be a dispute as to what the true facts of the matter are. If we had challenged a conceptual premise (not that there was one to challenge in this particular case in our author's argument) then the current dispute would have been one about the meaning connections among the ideas involved. I won't pursue these possibilities here any more as it would make even messier an already messy exercise (in illustration of the basics of complex extended reasoning); we'll return to discuss such matters later.

End of Aside

So, at the moment, what we have is a *moral* conflict and the task of the enquiry is to try to get that set of deeper moral values sorted out. My point about all of this is that, before rushing on, it is a good idea to be very clear in your mind just what the focus of concern is at *this* particular point in the enquiry.

Now, having worked out the current conflict as a key element in your Metacognitive Review, *what next?* When it is a *moral* dispute, as we have here, I find it useful to do one more thing before pressing on to select the next move. Remember that we expressed that current dispute in our example enquiry as the following question:

‘Should nurses’ primary responsibility be patient welfare even in situations where fulfilling that responsibility has, as its cost, treating patients without respect for their status as persons?’

Although it is unlikely, it may be that you are totally confident that you can answer that question. You might side with the author or you might side with the critic. This sets the boundaries of a range of possible initial reactions to the current dispute. There are less black-and-white reactions and these are more common in considering such deep moral disputes. So, for instance, although *not totally* persuaded by the critic, you might be pretty solidly inclined to favour treating people with respect

even when the cost is some loss in their physical health (which is, recall, how we clarified the idea of patients' welfare). Or, you might fairly solidly lean to the MP1 value. Or it might be a 'tilt' one way or another but a rather more hesitant, and slighter, one.

What I am suggesting here is that, at those points in an enquiry where the current focus of dispute is a *moral* one (as in our example), you should try to get explicitly clear where your sympathies lie at the moment. They might of course change as the enquiry unfolds; it is just a matter keeping track of things as you go. I find the following metaphorical device useful here for capturing your intuitions. Imagine a beam balance with one of the competing moral premises at one end and the other at the other. Which is more important, or morally *weightier*? If you, say, tend to favour CMP1 over MP1, then the CMP1 end of the balance would be weighed further down. By how much though? After all, a balance *steeply* tilted towards CMP1 over MP1 is a bit of a different situation for an enquiry to be in than were the balance to be only *shallowly* so tilted.

My suggestion is that you try to put an intuitive 'gut instinct' figure on the steepness of the tilt by mentally splitting up a total of 100 per cent between the two clashing values. So, if you were very much inclined to favour CMP1 over MP1 you might allocate that 100 as 90 for the former and 10 for the latter. In this case, there is a 90/10 'tilt' (as I will talk of it) in favour of CMP1 over MP1. If you were more conflicted in your thinking at that point in the enquiry but still tended to favour CMP1 over MP1, it might be that that is best represented by, say, a 60/40 'tilt' favouring CMP1. And so on through a morally schizoid 50/50 'toss-up' tilt, over to the other side of the spectrum in which you favour MP1 over CMP1. Mind you, it would be rather odd to have MP1 favoured 100/0 over CMP1 if you are the person who had offered the latter. After all, if it were to be deemed so hopeless a criticism then why would you have even bothered to advance it?

When you are allocating these 'tilt' ratios, keep in mind that they are merely (current) 'gut instinct' or intuitive preferences. They result from you consulting your current moral intuitions to see where your current moral priorities seem to lie. If you get 100/0 one way or another, then you have reached 'closure' on the dispute at hand and that thread of enquiry into your topic has finished (others may then open up, as we will see in due course). If you are anything more conflicted than 100/0, further enquiry is in order to investigate matters further. It might be that you are able to reach closure on that dispute once you have teased out more of the argumentation surrounding it. Just how it is best for you to start teasing out further argumentation depends a bit on the 'tilt' that you have identified. The best next 'move' varies according to the strength and direction of your current sympathies.

An Aside

Before I press on, and at the risk of raving on a bit, I'd like to address a possible misunderstanding as another aside from our main flow of exposition.

Say that you allocate your ‘tilt’ as 100/0 in favour of CMP1 over MP1. Does this mean that you think that treating patients with respect for their status as persons is perfectly good as a value (100) and acting for their welfare is to be totally rejected (0)? No. Note that such ‘tilts’ are *always relative* – it is this value *versus* that value – and a given value might get a different score depending upon what it is being set up in clash with. All that you would be indicating with a 100/0 ‘tilt’ is that, at this stage of your thinking, you are *sure* that if ever the two clashed such that satisfying one value interfered with satisfying the other, then you would *always* go for respect over welfare. Lesser ratios indicate doubt or indicate concern that the hierarchy of the two values might not always be in favour of one over the other. It is possible, after all, for one value to outweigh another in some scenarios and not in others. Extended enquiries, if well done, can tease the detail of this complexity out. For now, your ‘tilt’ is just a current ‘gut instinct’. I will return to all of this more thoroughly in the next chapter; for now, I am simply trying to get you to understand the basics of our process of extended enquiry.

End of Aside

Another Aside

Although I am not going to fuss much about this at this stage, counterparts of the ‘tilt’ business occur with descriptive disputes about what the facts really are and with the conceptual disputes about meaning relationships. For instance, it might emerge in an enquiry that a descriptive dispute ensues concerning, say, an eyewitness report of a felony conflicting with the alleged felon’s protestation of innocence. In essence, there is a conflict of rival testimonies as to what the facts of the matter really are. It might be that you are ready to reach ‘closure’ on this particular conflict, that you have enough confidence in one or the other party to not wish to pursue matters further. Then again, your ‘tilt’ might not be that conclusive and you might still have an open dispute, not being sure whom to trust and wishing to seek more data.

A counterpart situation applies to conceptual disputes. The author’s side of the dispute might be claiming that, for a person to be morally responsible for an action, it suffices that it was freely chosen (in the sense that no one is physically forcing that action on that person). The critic might challenge that. The basis of the challenge being that, even when no one is forcing that action upon someone, that person would not be properly thought of as morally responsible if they were acting in a way that reflected their upbringing and the moral indoctrination, or ‘programming’, that it contained – in another sense, they would be *unfree*. In essence here, the dispute is as to how one is to understand the concept of moral responsibility – which sense of freedom is connected in what way with being morally responsible?

In each of these cases, the tilt would be not so much a ‘gut instinct’ as one based on your current grasp of the relevant facts or your grip of conceptual

connections among ideas. Nonetheless, perhaps the ‘tilt’ metaphor is still a good one to employ.

End of Another Aside

So, where we have got to so far can be encapsulated as follows:

Key Ideas

After each new substantive argument (like CA1) as a ‘move’ in your enquiry, you should pause for a metacognitive *review* to get clear just where the enquiry has got to, in particular, what the *current focus of dispute* is. Depending on what sort of premise has been challenged, that dispute might be moral, factual or conceptual. Commonly, it is moral. If so, then, as part of that review, you should explicitly identify the *deep moral clash* at that point in the enquiry and your intuitive ‘*tilt*’ concerning it. Tilts are *relative* importance ratings of the moral values in conflict. They might be anywhere in the range from totally favouring one value in the dispute (100/0), through ‘evenly torn’ (50/50), to favouring the other value (0/100).

I will, for the moment, keep tracking along with our sample enquiry to get across some basic features of the process. As you would realize, various options always exist for the next ‘move’ and, even so far, other enquiries might have followed other paths than the ones we chose (for instance, someone might have chosen to defend MP1, or DP1, or to criticize DP1). It is best for the moment that we keep going down our particular path of having criticized MP1, or things will become too complicated, too soon, for you to keep track of.

So, to pick up the threads again, we have identified our current conflict as a deep moral clash, one able to be expressed with the question:

‘Should nurses’ primary responsibility be patient welfare even in situations where fulfilling that responsibility has, as its cost, treating patients without respect for their status as persons?’.

Let’s set a ‘tilt’ for the sake of continuing our illustration. Let’s assume that the critic’s argument found considerable favour with us – but not totally, so our ‘tilt’ is not 100/0, but it is still very strongly favouring the critic. So, say our ‘tilt’ is 80/20 in favour of CMP1 over MP1. (Remember this is just an initial intuitive reaction.) Identifying the ‘conflict of the moment’ and identifying our ‘tilt’ finishes this particular metacognitive *review*. So, what happens now, where do we go next?

Metacognitive Deliberation

As you will become sick of me saying, the answer to: ‘Where next?’ is: ‘*Nowhere automatically*’. There are *options* and we have to decide thoughtfully from among them. Unlike the case with our last exercise in choosing a path forward, we now have a new input to our thinking – we have gone far enough in things to have generated an unresolved controversy – the deep moral clash of MP1 versus CMP1. And, as an extra input into our thinking, we have some idea as to how we feel about things at this stage (we have an 80/20 ‘tilt’ in favour of CMP1 over MP1). As will soon emerge, that ‘tilt’ influences our tactical thinking. Note, though, that 80/20 is not 100/0. Substantial *sympathy with* the critic is not *agreement* that CA1 is right. Were you to simply agree 100/0 with the critic, then this particular thread of discussion on the topic would begin to close. But closure is, with an 80/20 tilt, not sensible at this early stage. Rather, the enquiry should open out a bit more in the hope that further argumentation might resolve things. So, the first thing to decide is whether you can ‘close’ on this conflict or not. In this particular case, with this tilt, the answer is: ‘No’.

Thus ‘accept A1’, ‘reject A1’, ‘reject CA1’ and ‘accept CA1’ are ruled out. Note that ‘accept CA1’ is effectively the same option as ‘reject A1’, for if CA1 is accepted, then MP1 is rejected and thus A1 fails in virtue of that. Still, I’ll list ‘reject A1’ separately at this stage, as it’s easier to keep track of in ensuring that you are listing all the possibilities. I will return later (in the next chapter) to discuss ‘accept A1’ a bit more. For now, I’ll list it for completeness and simply observe that, of course, there is no question of accepting A1 when we have an un-dismissed, indeed favoured, criticism of its MP in play. So, given our tilt, *no* closure option is endorsed – before we can settle our thinking on this dispute, we have to investigate things some more. The thread isn’t to close yet; it is to open out more. But how?

Before choosing a path forward for the enquiry, it is obviously a good idea to have an explicit grasp of all of the possible options facing you. The available possibilities depend a bit on the particular history of the particular enquiry, on the moves already made; in our example case, the options are as follows:

- Defend CMP1.
- Criticize CMP1.
- Defend CDP1.
- Criticize CDP1.
- Defend MP1.
- Defend DP1.
- Criticize DP1.

Note that this is a longish list and would have been longer than that if either of our arguments to date had had more premises than they did. (There is also another potential option that has been ruled out given our particular enquiry’s history;

‘Criticize MP1’ is a ‘used’ option.) And the list will get longer. The further down the enquiry you go and the more things that have happened already, the more the options grow as to where you *could* go next; again, we’ll come back to that later.

Note also that some options (the first four in this case) have *only just* become available with the advent of CA1. The other three are unchosen options *left over* from the previous exercise in metacognition. As we will see, this pattern of *new options* coming with the most recent argument plus an increasingly long list of *old unused* options is a recurrent feature of extended enquiries.

So, on what basis are we to choose from among those options? I will call this process of choice ‘*metacognitive deliberation*’. (To *deliberate* is to carefully consider options before decision – an apt name then for what you should be doing.)

The primary feature of this process of choice is that you are making a *tactical* choice as an enquirer. Of course you have a *strategic* interest in working out your considered views on nurses’ lying. But, in trying to do that, you mounted A1, then, in critical probing of it, CA1. This left you with a nicely exposed deep moral conflict (MP1 versus CMP1). In effect, your *strategic* goal of working out your views on nurses’ lying is blocked by the current dispute being unresolved. Thus your current *tactical* task is to try to sort out that conflict. This means that the next move should be whichever option you think will get you furthest towards achieving such a resolution.

A key input to your deliberation is your tilt. A general ‘rule of thumb’ is that, if you are enthusiastically in favour of one moral value over another (in this case, respect over welfare to an 80/20 extent), then you are generally advised to explore going *against* your current enthusiasm – ‘*going counter-intuitive*’ as I will call it. This covers both criticizing what you favour and defending what you don’t.

Why? Basically, it is a guard against having your enthusiasms run away with you. It is an all too common human tendency for people to become too quickly committed to a view and to not properly consider what might be wrong with it (and, as the other side of the same coin, to too quickly dismiss a view without properly considering its merits). What is usually tactically *unwise* is to *reinforce* whatever your current intuitive tendencies are. That is the way of overlooking possible problems.

So, as we have an 80/20 *tilt* favouring CMP1 over MP1, the first option I would dismiss is the intuition-*reinforcing* option: ‘Defend CMP1’. What of the rest?

‘Criticize CMP1’ is a counter-intuitive move (as it challenges your current tendency to favour CMP1 over MP1) and should go onto your short-list.

‘Defend MP1’ is equally a counterintuitive move (as it reinforces the view that you less favour in the clash) and should also go onto your short-list.

I’ll discuss these two a little bit more at the end; apart from them what else is possible?

‘Defend CDP1’ might be a possibility, as might be ‘Criticize CDP1’. It rather depends on how confident you are concerning the truth of that descriptive proposition. But as, in this particular enquiry, this was you being admirably

self-critical by mounting CA1, it would hardly have been a helpful move for you to have put down a challenge to MP1 that rested on a known-to-be highly dubious descriptive premise. You surely had considerable confidence in CDP1. Still, even so, there may have been *some* doubts; not all descriptive propositions deployed in an enquiry are going to be ones that you are near certain about. So, if there are some doubts, you might wish to either explore them by criticizing CDP1 or, perhaps, reassure yourself that it really is OK by mounting a defence of it. Either way, given that it is a descriptive proposition that is involved, you would be hunting out relevant evidence concerning it. You might think that, as the tactical issue of the moment is the dispute between CMP1 and MP1, concentrating any attention on anything but one of these two propositions is a diversion. To some extent this is true but sometimes there are good grounds for diverting briefly elsewhere. After all, it is not as if the clash between CMP1 and MP1 is direct (unlike that between CMC1 and MP1). Rather, CMP1's dispute with MP1 is *mediated via CDP1*. That descriptive proposition is the connecting link between CMP1 and CMC1 and thus gets CMP1 and MP1 into clash. Unless it is true, we would *not have* our 'tactical problem of the moment' (CMP1 versus MP1) even getting set up. So, given its importance in setting up our current dispute, if there is any doubt about it, it might well be very usefully 'on task', tactically speaking, to fuss about our confidence in the truth of CDP1. In this particular example enquiry, however, it again seems to me that this particular CDP1 is simply obviously true. Given that, it is pointless to bother defending it and futile attempting criticism. Thus, these two options are to be discarded.

How about DP1? I decided not to defend or criticize it back when I was making my last metacognitive decision. My reasons then were much like what I have just outlined for CDP1 – DP1 is just obviously true. That hasn't changed and so these two options stay discarded.

What's left after all of that? A short-list of two: criticize CMP1 or defend MP1.

Note that these options happen to focus directly on the tactical problem at hand: resolving the moral clash between MP1 and CMP1 – sorting out our moral priorities, if you like. As it *is* the tactical problem of the moment, doing something that bears on one or other of those values in the hope of resolving matters is obviously tactically sound. And, given our 'tilt' of 80/20 in favour of the critic's CMP1, what we are wise to be doing in response to this value clash is something that is *counter-intuitive*. *Each* of these options is. Criticizing CMP1 is fairly obviously counter-intuitive because it is to go counter to the value that we were solidly tilting towards. Less obviously, defending MP1 is also counter-intuitive because it would be supporting the value that you are intuitively tempted to discount (relative to CMP1).

So, *for reasons that we can explain*, we have trimmed the range of tactically sensible options down to two. But *which* of the two should be the next move? Both might eventually happen as the enquiry unfolds but only *one* thing can occur right now as the next move; so *which* should it be?

An Aside

I say ‘only *one* thing’ because it is generally a bad idea to have too many things going on at once. Sometimes you will be forced into it (as we will see in a later chapter) but it is easier to keep track of emerging complexities if you expand the discussion gradually, keeping things as simple as you can.

End of Aside

At this stage, the basis for making a decision between these two becomes even more personalized than before. A range of possible tactical motivations for doing one or other of our short-list might apply. In what follows, I will play with a couple of such possible considerations to give you an idea of the sort of thinking that might lead to a final decision as to a path forward.

Here is one possibility Say that you had been somewhat surprised by the relative success of the ‘respect’ value of the critic over the original author’s ‘welfare’ value. Moreover, say that you have a good idea of what the defence of the original MP1 would look like were you to mount it. That is, although not yet presented formally as an argument on the page, a defence (resting on some, yet deeper again, MP of the author’s) is fairly clear in your mind and, moreover, was in your mind when you did your tilt towards CMP1. Given this, there would be little *tactical* point in *formally* mounting this defence; it will not contribute anything in challenging your current intuitive tendency to favour the critic because it was informally present in the back of your mind already when you favoured CMP1. In such a scenario, you would be wise to choose ‘Criticize CMP1’ as your path forward. This is because it would add *new* issues into the enquiry and this might help you to resolve matters (as well as challenging your current intuitive tendencies). So, given this particular set of considerations, the choice between our two counter-intuitive short-listed options would be whittled down to one: ‘Criticize CMP1’.

Here is another possibility Say, instead, that you had been strongly committed to MP1 and were just going through the process of probing self-criticism for the sake of intellectual thoroughness. Yet, once it was advanced, CMP1 surprised you with its relative attractiveness. In such a scenario, say that its swift success has unsettled you and you now wonder why you were so enthused about MP1 in the first place. You still think patient welfare to be important but why were you rating it as *highly* as you did when offering MP1 (a rating you now doubt)? Moreover, in this scenario, unlike the last one, you might *not* have clearly in your mind what the answer to that question is. As is not uncommon in professionals’ thinking about ethical matters, with MP1 (in this case) you committed to a stance without any clear idea about *why*. In this case, you might be more interested in returning to MP1 at this stage and defending it, rather than taking some new tangent by criticizing CMP1. Your motivation is to see if you can find any decent rationale for your original MP1-style *strength* of commitment to patient welfare. Maybe you

can begin to restore your original confidence in it. So, given this rather different set of considerations, this time the choice between our two short-listed counter-intuitive possibilities goes the other way: to defend MP1.

My point in exploring these two possible paths is to show that, although some tactical considerations are fairly clear (e.g. don't close prematurely, don't bother to reinforce strongish current value intuitions but challenge them) things become fairly personalized fast in a way that it is not possible to set up text-book 'recipes' for. You have to exercise careful tactical *judgement* in choosing a path forward from the options facing you and that judgement might appeal to motivations that are quite personalized. As just illustrated, two enquirers with the same enquiry history of 'moves' and the same 'tilt' might, for *individually good* reasons, take the enquiry forward in *different* directions.

It is also possible that whatever tactical reasons you have *don't* manage to trim the options down to one. You might be left with a short-list, any one of which seems as equally tactically sound as an option as any other. So, what to do then? Basically, 'pick with a pin'. Do *something* from the shortlist and hope that it will help you resolve the conflict that is the current tactical problem.

Finally, just because, at this stage, you choose one option and not others, doesn't mean that you will not return to those others at some later stage. They remain on your books as possibilities for later choice; all unused options are 'carried forward' for later consideration and possible selection.

So, for the sake of illustration, let's return to our particular enquiry. I will assume that, of the two counter-intuitive scenarios listed, 'Criticize CMP1' was chosen for the reasons outlined.

What next? Basically, *implement* the decision just made; having carried out our metacognitive review and deliberation we proceed on to crafting our *next substantive argument*, one having a denial of CMP1 as its conclusion.

Key Ideas

At any given point in an enquiry when a substantive argument has been offered, there is no automatic next move. A deliberated upon metacognitive decision is to be taken to select the path forward that is best suited to progressing resolution of the tactical problem at hand. That process of *metacognitive deliberation* is informed by the *metacognitive review* that has preceded it. In particular, if the key focus of the dispute is moral, then identifying the *deep moral clash* and the *tilt* concerning it are key matters. If you fairly strongly favour one side, then it is usually tactically wise to challenge your intuitive preference by 'going counter-intuitive'.

Summary of Enquiry to Date

Portrayed in ‘flowchart’ diagrammatical form, we have this dialogue history:

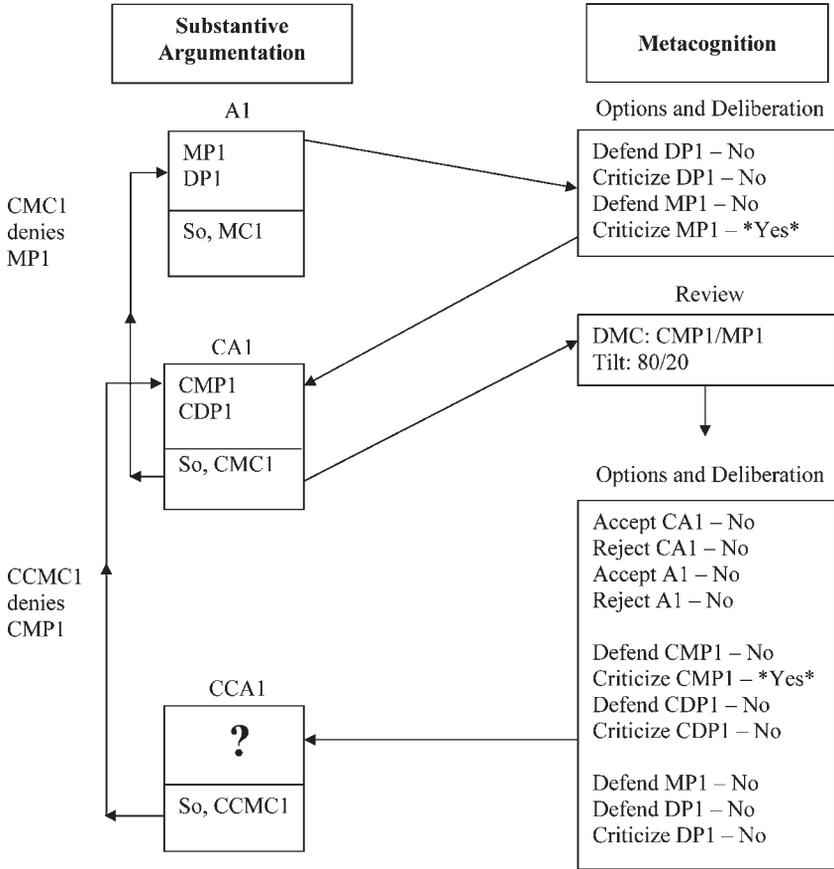


Diagram 3

A few comments on this diagram. In the Substantive Argumentation column, note again the vertical arrows showing the relationships among the various arguments in that column. Note also that, in the Metacognition column, things are a little bit more complicated than last time we did one of these in Diagram 1. We now have some more detailed understanding of what goes on in metacognition and some terminology to deploy. So, in the first metacognitive exercise (after A1), I have re-labelled the box from ‘Options’ to ‘Options and Deliberation’ because we now have that term to describe what was going on there. We have also had a criticism happen prior to this latest exercise in metacognition and, to reflect that developing complexity, I have two separate boxes for the two separate tasks of review and

deliberation; note the vertical arrow between them to show the sequence of events. Within the deliberation box, you will notice that it's quite a long list. This time, I have internally broken up the list of options as, first, the four 'closure' moves grouped together, then four new options that have come with the new argument (CA1) and, last, the three unused options that have been carried forward from last time. How you bother to list these is your decision and you will see me doing things in a different way in Diagram 5 below. Another possibility is that you might find that your flowchart is getting too cluttered if you bother to list all of the possibilities and you might want to just list the review and then, in the deliberation box, just the path forward that you chose. Personally, I like to list the lot just to remind me that there really are quite a lot of options (again, look at Diagram 5 below).

Before proceeding to the next section, I would like to supplement the above diagram with a brief recap of what we have done at this metacognitive decision point in this enquiry. As you might be beginning to appreciate, things can get rather complicated and, to help prevent getting lost, I think that it is useful for you to periodically do this sort of abbreviated summary.

Having completed our criticism of MP1, we suspended our substantive enquiry and 'went metacognitive'. Our first task was a metacognitive *review* in which we identified the current dispute. In our case it was MP1 versus CMP1, a *moral* dispute; we also consulted our intuitions to come up with our 'tilt' of 80/20 favouring CMP1 over MP1. Review finished, we proceeded to *deliberate* upon our options. First thing to do was to be aware of what those options were. So, we drew up a list – some options were associated with the latest substantive argument, CA1, and some were unused 'left-overs' carried forward from the last decision. Then we set about trimming the list, hoping to end up with one clear path forward. Some options were almost automatically discarded (we were not ready to accept anything and thus close that dispute, and we thought various descriptive premises to demand no 'defend or criticize' attention at all). Then, noting that we had a substantial 80/20 'tilt' of intuitive preference favouring CMP1 over MP1, we decided that a primary tactical motivation to deploy in choosing from among the remaining options was to 'go counter-intuitive'. This weeded things down to a short-list of two options: 'Defend MP1' or 'Criticize CMP1'. Further, some secondary considerations did manage, in this case, to further reduce this to one option: 'Criticize CMP1'. As far as we can judge, doing this is the smartest choice in trying to resolve the tactical problem facing the enquiry at this stage, namely the deep moral clash between MP1 and CMP1.

Key Ideas

Metacognition is comprised of two elements:

Metacognitive *Reviews* keep you aware of what the enquiry has done to date and, in particular, what the current foci of unresolved conflict are. In particular, and if applicable, the review should identify the *deep moral clash*, and the ‘*tilt*’ concerning it, that you have.

Metacognitive *Deliberation* involves understanding and choosing from among your options. After the elimination of *non-viable* options, you should choose from among the rest for reasons (of various sorts and of differing importance) that you can explain. This amounts to making a *tactical* decision, a decision as to which option will best help resolve whatever the current unresolved conflict is.

Some Possible Problems When Carrying out Metacognitive Deliberation

Before pressing on with our enquiry, I would like to pause for a moment and warn of some common errors that those who are not used to metacognitive deliberation sometimes commit. Beginners often fail to keep in mind the ‘tactics discussion’ style of such metacognitive deliberation. Instead of giving reasons for choosing or rejecting various possible paths forward, some other (and useless in that context) sort of discussion is offered. Here are three errors that are surprisingly common when performing this task. I will illustrate them assuming that, say, the option: ‘Defend CMP1’ was the one decided upon this time.

The *first* is to say something like: ‘One option is to defend CMP1; if I did this then I would be crafting an argument that had CMP1 as its conclusion. Another option is ...’. And then, out of the blue: ‘My choice is ...’.

This gives the final choice but gives *no* reason for it. In supposed support, all we get is an outline of what the option ‘Defend CMP1’ would involve and ditto for the other options. But to merely describe what an option involves is to give no reason at all for choosing it or rejecting it.

The *second* is to expand a bit on one or more of the options by giving a feral version of the substantive argument that would be eventually offered were that option to be chosen. So, one might have: ‘One option is to defend CMP1, I favour this because if nurses don’t treat patients with respect for their status as persons then they are acting as if they were superior to the patients yet everyone is morally equal’.

To include this sort of thing is to confuse giving a metacognitive reason for *choosing* an option as *one worth exploring next*, with the separate activity of previewing ferally the substantive argument that might result *once* the option has been chosen. One can, indeed, have good *tactical* grounds for choosing to, say, defend CMP1 even if one has not got the faintest idea what such a defending argument would look like (even ferally). In short, *substantive* arguments on the

topic have *no place* in your *metacognition*. They will come *later* once you are *implementing* your decision as to the next path forward.

The *third* common error is to offer this sort of thing: ‘I don’t want to criticize CMP1 because I think it more valuable to defend it and that is what I will be doing. For similar reasons I won’t defend MP1 and, given that I wish to defend CMP1, I won’t choose the option ...’.

This is mildly caricatured; but note that nowhere do we get any tactical rationale for choosing ‘Defend CMP1’ as the path forward. Clearly the writer is enthused by this option and, given that enthusiasm, the only reason advanced against any other option is that it isn’t the preferred one.

If you keep firmly in mind that you are supposed to be giving a *tactically motivated rationale* for choosing to direct the enquiry down some particular path then, hopefully, you will avoid the above errors. For each rejected option, it should be clear *why* you are tactically avoiding it and, for the chosen option, it should be clear *why* it is chosen.

Implementing the Metacognitive Decision

As noted repeatedly, even in the same enquiry, different enquirers will likely make different decisions as to the best next move. In our example enquiry, I am assuming that the decision was to *criticize* CMP1. Moreover, if you look back at the thinking that finally led to a choice between our two counter-intuitive options and ruled out ‘Defend MP1’, that was done because, in our example scenario, how that defence would go was already *mentally* sketched in and its *formal* presentation wouldn’t add anything new in settling our deep moral dispute – hang on to that last point, we will use it later.

So, how might our criticism go? I will portray a feral argument and then a tame, logical and clear structured version of it and then talk about the criticism a bit.

As a feral challenge, try: some people are too morally bad to deserve any respect, so sometimes nurses shouldn’t treat some patients (the morally bad ones) with respect for their status as persons.

Let’s lay this out as a tame and logical structure:

CCA1 (For ‘critic of the critic’s first argument’).

CCMP1 All and only those with status as persons who are also not morally bad (to a certain extent) deserve to be treated with respect by anyone.

CCMP2 Some patients of some nurses are morally bad to that extent.

So,

CCMC1 Some nurses should not treat some (those) patients with respect for their status as persons.

This is tame and logical but one thing that is manifestly *unclear* is the key new idea in the moral premises here – what counts as ‘morally bad (to a certain extent)’?

We know that, whatever it is, if someone is like that, then this argument deems them not to deserve respect as a person (meaning by the latter what was clarified earlier, in the paragraph prior to CA1). But what is it? Obviously our degree of sympathy with CCMP1 might vary depending on what is meant, in particular, on what *extent* of moral badness is said to debar one from deserving to be treated with respect.

One thing is clear, the moral badness is to be judged by reference to whatever set of moral principles are endorsed by the author of CCA1. And, as we have set this enquiry up as one carried out by one person engaging in self-criticism, that means that if *you* are the enquirer, then it's whatever *you* count as morally bad. Ditto for the *extent* element. In effect, this is you laying down (at least tentatively) the qualities that would debar (and those that would qualify) someone from being deserving of respectful treatment. As I have said, it is your clarification to make and who knows what *you*, the actual reader at this point, would say on this matter. So, for the sake of progressing our illustrative dialogue, I will simply decree that what is meant in these moral premises is simply that all and only those who do not habitually tell lies to advantage themselves or are habitually unconcerned about the welfare of others are not morally bad (to our 'certain extent'). Note that this gives us *some* guidance as to the *qualities* unpacking 'morally bad' (lying to ones' advantage and not being concerned about others' welfare) and the *extent* that is of concern (habitually). Of course it may prove as the enquiry unfolds that this clarification isn't yet adequate but we would operate with it until any such inadequacies emerge – one can always revisit things later and refine meanings further.

One other feature of the above structure is worth comment. Have look at the quantification in the moral premise. The 'all' asserts that every person who satisfies the criteria listed later in the premise is deserving of respect. The 'only' asserts that no one else, that is anyone who doesn't satisfy those criteria, is deserving of respect. Reflect upon it, the two quantifiers do quite different jobs and both are needed to express what this 'critic of the critic' is wanting to say. (As I said way back in Chapter 3, quantifiers matter – what they are, and are not, affects the meaning of what is said.)

I won't bother to do a flowchart diagram of the dialogue with this last move in but you will see it in Diagram 5 in the next section. I will, though, do one of our other style of diagram, that more focused on substantive argumentation. Note again that the entries are only rather cryptic tags for your memory of the fuller version.

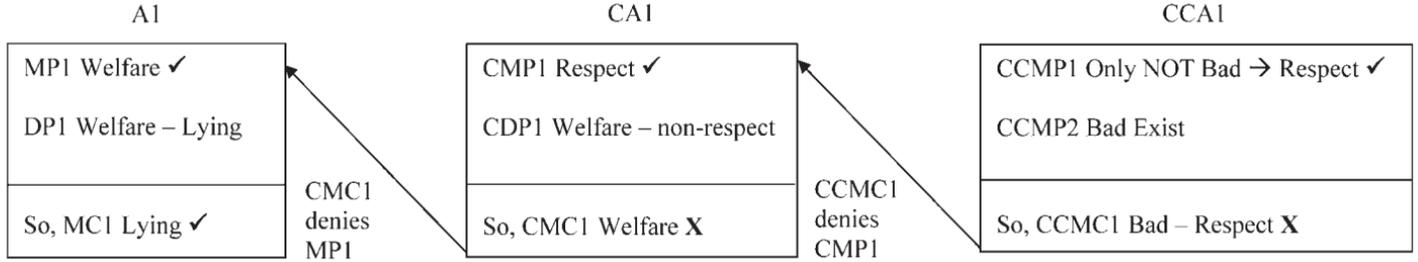


Diagram 4

So we now have (hopefully) a tame, logical and *clear* criticism of the critic's CMP1, where next?

As I hope you would, by now, predict, *nowhere automatically*. As usual, we should first stand back from the fray and carry out a metacognitive *review* to get a grip on where the enquiry has got to and then proceed to *deliberate* among our options with a view to choosing a path forward.

Key Ideas

Having implemented our metacognitive decision and advanced the next substantive 'move' in the enquiry, one that does the tactical job we decided was our current priority, that argument, like any other, should be *automatically* made tame, logical and clear.

What happens then, is, however, *not* automatic and another process of careful metacognitive *review* followed by metacognitive *deliberation* is to be carried out.

Next Metacognitive Review And Further Deliberation

As you should realize by now, a major task for these reviews is to identify explicitly the current focus (or foci) of dispute. In this case, the type of dispute is moral and one obvious *deep moral clash* is that between CCMP1 and CMP1. Put in question form, this could be expressed as follows:

'Should nurses treat even morally bad patients with respect?'

And, concerning this deep moral clash, say that I am now beginning to get 'cold feet' about my ('feelgood' slogan-style) rather sweeping commitment to having nurses respect *all* patients. I might now have considerable sympathy for the view that, by being sufficiently immoral, people do *not* deserve respect for their status as autonomous moral agents. In effect, their immorality might legitimately have the consequence that I feel justified in subverting their ability to exercise moral autonomy (in this scenario, by lying perhaps, or withholding information from them, or ...). Let us say that my tilt is 90/10 favouring CCMP1 over CMP1.

Before proceeding on to our deliberation among our options, there is another matter that I wish to illustrate. It is rather important as a feature of reviews once an enquiry has gone beyond the first couple of moves so I will spend some time upon it.

The matter that I have in mind concerns what I will call: '*voices*'.

We know that MP1 of A1 and CMP1 of CA1 are in dispute (after all, CA1 was deliberately set up to dispute MP1). We also know that CCMP1 of CCA1 and CMP1 of CA1 are in dispute (again, CCA1 was deliberately invented to dispute CMP1). So we have two deliberate deep moral clashes so far in the dialogue; but

there is still a question to be addressed, however: ‘what is the relationship between CCMP1 and MP1 (of A1)?’

There seem to be three possible answers to this. One is that the best way of interpreting CCA1 is as the original *author responding* to criticism. The second is that one can’t so construe CCA1 and, although it wasn’t its formal role (which was to critically probe CMP1), CCMP1 happens to be just as much in dispute with MP1 as it is with its formal target CMP1. The third possibility is that CCA1 can neither be construed as the author critically replying to CA1 (having a second turn if you like) nor as an argument in dispute with MP1, but as yet another, third, viewpoint, one which is *neutral* to MP1.

One way of thinking about this is in terms of what I will call ‘voices’. To date, we have two clear and opposed voices: the author (expressing A1) and the critic (expressing CA1). So what is the voice of the writer of the criticism of the critic? Obviously it is not the critic writing CCA1 but is it the other one of our existing voices, the author, or is it someone else again, some third voice. And, if it is a third voice, what is the relationship of that voice to the first, that of the author? Keep in mind that this talk of author, critic, voices and so on is just a device. In an enquiry they may well all be you (it is not at all uncommon for one’s underlying moral principles to be in multiple conflicts). ‘Voice’ is just our way of talking about a viewpoint of a distinct sort put as an offering in an enquiry. The other labels (‘first’ etc.) simply help us to remember where in the dialogue that viewpoint cropped up.

To sum up this point about voices, there are, at this stage, three possibilities as to ‘whom’ the critic of the critic might be:

- a. Author replying;
- b. Third voice disagreeing with author; and
- c. Third voice neutral to author.

My point is that, as part of a metacognitive review that is trying to keep track of what is unfolding in the enquiry so far, it is important to understand the voices present (especially if they are all *you*) as you try to think conflicts out.

So, how do you work out which voice the critic of the critic is? The answer is: by analysing the relationship of CCMP1 and of MP1. Let’s talk about each of our above possibilities in turn.

- a. Say that what is really going on is that CCA1 is the *author replying* to the criticism of CA1. This should be detectable by noting that what is said in CCMP1 is the sort of thing that you would expect the author to be committed to. *Usually* what would occur in this scenario is that the author would be digging deeper into her values and appealing to some such value (as CCMP1) to put on the table in criticism of CMP1. A common way for this to occur is that the content of CCMP1 is the sort of value that could equally well have been offered as further development of the author’s

views had you chosen to defend MP1. This is *not always* what is going on with this ‘first voice having a second turn’ scenario but if you can see how CCMP1 could act as (part of) a defence of MP1, then you can construe CCA1 as offered by the author who is responding to criticism by deploying her deeper values in order to criticize the critic. (To confirm your thinking that this is what is going on, try writing a little feral argument appealing to CCMP1 as the motivating moral premise of an argument in defence of MP1.)

- b. If, on the other hand, the scenario is one in which CCMP1 represents a *third voice in dispute with MP1*, then that should be obvious when you read each of them and see that they are in conflict with one another. One way of seeing this is to try using CCMP1 as the moral premise of *another* argument, one which has the denial of MP1 as its conclusion. If you can think up a plausible connecting premise (probably a descriptive premise) that puts the thing valued in MP1 in, at least partial, opposition with whatever is valued in CCMP1, then you have a third voice that is disputing, *not just* the second voice and its CMP1, *but also* the first voice and its MP1.
- c. Finally, if CCA1 represents a *third, but neutral, voice* then, looking at CCMP1, you would see that it is neither the sort of value you could see as ‘more author’s story’ (probably as a deeper support for MP1) nor something that is in conflict with it.

So, what is the ‘voices’ situation in our sample enquiry? Let’s analyse things.

Put briefly (and over-simply), MP1 commits to patient welfare. As asserted in CDP1, this clashes, on occasion, with the critic’s favoured ‘respect’. CCMP1 is still, to some extent, committed to respect but wishes to restrict who should get it: just all the moral people. As it is implausible to suggest that it would only be immoral people for whom ‘respect’ and ‘welfare’ might clash, it would seem that CCA1 constitutes a third voice that doesn’t *just* dispute CMP1 but *also* MP1. In effect, we have *another*, unintended, deep moral clash that has emerged, one that has its loci in MP1 and CCMP1. Put as a question, it is:

‘Should nurses’ primary responsibility be maximizing patient welfare even in situations where fulfilling that responsibility has, as its cost, treating moral patients without respect for their status as persons?’

Let us just confirm our analysis here by using CCMP1 as the motivating value in an argument criticizing MP1 (in the manner suggested above).

CCA2

CCMP1 All and only those with status as persons who are also not morally bad (to a certain extent) deserve to be treated with respect by anyone.

CCDP2 (CDP1) Sometimes, maximizing a patient's welfare entails treating her without respect for her status as a person.

CCDP3 In some of those cases, the patient involved would have status as a person and would not also be morally bad (to the stipulated extent).

So,

CCMC2 On those occasions, it is not a nurse's primary responsibility to maximize his patient's welfare.

Aside

A few comments on this structure: Note that, in the second descriptive premise, we get two grammatical back references to earlier propositions in the argument ('those cases' and 'the stipulated extent'). Similarly, in the conclusion, we get such a back reference with 'those'. Doing this can lessen 'clutter' in the expression of an argument but it has the down-side that you have to be a little bit more skilful in ensuring that the argument is in mesh when you are check-listing it.

Also, note that the moral premise is indeed the same as the one deployed in CCA1. Note further that CCDP2 says the same thing as CDP1, a descriptive premise that was originally deployed by the second voice, the original critic of the original author. Although our third voice is in *moral* dispute with the second (about the number of people deserving of respect) they share a factual belief about the possibility of this clash occurring. Participants in a dispute can agree about some things yet disagree about others. Note finally that the conclusion in the above argument *looks* the same as the conclusion that the original (second voice) critic of the author had. Indeed, just in terms of the words on the page, the two conclusions are identically worded. However, they *don't mean* the same because the grammatical back reference of 'those' is different in each case. Mind you, the original critic (the second voice) would probably be happy to endorse CCMC1, it is just that he would wish to extend the exception cases to welfare maximization beyond those that the third voice would be comfortable with.

End of Aside

Anyway, by successfully crafting CCA2, it is confirmed in our mind that we have a *second* line of criticism that has emerged against MP1 (we will revisit this business of multiple criticisms of a given premise in Chapter 7). So, we have another deep moral clash, thus there will also be a new 'tilt'. Say that, in *this* case, it's 90/10 favouring CCMP1 over MP1. I said earlier that you should grow complexity gradually and deliberately but, in this case, two things have happened in the one move without any explicit intention that that occur. Still, they have both occurred and you would be silly not to explicitly recognize the emergence of a CCA2 'third voice' criticism of the author and take account of it in your thinking.

Anyway, given that things are becoming rather complicated, it is especially not a bad idea to pause and go into metacognitive *review* mode to make sure that you are tracking things without getting lost. Accordingly, what has happened up to this point in our enquiry? I would suggest that, basically, what we have is a ‘three-cornered’ contest with each voice disagreeing with each other one.

I would sum up the state of play as follows: Although initially inclined to consider patient welfare as a good ground for approving of a nurse lying to a patient, once I realized that patient welfare might be achieved by means that involved a lack of respect for a patient’s status as a person, I had serious qualms; indeed, in such a conflict I tilted 80/20 towards respect over patient welfare. Challenging my tilt, I considered that it might not be everyone who *deserved* such respect and, indeed, with 90/10 confidence, I inclined to the view that only moral people did. And then, in clash with the original patient-welfare view, I was even more confident that respecting *moral* people at least was more important than acting for their welfare (CCMP1 versus MP1 was 90/10) than I was that respecting just anyone outweighed acting for their welfare (CMP1 versus MP1 was 80/20). Of the two clashes with MP1, it seems that the line of criticism that I have more faith in is that derived from the third ‘voice’.

Key Ideas

Once an enquiry has gone beyond the initial stages, metacognitive review becomes both more complicated in what it covers and more important in helping to keep track of things. In particular, once beyond an initial criticism, you should think very carefully and explicitly about the inter-relationships of the various arguments in the enquiry. More might be happening than you deliberately intended to be present – the issue of ‘voices’.

Metacognitive *review* completed, where to next? As before, the next move is to engage in metacognitive *deliberation* among your available options. And, again, one can hardly do this without understanding what the options are; so, let’s list them.

With the advent of CCA1 come a number of new options:

- Accept CCA1.
- Criticize CCMP1.
- Defend CCMP1.
- Criticize CCMP2.
- Defend CCMP2.

And, with, our now formally crafted, CCA2, come further options:

Accept CCA2.
 Criticize CCDP3.
 Defend CCDP3.

Remember that the first two premises of this argument were already on the table in other arguments (see below) but you might find it useful to re-list them if that helps you to remember that they occur in more than one place.

And, added to these, are all the unused options from the past (ones that we might now have some *new* reason to choose):

Accept A1.
 Accept CA1.
 Defend CMP1.
 Criticize CDP1 (CCDP2).
 Defend CDP1 (CCDP2).
 Defend MP1.
 Criticize DP1.
 Defend DP1.

Quite a forbiddingly long list.

But, although I include all of the available options for completeness, a good number of them are obvious non-starters. Here's how I would think things through (*go slowly* in reading the following, there are a lot of proposition labels to back-track on – looking at Diagram 6, below, should help).

Although my sympathy with CCMP1 when compared with either rival is high, it is not at a level warranting acceptance yet; so the options of accepting CCA1 or CCA2 are out. Also, 'Accept CA1' and 'Accept A1', options rejected last time, have had nothing happen to warrant reversal of that decision. Further, given my critical focus upon moral premises, not descriptive ones, it seems a diversion from the flow of the enquiry to move focus to the latter. Anyway, as nothing has happened to change my confidence in DP1 and CDP1/CCDP2 and thus of the pointlessness of their defence and the futility of their criticism, those four options drop away. CCDP3 seems also to be obviously plausible (surely it wouldn't only be the immoral patients whose welfare might well be served by disrespect).

Given that the main current conflict is, in a general way, between 'respect' and 'welfare', and, given further that the 'respect' based criticism is at its strongest in its refined CCMP1 form and that a primary motivation in any further weeding is to focus on options that help me resolve that conflict, CCMP1 should be my focus. (If I don't decide that respect for *moral* people outweighs their welfare, I am unlikely – given my 90/10 tilt to CCMP1 over CMP1 – to favour respect of those left, the *immoral* ones, over welfare. Put another way, if CCMP1 doesn't end up beating MP1, could CMP1?) This means that any CA1 located options get weeded out. Events have overtaken them a bit. Curiously, the un-planned criticism of MP1 (CCA2) has proved to be more important in my mind than CA1.

So, what's left? – *three* options:

Criticize or defend CCMP1.

Defend MP1.

What should be the basis of my choice here? Recall that my tilt between CCMP1 and MP1 is 90/10 favouring the former over the latter. Given such a strong intuitive leaning, it is usually a good idea (as I have said earlier) to challenge, rather than reinforce, such an intention. (This is especially the case in the early stages of an enquiry; I'll return to some complications next chapter.) If the motivation is to 'go counter-intuitive', then 'Defend CCMP1' is eliminated because doing that would be reinforcing my current tendencies; hence that leaves a short-list of just *two* options.

So, should I defend MP1 or criticize CCMP1? My *primary* tactical motivation was to go counter-intuitive but that left me with these two options; so are there any *secondary* motivations that will guide a choice between them? Last decision time, I chose to criticize the critic (CMP1 in that case) and what emerged was basically a 'friendly refinement' of the critic's case, one simply narrowing the range of the clash between 'respect' and 'welfare' that was of moral concern. I could, in effect, criticize again, this time against the new, narrower, species of the generic 'respect' position. However, having gone down the 'criticize respect' path, it might be more interesting to go back to MP1 and see if there's anything that can be said in support of the 'welfare' value that might challenge my current tendency to discount it when it conflicts with respecting people, especially morally good people. Also, I have an existing dispute (respect versus welfare) in play and maybe I should stay with it and not run the risk of a more complex situation with too many 'balls in the air' at one time. Last time, I criticized CMP1 and I was lucky that the third voice that was generated was a 'first cousin' of the second, just one with a more restricted commitment to respect for others. If I mounted a criticism of CCMP1, then I wouldn't want it to be a *fourth* voice (!). It could come from the second voice but that is out of play for the moment. So, it would seem that, were I to mount a criticism of CCMP1, it would end up being a criticism generated from the point of view of the *first* voice (the original author). Given this, why not just articulate more of that first voice position in a more straightforward way as a defence of MP1? It would then be easier for me to keep track of all of the voices in the dialogue. Admittedly, I said the last time that such a defence was mentally familiar but it might still be a good idea to get it formally 'on the table' and, perhaps, given its mental familiarity, I might even persist a bit and further expand upon that defence with a 'defence of the defence'. Anyway, as things have unfolded, it seems a good move now even if it wasn't earlier.

So, after a somewhat involved 'tactics discussion' my metacognitive decision is: *Defend MP1*.

Note that this is a 'left over' option from way back. Although I didn't have a good reason to do it in the past, I *now* do *and* I can *explain why* to myself.

Key Ideas

As an enquiry proceeds, the number of options facing you in metacognitive *deliberation* as to where to go next expands rapidly. Fortunately, there are usually good tactical grounds for quickly ruling out a number of options and you are then left with a short-list for more serious consideration. Note that this process of metacognitive deliberation operates in a *sequenced* way with obviously poor options eliminated first and then the remaining ones trimmed methodically by appeal to primary motivations and then secondary ones and so forth until, hopefully, you are left with one path forward. Sometimes you can be left with a short-list of more than one with *no good reason* to choose among them; in such a case, given that you can't do more than one thing at once, you will just be fairly randomly picking out one of them (you might return to do some other, unchosen, option, or options, from your final short-list at some later stage in the enquiry).

Note also that, as an enquiry proceeds, it becomes increasingly important to carry out thorough and thoughtful metacognitive *reviews* – both to keep your finger on the pulse of what is emerging in the enquiry (in a perhaps un-planned way) and as inputs into your thinking as to where to go next.

What Now?

So, where would the enquiry go next? Well, having decided to defend MP1, you would proceed to implement that decision. And, as we noted that such a defence had been mentally pencilled in already, it might be that it gets elaborated upon a little bit beyond that so that new ground emerges. One way of doing this is to double up on the defence so that we don't just get a single defence move, like this (schematically):

DMP1
 (plus some other premises)
 So,
 MP1
 (plus some other premises)
 So,
 MC1.

Instead, we get a 'double depth' defence as follows (schematically):

DDMP1
 (plus some other premises)
 So,
 DMP1
 (plus some other premises)
 So,
 MP1
 (plus some other premises)
 So,
 MC1.

You can see why I spoke earlier of ‘chains of reasoning’ and their links. In this case we would have a three-link chain.

We will be looking at other ways of elaborating upon the author’s case in the next chapter. But, as this chapter is just an introduction to the *basics* of extended reasoning, I will leave things for now. Generally speaking, you would continue this process of metacognitively guided elaboration of the features of a dispute (in this case the current one is MP1 versus CCMP1) until confident enough about your feelings (your tilt) concerning that dispute to ‘close’ on it. (CCMP1 was close to this situation having a 90/10 tilt in its favour in comparison to either of the other moral premises). A discussion of that type of closure move (and its consequences for your enquiry on the original topic) is a matter for the next chapter.

Summary

Laid out as a flowchart, we have this form for our sample enquiry so far (see Diagram 5).

Note again that there are two main types of alternating activity occurring as the enquiry proceeds. One is what I have called ‘*substantive argumentation*’ (the initial argument, the criticism of MP1 and then of CMP1 (and, in an un-planned way, of MP1 again) and, finally, the planned defence of MP1). The other is what I have called ‘*metacognition*’. In turn, this has two main types of activity.

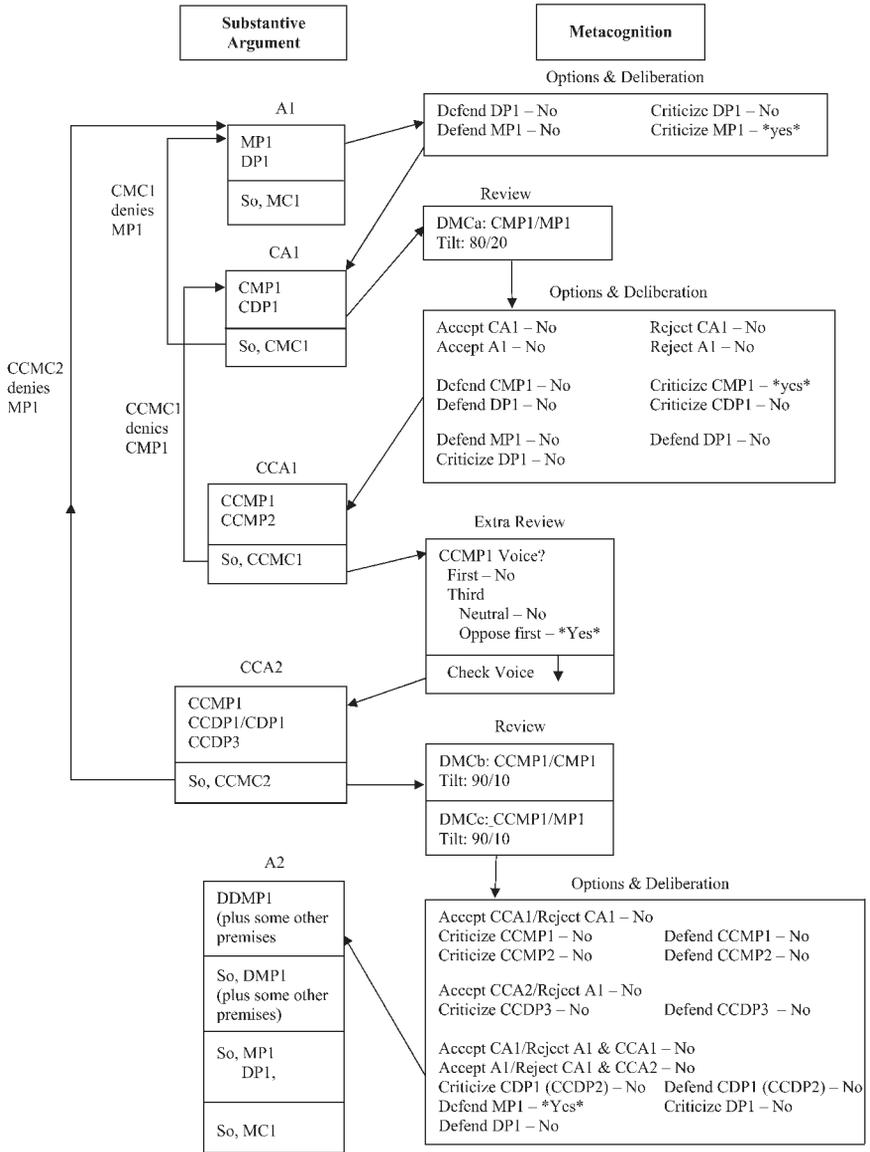


Diagram 5

The first is a metacognitive *review*. Such a review is a *backward*-looking activity in which track is kept of what has already happened – in particular, of what the emerging foci of dispute are and, if it is a moral dispute, the deep moral clash (or clashes) and your tilt (or tilts) that are present. At this stage, we have another extra element in our reviews: *voices*. Note that I have accommodated this feature in the flowchart with the box headed ‘Extra Review’. At this point in this particular enquiry, the issue is the ‘voice’ of CCMP1, in particular, its relationship to MP1. If you recall our discussion of the three possibilities for that relationship, I hope that you will follow the ‘shorthand’ in the box well enough. Note also that there’s a little decision in there to confirm the analysis as to which voice it might be. To check out our view as to the voice of CCMP1, we crafted CCA2 and you will see that decision within the metacognitive ‘extra review’ box and then, zig-zagging across to the other column, we get CCA2 portrayed (and note the vertical arrow connecting it back to MP1 and showing the relationship between them).

The other element within metacognition, metacognitive *deliberation*, is a *forward*-looking activity in which you consider possible options and, for various tactical reasons of varying importance, methodically weed the list in a sequenced way as much as you have good tactical grounds for. (An important input into this deliberation is the analysis of the enquiry’s current state of play as provided by your metacognitive review and, as applicable, your tilts concerning various disputes.) If you look at the ‘Options and Deliberation’ box that follows the mounting of CCA2 (and, effectively, after a bit of a quick think about voices, CCA1) you’ll see that I have listed the options differently this time and first group together those that come with the offering of CCA1, then those that come with CCA2 and then the list of unused options from the past. In particular, I haven’t listed all of the ‘closure’ options first (compare Diagram 3). Note also that I’ve got some options listed in an ‘accept/reject’ form. I didn’t do this in previous deliberation boxes and I offer it now just as a way of reminding yourself that, for instance, accepting CCA1 is tantamount to rejecting CA1 – they are two sides of the same decision. And, again, you might decide that all this is cluttering your flowchart too much and trim it to, perhaps, just the decision that you finally take or just those that were given serious consideration as possibilities. Again, my personal preference is to leave the clutter in because it reminds me of *all* of the possible options.

Focusing on the relationship among the substantive arguments, you could try one of our other styles of diagram to get the following:

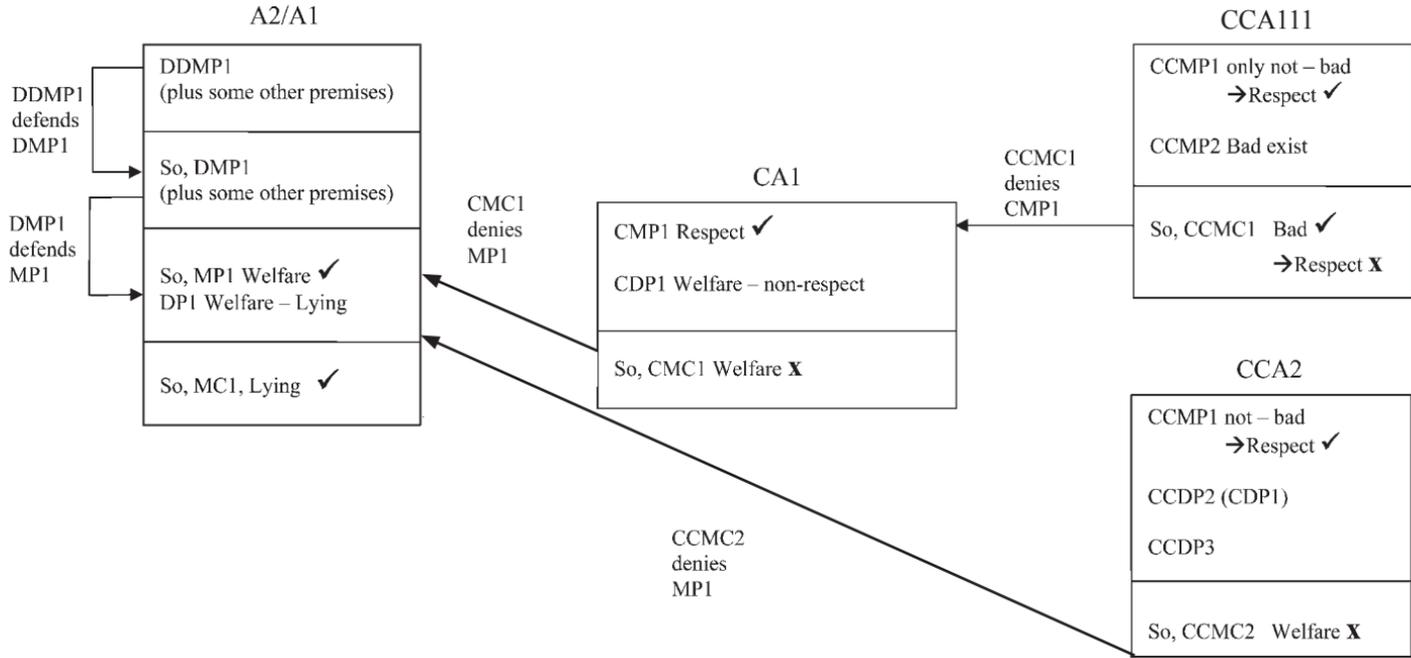


Diagram 6

Note that, in this diagram, it is clear just what arguments are challenging what moral premises. Note also that, although I have painted in a ‘shorthand’ sketch of the content of some of the premises (and look back at the full versions in the structures and see how *you* would do some sort of abbreviation for the diagram), I haven’t bothered for either descriptive premise in CCA2. For a start, I couldn’t think of anything clear that wasn’t rather too elaborate and, anyway, for the task at hand of tracking relationships among substantive arguments, they don’t much matter – it is the moral premise and the conclusion that are of more importance here. One thing that I haven’t done in the diagram but that you might consider to be worthwhile, is to head each of our columns with some such title as ‘first voice’, ‘second voice’ or ‘third voice’. This reminds you that all of the arguments in that particular column come from the same point of view, or voice. So, A2 is a further development of A1 (both first voice) and both CCA1 and CCA2, although they do different jobs with different targets, have the same motivation, CCMP1; they are in the same voice.

Anyway, as a result of these alternating activities of substantive argumentation and metacognitive tracking and planning of the enquiry, the controversial issues underlying the original topic should be gradually teased out and addressed with, ultimately, some resolution, or closure, concerning these deeper disputes. That resolution achieved, the enquirer has a more sophisticated and thought-through framework of beliefs and values to track back to, and apply to, the original topic question.

Of course, our above enquiry is just one illustration of the basic elements of the process and, as you might predict by now, things could have gone down some other path and could have been somewhat more complicated. It is the task of the next chapter to begin exploring some of those possible complications.