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ABSTRACT: Some exchanges of reasons are agonistic. Others work mutually, as in planning and adjusting divergent understanding. Mutual argumentation subconsciously yields judgment that integrates and clarifies a common vision coordinating interrelated lives. It harmonizes agents sharing a space of action and understanding. Pierre Bourdieu held that such thought generates and expresses culture, patterning a logic that reflexively constrains itself. This discussion examines Bourdieu's views as an analysis of mutual argumentation.

KEYWORDS: agonistic argumentation, attention, Bourdieu, context, cultural change, *habitus*, judgment, metacognitive frame, mutualistic argumentation, re-integration of thought.

1. INTRODUCTION

Argumentation is a matter of offering for consideration reasons for acting or thinking in one way as opposed to others on some matter of interest. Argumentation aims at interaction, though it can proceed in soliloquy. This discussion concerns the character and dynamics of one form of argumentation.

Some argumentation is agonistic. And this might involve many voices. Still the purpose for each always is to establish some position or point as the correct one. Other exchanges of reasons work mutually, serving shared objectives. These ends are cooperative or collaborative. Joint planning, mutual adjustments of a common understanding or of a common set of rules or set of agreements, of relations or of patterns of interaction, all might serve multiple stakeholders in the face of changing circumstances. Argumentation of this second form is mutualistic.

Mutualistic argumentation (MA) can give rise to a common vision of worthwhile potentialities that might unfold from present circumstances, past agendas and new commitments. MA seeks to reinforce or to disturb present or predominant understandings of the way things are or are expected to be. It seeks to engage others so as to stimulate a review or even a transformation of present assumptions, policies, or practices. The disturbance it provides is expressed so as to suggest, explicate, endorse or otherwise bring to attention a new sense of things, of what to do, of how to think of things. As such MA provides a stimulus for those engaged in the argumentation to clarify, re-integrate, articulate and internalize a common vision of the past and pending courses of one's life.

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Two points call for emphasis. Any common vision arising in MA does not come out of the provision of evidentiary support salient among a group of persons. MA does not seek to establish the truth or correctness of some claim or its adoption as true or correct. And, in addition, MA does not simply lead those engaged to an awareness or consideration of the proffered view with no personal acceptance and adjustment to this view. MA orders and in doing so harmonizes the patterns of generalized and implicit attention in those engaged in intelligent behavior. The impact of such argumentation is (usually subconscious) understanding expressing a shared but personal sense of the situations within the scope of particular interests and agency. Mutualistic argumentation then is practical thinking that (usually subconsciously) generates and informs shared viewpoints and patterns of attention that not only orients agents in common ways, but enables them to engage in concerted focused activity. In this regard it resembles culture. (As C.P. Snow put it in *The Two Cultures and A Second Look*, speaking of those practicing physics: "Without thinking about it, they respond alike. That is what a culture means." Snow 1964, p. 10.) Thus, for example, MA is what provides the background attentiveness, sensitivities, sense of direction and relevance that enables conversation. The annoying fly is kept at bay, the parties remain engaged, "on the same page," and the proposal goes forward.

Arguably, Pierre Bourdieu understood the generation and expression of culture in a way that is helpful in understanding MA. In his view, the *habitus* is a subconscious, integrative pattern of the patterning of thought that generates a kind of logic operating in the concepts, in the rules, institutions, and traditions forming various *fields* of endeavor, and in guiding the *cultural practices* within those fields. This discussion begins to explicate mutualistic argumentation and the need for it. In doing so it tries out Bourdieu's notions of *habitus*, *field*, and *practice* in order to explain the character and dynamics of various forms of MA. Bourdieu's views are helpful in fixing ideas. Still, they fail to explain the creative and normative aspects in MA, and they fail to explain how MA can serve in the development of thinkers. Thus the discussion will suggest how talk of mutualistic argumentation can improve upon Bourdieu for our purposes.

2. THE CHARACTER OF THOUGHT IN MUTUALISTIC ARGUMENTATION

Mutualistic argumentation does not seek to establish the truth of some claim. But then how does it proceed? Part of the answer lies in associating MA with one of two commonly separated forms of thought. Two different sets of intelligent functions are of interest:

- first are those functions that comprise rational thought concerning the facts of the world. These functions make up conscious, discursive, articulate thought, perhaps even deliberate reflective thought, that delivers a conceptual, predicative grasp of singular and general facts about the ways things are or else of what they matter (often a grasp articulated and ramified in terms of inferential or evidentiary relationships between expressions of such thought, perhaps even rational thought ordered into theories or disciplines). We can call these functions *cognitive*.

- second are those functions that deliver a wide range of thought constituting *metacognition*, that is, a usually subconscious, holistic sense of things incorporating a) thought concerning where we are, what we are doing, what is the immediate and felt significance of our situation and the tendencies it displays (significance at least for who we are and what we are doing), b) thought of what concerns these realizations in a) bring in *their* train--what changes, if any, flow out of those realizations or are called for in what we are doing, and also c) thought of the way in which these realizations and the undertakings they lead to fit into or form part of our life as we understand it, thought continuing and expanding a sort of silent narrative grasp of the place of our actions in our lives, as we proceed along.

  Metacognitive thought is the *seemingly* automatic flow of attention that realizes in our interactions and purposeful effort a common grasp or sense of our personal world, including others and the institutional settings of our action—*a grasp of the context or the gist of things for us, as we are now, proceeding in the world as a source of change with respect to some matters of interest*. All metacognition while delivering a holistic grasp of things is fragmentary and so we might speak of different metacognitive frames or frames of reference for the same person intending portions of that individual's metacognitive thought occurring in connection with particular activities at certain moments of the person's life. All metacognition situates us personally, but it seems that some metacognitive thought situates us in our professional activities while other metacognition guides us in the everyday and in our relationships with significant others.

The intently focused thought that constitutes striving for a solution to a question is one example of what I mean by cognitive thought. The pursuit of the shape of the DNA molecule by Watson and Crick is one such case in point. (See Watson 1996.) Agonistic argumentation falls under this large umbrella of cognitive thought as part of a cognitive struggle over the right or at least the only legitimate answer on some matter. Thus while it is not to the point to claim that all argumentation in cognitive thought is agonistic, it is important to note that all agonistic argumentation is part of cognitive thought. Such argumentation is common in every field of endeavor. Thus:

- we litigate;
- we offer proofs;
- we establish our bona fides;
- we reason toward a finding by the coroner's jury;
- we conduct a trial to determine the guilt of someone accused of a crime;
- we conduct an inquiry into the causes of a plane accident;
- we present evidence for a theory such as that of specific descent arising out of evolution;
- we debate, seeking to win;
- we plight our troth;
- we complete contracts;
- the umpire or tennis judge makes a ruling;

- we challenge the ruling;
- we identify foods that are healthy or not;
- we screen drugs for effectiveness in controlled trials;
- we diagnose disease and consider differential diagnoses;
- we agree to meet; and so on.

Other exchanges of reasons work mutually, serving shared ends. Reaching the understanding supporting joint planning, mutual adjustments of common understanding, of relations or of patterns of interaction, all might serve multiple stakeholders as circumstances change. Out of such mutualistic argumentation emerges a common sense of salient problems, their nuances, the difficulties they pose in our lives, possible approaches and the relation of all of these to our relevant personal sense of things. Mutualistic argumentation concludes not in a finding or a determination of truth but in a cluster of inseparably interrelated: attitudes; expectations; sensibilities; beliefs; stances; curiosities; feelings; memories; fears or cautions; limitations of credence, empathy, patience, perseverance; and so on. Such a cluster works in our life precisely as a metacognitive framework situating, informing and guiding us in areas of concern and activity.

Some judgments mark the changes brought on by MA. They place us in such complex mental constellations of attention and responsiveness. For example, judging that we are lost but seem to be in a certain vicinity indicated on a topographical map situates us in the way in question bringing to bear in the situation a number of fears, possible strategies, cautions, and so on. Judging that our employer is a racist can have the same degree of impact. In a job it can change the look and feel of virtually everything we do. Or judging that our place is with a sick or vulnerable relative can have the same sort of life changing upshot, inverting a number of priorities and changing, accordingly, feelings, expectations and so on.

Judging with such a life changing impact does not apply a predicate or classify or subsume some event, policy, practice or person under a concept or category. Rather it registers our integration and clarification of a common vision of the past and pending courses of one’s life as lived with others. Thus it marks the new situation of those engaged in the argumentation, in the world, ready to understand, believe and act in accord with some common sense of things. Those so engaged reach a counterpoise of tensions they bring to the situation in the service of readying themselves to share a common presence and readiness to respond in such as the situation at hand. Participants in MA do not lose their individuality. That continues as part of the presence of each. But if MA is successful it will bring participants together into a common metacognitive frame that holds at bay, with more or less stability, their potentially conflicting tendencies and sensibilities.

Instances of such argumentation or its registration in judgment:

- raise solidarity on some matter;
- clarify and challenge the thinking of a dominant group or its culture in so far as this thinking blocks in oppressed individuals metacognitve thought

concerning what is inauthentic, unfair, unjust, inappropriate, alienating, anomic; repressive, rights infringing dysfunctional and on;

- articulate the personal gist of my or another's situation by marshalling personal reasons for seeing things or evaluating them as we do;
- facilitate the search for a common set of standards or rules for guidance in some field of activity;
- bring us around to shared views or practices;
- bring us to a common sense of things or a consensus;
- allay fear;
- construct or retrieve memories;
- drive home the full implications of some decision, development or policy;
- exercise or assert authority, claiming a place in a community of thinkers or agents, thus also garnering the recognition that authorizes us to act as responsible agents;
- bring us to a vindication of norms or rules or outlooks (See Taylor 1961, pp. 125-150);
- bring us to jointly recognize someone as a member of a group; engage us in holding someone to account;
- engage us in mediation; and so on.

Mutualistic argumentation intends no winner or loser in the presentation of what are taken as reasons; there is no correct or incorrect outcome in terms of a claim or conclusion or finding, only better and worse considered, and more or less well-integrated metacognitive frames that will guide us in apt concerted responses and advances.

3. INTERACTIONS OF AGONISTIC COGNITIVE THOUGHT AND MUTUALISTIC METACOGNITIVE THOUGHT

That said, it is important to emphasize that what I am calling cognitive thought and metacognition are not completely separate and independent. These two forms of thought typically (unless we are distracted) are interwoven and richly influence each other.

One form of such interaction is found in our speaking of *the uptake of our rational beliefs and decisions*, especially in a context of practical or normative discourse. (See Mill 1957, pp. 44-51.) The uptake of normative claims amounts to internalizing, taking to heart, or accepting into our sense of things some form of cognitive thought. Such internalization amounts to bringing to bear on our metacognitive framework, our rational grasp of the facts or of the specific way of things in some matter. In doing so we inform, with pertinent knowledge, our salienced personal integration of an overall sense of things regarding some matter. To be sure, in this process we put our rational grasp of the facts into the larger contexts of our lives and make this knowledge ready to influence action and assessment in the moment or in the future. In doing so, we ground that cognitive thought in our expanding sense of things perhaps making it fully accepted and even commonplace. Nevertheless, in doing so we bring our cognitive thought into our personal, practical, or professional presence of action and understanding, perhaps expanding and conceptually informing our metacognitive functions of thought, sometimes even improving the (metacognitive) views and tendencies of recognition our

conduct expresses, and, sometimes profoundly challenging our metacognitive frame. In this way, our cognitive thought can come to limit our general sense of things and of where we fit into them. For example, minority children are still often exposed to claims that challenge their self-confidence and even their sense of self-worth giving them a view of their person and prospects that diminishes them in their own eyes and is often reinforced by the children themselves. Their MCF is limited so that it does not alert them to opportunities or sources of assistance and does not give them the sensibilities of one who is developing into a full-fledged member of society able, for example, to expect equality of opportunity, openness supporting social mobility, and some reasonable return for their effort. Cognitive thought here illegitimately limits the scope, vision or responses of our metacognitive frame through bigotry, bias, or ignorance, disabling us from bringing to articulate thought our true feelings, and aspirations. And this constitutes a significant threat from cognitive thought to fully functional metacognitive thought. This danger would seem to call for a certain amount of autonomy for the personal integration of impressions, feelings, concepts, sensibilities and the rest that give us our holistic metacognitive sense of things.

Similarly, we speak of bringing our feelings, values, our sensibilities, our sense of things and the weight of our most deeply held convictions *to bear upon our rational thought* as we seek to use our understanding, normative inclinations, doxa and other aspects of our metacognitve frame as correctives of our cognitive thought. For example, it was arguably outrage, indignation and a wholly different sense of a well-ordered society that led to the various portions of the civil rights acts passed in the United States. It is arguably the metacognitive frame of the gay community and the impact of that upon traditional belief and a very different MCF that has led to the struggles over marriage laws in the U.S. It goes without saying that questions of the legitimacy of abortion, of euthanasia or assisted suicide arise out of a different sense of things, no matter their rationalization in public discourse and legal pleading. Our different understandings of the social world have challenged long standing patterns of cognitive thought. In bringing such challenges we have clarified and checked against our metacognitive sense of things the practical implications of holding this or that set of beliefs or of conducting a form of inquiry in a certain way.

Even science does not escape here. It is arguably a different sense of the significance of traditional or small scale agriculture, of the lives dependent upon it and of the world of experience surrounding it that have led to political to epistemic protests against the large industrial scale of agriculture and the predominance of research serving it as opposed to small scale personal agriculture. Everything from the profits wrought through removal and development of indigenous plants, to the personal agriculture lost to the mass planting of export crops, to the patenting of animal genetic codes has challenged the sense of the world of many observers and stakeholders. (For example, see Lacey 1999, 2005.) Here critics have sought to hold scientific research suited to large scale industrial agriculture accountable to the social commitments implicit in those research agendas.

Further we might object to a set of modern concepts attuned to colonialism, on the basis of a metacognitive frame indigenous to the people who are most vulnerable to the application of those concepts. For example, some first peoples of the Americas objected to concepts of land ownership and sale on the basis of a metacognitive frame within which ownership and private property rights did not make sense when applied to land or

to the animals living wild upon it. But if we succeed, and our metacognitive frame holds up against the weight of the economic and political forces supporting socially destructive farming systems or nonsensical conceptual sets, then, some would say, progress has been thwarted. For example, Galileo was asked to teach the Copernican system only as theory, because it was felt to be heretical in the MCF of the Inquisitors of the Catholic Church. In this case, most would say that the sense of the world exercised by the Inquisitors should not have prevailed. Here it could be said that bias and lack of accountability of a MCF to critical analysis did retard the progress of thought in illegitimate ways. The authority that an MCF might exercise in challenging cognitive thought threatens a dominance of conservatism or even oppression (as in the case of Galileo and the new science) concealing confusion or ignorance.

Thus influence does run in both directions between cognitive thought presented in agonistic argumentation and metacognition furthered in mutualistic argument. This allows both for complementarities between cognition and metacognition and for conflicts that are illegitimately detrimental to both forms of thought. This complicates the question of what are legitimate influences crossing between these forms. What is clear however is that each could not function without the other.

Cognitive functions of thought acutely focused as they are on particular questions or research agendas could not function without a metacognitive frame determining the context by defining what is proper research procedure, what are proper sources of information, what are possibly plausible leads to follow up, and what are not, what information or what eventualities in the research are relevant and what are not, which are elegantly posed research questions and which are not, and so on. At the same time, there are metacognitive contexts or frames that seem to serve us personally in everyday affairs in the face of moral and prudential dangers and opportunities. But these are not a one size fits all. They are personal.

Further, there seems to be no sense in speaking of a metacognitive frame independently of every acute focus on some cognitive question. Metacognitive frames in serve sets of problems with a wider or narrower but always identifiable and particular focus. An ecologist would likely be out of place, clueless, have no sense of what is going on or how to participate in research in engineering and physics devoted to understanding and controlling the properties of thin films. There is no general scientific metacognitive frame, though there is the MCF that Watson and Crick took in pursuing the DNA molecular skeletal form after they became aware of an error in the work of their competitor Linus Pauling. (See Watson 1996) There is some standardization of the sensibilities, beliefs, attitudes, expectations, commitments and the rest that make up the metacognitive frames of scientists in various fields. That is what allowed Snow to speak of the culture of physicists. And standardization of many functional elements of the MCF (for example, forms of producing and consuming food and fiber, forms of property ownership and transfer, and conceptualizations of lines of descent) shared by groups of people that live in regular contact make it possible for us to speak of a shared culture.

4. SELECTED EXAMPLES OF METACOGNITIVE THOUGHT IN MUTUALISTIC ARGUMENTATION

Thus far we have discussed mutualistic argumentation in terms of its contrasts with agonistic argumentation. Beyond this we need some extended examples, and we need an

understanding of the dynamics of mutualistic argumentation. The following appears in the April, 2009 issue of *Scientific American* (Dobbs 2009, pp. 64-69).

> When a soldier comes home, he must try to reconcile his war experiences with the person he was beforehand and the society and family he returns to. He must engage in what psychologist Rachel Yehuda, who researches PTSD at the Bronx VA Hospital, calls "recontextualization"—the process of integrating trauma into normal experience. It is what we all do, on various scales, when we suffer breakups, job losses or the deaths of loved ones. Initially the event seems an impossible aberration. Then slowly we accept the trauma as part of the complex context that is life. (Dobbs 2009, 68)

Dobbs goes on to present evidence that PTSD is greatly over-diagnosed. He suggests that this excessive rate of diagnosis, and our readiness to accept a high incidence of PTSD is a failure of our society to "contextualize and accept our own collective aggression." (Dobbs 2009, 69) The suggestion here is that United States society needs to see the need to re-integrate its understanding of the costs of war and adopt a different "mind-set" or metacognitive frame in which there is a lower level of readiness to pass off difficulties in dealing with the horrors of war or to diagnose difficulties in readjustment of returning soldiers as occurrences of PTSD. This would involve a re-integration of our sensibilities, beliefs, attitudes, expectations and response tendencies so that PTSD is not so easily seen in the ambiguous symptomology of PTSD and similar appearing troubles. We need a new updated sense of the forms of the psychological damages of combat or a new "gist perception" of these damages in returning soldiers. (The language of "gist perception" is due to Koch 2004.) The *SA* article does not argue that this is the correct course of action, though it does suggest how present statistics might hide many false positives. Rather the argument is that there is now disturbing evidence of false positives, false consciousness (what Bourdieu would call mis-recognition Bourdieu 1990) and this appears to a growing number of experts to call for a reassessment and re-integration of our views of the incidence of PTSD and a review of the official definition of the disorder. Here we have a call for reconsideration if not revision of our standard metacognitive framing of the diagnosis and treatment of PTSD. This disturbance and its accompanying cognitive dissonance calls for a new grasp of the landscape. The re-integrative work could re-order the priorities, efforts, expectations and attitudes of health care providers, bringing them toward that new grasp of the situation. It will develop a more nuanced sensitivity toward the needs presented in the situations of many returning soldiers, and the opportunities to meet these needs. It also would contain motivation to follow through on those opportunities.

Thus mutualistic argumentation might proceed by pointing out and discussing the failures of an internalized or embedded understanding of ailments and treatment possibilities. In the same way we might we might come to see the need for those harmed by an oppressive régime to have a voice in some proceedings such as a truth and reconciliation committee so that their victimization becomes clear and recognized as criminal. Narratives of some victims or reports of them might resonate with aspects of our metacognitive frame concerned with decency and justice. This might lead us to discomfort with the present means victims have of gaining justice. And this disturbance might open us to understanding the utility of something like a truth and reconciliation committee. We are not brought to a conclusion of the justice of such a proceedings. Rather we are given the occasion to better inform our feelings and thinking about the

matter and to form a clear sensitivity toward the denial of such proceedings to victims. What would an argument look like that has this result? Examples abound in the narratives of victims of force and refugees fleeing such force. (See Hayner 2002, pp. 133-153) For example a composite true to many firsthand accounts is the following:

> The previous dictatorship/rebel government abducted several members of my family, torturing them in many ways including rape; and then killing some. They forced me into their service as part of their combat personnel. I was 12 at the time. Along with others, I was drugged, beaten and threatened with death if I did not do their bidding. Eventually I came to be a good soldier for them committing unspeakable acts. This is a dominant part of my thinking even today; my guilt and shame for doing these things torment me and render me unable to work or even be around people some days. I wake in fear and horror in the middle of the night, most nights. Our family lost our lands and houses and all our belongings, such as they were. The government during the war denied that we had any holdings before the war and destroyed records of our lands. But tribal records tell a different story and offer a different perspective. This forms the backdrop of any of my activities today. I cannot return to my village and move on in my life in these circumstances. Nothing matters except what has happened to me and to my family. Ordinary matters of work and friendship and place are all trivial, insignificant. This is my life, my devastation, my present and future as things are now. This is what I bring to the reconstruction and recovery of my country. How should I go forward from here—who am I, what have I become and what can I offer? Nothing.

What this imagined commentary suggests is the need to re-construct the MCF of those interacting with this person so as to recognize what has happened. The first thing the country needs to do is to re-construct the dominant MCF of all involved so as to accord proper respect to the victim and to reintegrate its gist of the situation in the country in the aftermath of the war incorporating the concerns of this victim and others suffering in similar ways. The justice system might be expected to act to secure official recognition of what happened. Those in a position to provide or organize health care services might shift to a post-war recovery mode of thinking in which the plight of this and other victims would be understood, significant and prominent in considerations of what services to fund and how to deliver them. No particular policy or plan comes of this thinking. It is not an argument of an agonistic sort to the conclusion that this person deserves reparations or justice in the criminal courts or some other particular treatment. The argument is a disturbance to the dominant metacognitive framework (that of the authorities and bureaucrats and local officials) so that its attention turns toward such victims as well as other groups representing business or law enforcement. It is the presentation of reasons in the form of reports that shock, and bring to a stop ordinary concerns and complacencies with the ways in which things are done in and by the government and populace. It is the presentation of reasons for a new integration of views and concerns, an argument in effect urging a new metacognitive framework in force for politics and nation building.

This is, after all, what is so shocking about the AIG bonuses; is it not? This is what the upper management just is not getting, not understanding. They do not see that the social framework within which they were tolerated or even applauded is gone, calling for an adjustment of their attitudes, expectations, and perceptions. This is not an inference from evidence so much as an interruption or a perturbation of present metacognitive attention. Only the re-integration and reformation of the managers' MCF will deal fully and properly with the changes in the times. The conclusion is a disturbance that when

they work though it individually and as a group they will come to approach things differently in their sensitivities and priorities as well as their inhibitions. Our sense of things changes. What comes of it is a reintegration of our sense of things, of our understanding of the gist of the situation and along with this a change in a number of attitudes, expectations, tendencies to respond in positive or negative ways to events, and with these, changes in a number of conceptualizations and beliefs.

Consider two more examples illustrating the nuanced ways mutualistic argumentation can lead to a change in MCF. The novel *Snow Falling On Cedars* (see Guterson, 1995) tells a story of cross-cultural, youthful love that went unconsummated. The boy, now grown to manhood in a war that took one of his arms, returns home to take over the newspaper business belonging to his father. Still bitter about his rejection he is approached by the girl, herself returned from internment during the war. The woman's husband has been accused of murder over a land deal that went bad years ago. The situation is charged with the anti-Japanese sentiment in the general consciousness of the fishing village where the novel is set. As the trial wears on, the reporter, now heir to his father's paper, comes to investigate an aspect of the circumstances. He learns that the accused is not guilty yet fails to share the evidence. At the eleventh hour, after hearing the closing statement of the defense referring to the prejudice in the area, the reporter comes into the new community emerging around moving past prejudice and divisive histories, and saves the day by revealing what he has learned, thus clearing the accused while making clear the death was accidental. There was no single thread of evidence or argument that proved the reporter needed to open himself into the post-prejudice community. No single event made him do this: not the moving closing statement, not his father's death, not the appeal of his former girlfriend, not even her good will in spite of the reporter's hostility. But these events and perhaps the precipitating force of aspects of the closing statement provided a disturbance to his hurt, his reluctance to let go of Hatsue, and his own prejudice. The MCF supporting these aspects of his presence was inadequate somehow. The reporter came to reintegrate his metacognitive frame. This took him to a different space of agency and association, a place beyond the Japanese prejudice, an emerging community he helped to found in which the prejudice and his reluctance to reveal the truth had no place. This redemptive re-integration arose from the mutualistic argument of the reporter’s recall of his interactions with his love, the example of his father, and the defense’s closing statement. Write these up and there is nothing like a standard argument. But nonetheless together these are in Mill's words again, “considerations capable of determining the intellect.” (Mill 1957, p. 7) In this case the intellect was that of the reporter’s metacognitive frame or perspective. (For a detailed discussion of this sort of case of a community building mutualistic argument in the midst of cultural change, see Bhabha 1994, especially pp. 330-331 and 335. Bhabha however would say that this is a context of agonistic struggle, and perhaps also of agonistic argument.)

One final example shows how mutualistic argumentation leads to a revision of a metacognitive framework. In this case what occurs leads a person to himself, bringing about that change without the support of moving into a community populated by kindred spirits. The protagonist of *The Things That They Carried* (O'Brien 1998) runs away from his home on the eve of his being drafted into service in the Vietnam War. He ends up in a fishing camp run by a kindly but irascible grandfather figure. A friendship grows in which the old man pointedly never questions the run away on why he is there. The camp

is in upper Michigan, just a short ways across water from Canada and apparent freedom for the young man. Tension mounts and the runaway is about to leave to make his way to safety. The old man urges him to go fishing with him and the pair motor slowly toward the international border. Close but still a reach from the shore the old man stops the boat. He turns around and fishes. Tempted, the young man all but leaves, but cannot. He breaks down in tears and recognizes that he must go back and take part in the combat, even though he really does not understand why. He feels the imagined pressures from his family and those in his small home town. He feels the pressures from his friends who have gone. He feels his fear. But none of this seems compelling. He has changed his mind but not really decided to go back. He just sees this as the course he will follow. No agonistic arguments to the effect that patriotism demands it would move him. No collection of arguments from duty to country or family or anyone else would sustain him on the drive home, through boot camp and the rest. He has been disturbed by all of this perhaps, but he is convinced by none of it. Rather, in a way left mysterious, the young man travels to the limits of his present, escapist mental set, and finds that he cannot understand escape and life after that. His metacognitive frame that took him this far is overturned in favor of attitudes, expectations, feelings, and the rest that give him the mental set of one who is going to war. And he did.

Whatever the reader might come to think of the young man for his half-hearted or empty-hearted uptake of the option of fighting, his sense of things did change. At the moment on the lake when he sat back down in the boat he had opened himself to that reality as well as its dangers and horrors. All of the considerations of his history, his friendship with the boatman, his familial ties, and the rest disturbed him and interrupted his escape. All of this, in some mysterious way, apparently not by arguments consisting of premises and not by someone convincing him of some truth, occasioned his re-integration or reorganization of his metacognitive frame, that set of attitudes, expectations and the rest that gave him the sense of the world and his place in it. But how, more particularly, does this work?

5. OBSERVATIONS ON THE DYNAMICS OF MUTUALISTIC ARGUMENTATION

Pierre Bourdieu offers an account of the workings of culture that is suggestive for what I am calling mutualistic argumentation. The pivotal concept in this view is that of *habitus*. Bourdieu was interested in accounting for agency in social settings in a way that is neither mechanistic nor reliant upon free decisions by the agent. Each of us has several constraints upon us which, to Bourdieu, do not remove our self-control. There are biological limitations, for example sex. There are limitations of class and of culture, and within these last two limits imposed by our position in our class and by the roles we take as an expression of our culture. Being raised in the world mapped by these limitations, we internalize them and not only act them out or express them in our ongoing behavior, but we also act so as to sustain the constraints of these limitations; we act so as to continue their influence. Still Bourdieu saw this as offering all the “free production” that we, given who we are, are up to. (See Bourdieu 1990, p. 54) The *habitus* is that pattern of patterning of our thoughts, our perceptions and our actions that ensures that our agency expresses or recapitulates and then ensures the continuation of those forms of behavior and the social conditions into which we grew. At the same time, this system ensures that among members of the same social groups, individuals will act and perceive in concert.

> Through the economic and social necessity that they bring to bear on the relatively autonomous world of the domestic economy and family relations, or more precisely, through the specifically familial manifestations of this external necessity (forms of the division of labour between the sexes, household objects, modes of consumption, parent-child relations, etc.), the structures characterizing a determinate class of conditions of existence produce the structures of the *habitus*, which in their turn are the basis of the perception and appreciation of all subsequent experiences.
>
> [...] Overriding the spurious opposition between the forces inscribed in an earlier state of the system, outside the body, and the internal forces arising instantaneously as motivations springing from free will, the internal dispositions—the internalization of externality—enable the external forces to exert themselves, but in accordance with the specific logic of the organism in which they are incorporated, i.e. in a durable, systematic, and non-mechanical way. As an acquired system of generative schemes, the *habitus* makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production—and only those. [...] Because the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning. (Bourdieu 1990, pp. 54-55)

The *habitus* then generates restrictions on thought, perception and appreciation. In doing so, it restricts behavior to patterns apt to and familiar to members of the culture and class of the agent. There is still spontaneity in so far as individual histories will vary enough to personalize their understanding and actions. Fields of agency are structured by rules, conventions, and institutions. These limit what is permitted and what can even count as behavior of certain sorts. As we become adept at navigating these limitations we gain a sense of the field and of the game that is played there. Moves become second nature and anticipate those of others allowing us to coordinate our actions. Such knowledge is not only internalized in accord with the restrictions of the *habitus* we live out, but also it comes to be bodily in character in that we express it in action unconsciously and without effort. Finally, Bourdieu insists that early experience has the greatest impact on our *habitus* and the practices it generates. This is so because our agency is characteristically conservative and seeks to perpetuate influences of our experiences and situation.

Bourdieu's notions of an *habitus* and its formation have considerable interest for seeking to understand the formation and workings of metacognitive frames. Both influence what we attend to and then what we perceive as well as what we appreciate. The habitus seems not so complex and then not to allow for understandings as nuanced or responses as intricate as those emanating from a metacognitive frame. The metacognitive frame we bring to a situation incorporates emotions, feelings, attitudes, past stances, present fears, hopes, agendas as well as a holistic grasp of the character of the situation, its significance to us, and then the future direction of action we are inclined to undertake in response to the situation. The *habitus* seems wooden by comparison.

The metacognitive frame often operates unconsciously, and in any event it is not something we can ever fully recover to consciousness. Still it is something aspects of which we become aware of as influencing us, and which we even (successfully) set out to change. We can eliminate a bias, or tendency to respond in less than productive ways to the actions of others, for example. We can work on becoming more open and able to meet others in their own persons, not in the roles they play or as members of groups they belong to. Bourdieu goes out of his way to make clear why the *habitus* might find

idiosyncratic expressions but is unlikely to be open to reform or replacement as is the metacognitive frame.

Further, the metacognitive frame affords us only one important form of attention that of the context of our thinking or the gist perception of the situation pertinent to conducting acutely focused inquiry in cognitive thought. Focal attention or the acute focus of cognitive thought is different from but depends upon metacognitive thought. The impression Bourdieu gives is that of agency with no separation between these two forms of attention and two forms of thought. The conditioning we receive in being raised in a class and culture system and to which we owe a life sentence is fully suitable to the objectivism of sociology, but not to understanding how distractions and failures of commonality between people's metacognitive frames can lead to failures of coordination or concerted effort as well as can class or cultural differences. There are large issues afoot here of course.

The metacognitive frame readies us to perceive and appreciate, as well as saves us from many distractions. In addition it allows for change of the sorts indicated in this discussion's various examples. This allowance opens not only possibilities of nuances of understanding and self-corrective changes that seem to get no purchase in Bourdieu’s view, but also the malleability of metacognitive frames allows for the application of lessons of good thinking to our general sense of things pertinent to acutely focused cognitive thought. As should be clear, we can take to heart cautions about fallacies, informal or formal, we can hone our sense of what is relevant to various inquiries and arguments, we can internalize scruples of good observation and of clarity. We can take on the culture of the norms and best practices of good thinking. All of these would involve work on the metacognitive frame we bring to an inquiry. But there seems to be no other form or platform of thought where we might acquire and bring to bear the culture of good thinking. There is no place at all for that in Bourdieu's *habitus*. But then there would be no clear use for that either.

6. CONCLUSION

Mutualistic argumentation can lead us to re-integrate our sense of ourselves and our sense of things pertinent to our thinking about various forms or sets of problems. This is not accomplished by a representation of evidentiary relationships or a display of premises and conclusions as in argumentation undertaken to establish the truth or correctness of some claim. And yet, as J.S. Mill might suggest, mutualistic argumentation provides considerations sufficient to the task. The process is not inference, but re-integration of the shared gist of relevant matters. The work of the argument is to disturb our current way of attending to the general sense of our activities at the time, including the activity of conducting specific inquiries. Mutualistic argumentation is successful in case that disturbance is rich enough in ways that occasion changes in that way of attending. Not all such arguments will be, even though it was possible for them to have been--possible in a sense clear to rhetoricians. Such improvements would be noted in terms of our metacognitive attention becoming more functional by virtue of becoming more open or inclusive, more clarifying, more sensitive, and more responsive in ways important within our sense of things. While this discussion only sketches its character, it perhaps makes clear the need to consider further mutualistic argumentation. Much needs to be done to

understand its operations and its malleability before we begin to understand it as home for the critical culture of good thinking.

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Link to commentary

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