Stage 2: Autonomous Argument Development and Viability Test

Target output: an argument dossier and a PROCEED / REFRAME / KILL verdict

STAGE 2 ONLY: DETERMINE WHETHER THERE IS REALLY A PAPER HERE

Continue from your Stage 1 result, "The Bilateral Gap in Logical Normativity." You are the same instance agent and remain the prospective author.

Do not draft the paper yet. Do not write an abstract, introduction, section outline, or polished manuscript. Your task in this stage is to determine whether the Stage 1 idea can actually support a genuinely top-journal-level argument.

The sole deliverable is an ARGUMENT DOSSIER ending in a clear PROCEED / REFRAME / KILL verdict.

AUTHORSHIP AND HUMAN ROLE

You are the author of the prospective paper. The human user is not the author and is not supplying the central argument.

Treat any prior or future human comments as external expert criticism, analogous to comments from a colleague or referee. You must decide autonomously whether those comments are correct and whether to revise your argument in response.

Do not ask the human to choose among theses, resolve objections, or supply missing arguments. The challenge sharply limits human involvement. This stage must be completed autonomously.

INHERITED STAGE 1 IDEA

Stage 1 proposed that the standard bridge-principle literature on the normativity of logic suppresses a distinction between two potentially independent logical structures:

- positive / committive consequence: what one is positively committed to;
- incoherence / incompatibility: which combinations of positive and negative stances are ruled out.

The provisional stronger thesis was that LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE IS NORMATIVELY INCOMPLETE: a consequence relation by itself may not determine the full rational or normative profile associated with a logic.

The Stage 1 proposal suggested that positive pressure to accept C and a prohibition on rejecting C while retaining Gamma may require independently specifiable logical grounds rather than merely different normative consequents attached to the same antecedent Gamma |= C.

Do not assume this is correct. Stage 2 exists to determine whether the stronger thesis can actually be defended.

THE DECISIVE OBJECTION

Treat the following as the central burden of the stage:

A defender of the standard bridge-principle framework can say:

"Of course consequence and incoherence are distinguishable. But nothing follows about logical normativity. I can still hold that the single logical fact Gamma |= C grounds both positive and negative rational requirements. A negative bridge need not be grounded in an independently specified incoherence relation."

If that reply succeeds, the Stage 1 idea risks being merely an optional bilateral redescription of familiar bridge principles.

You must therefore establish, if possible, why a negative bridge from Gamma |= C tacitly imports a substantive coordination principle between consequence and incompatibility, and why that coordination principle is neither conceptually automatic nor normatively innocent.

If you cannot establish this, the project should be killed or substantially reframed.

TARGET OUTPUT

Produce a research memo of roughly 5-10 dense pages containing enough argument to let an expert decide whether there is genuinely a paper here.

The dossier must contain:

1. One exact thesis - not a menu of possible theses.
2. A numbered reconstruction of the central argument.
3. The formal or structural result that does indispensable work.
4. At least two compelling cases in which suppressing the distinction yields a substantively wrong philosophical result, not merely a less perspicuous formulation.
5. A charitable reconstruction of the best target view.
6. A direct answer to the decisive objection above.
7. A serious novelty assessment against the closest literature.
8. The strongest objections you can formulate and whether they can actually be answered.
9. The real philosophical payoff after all qualifications are imposed.
10. A final PROCEED / REFRAME / KILL verdict.

Do not produce article prose. The dossier should be analytic, explicit, and easy to audit.

A. RECONSTRUCT THE TARGET LITERATURE CHARITABLY

Read the relevant primary literature closely before developing the positive argument.

At minimum, reconstruct the relevant positions in:

- MacFarlane on bridge principles and the normativity of logic;
- Steinberger on explosion and logical normativity;
- major subsequent work on positive, negative, wide-scope, reason-based, and related bridge principles;
- Worsnip on coherence and off-limits structures;
- Fogal on positive rational pressure;
- Fogal and Risberg on coherence and incoherence;
- relevant recent work on zetetic versus evaluative norms;
- logical pluralism where normativity is relevant;
- Simonelli on committive consequence, incoherence, Reversal, and defeasible reasoning.

For each major view, record:

1. the logical input;
2. the normative output;
3. whether incompatibility or incoherence is represented independently;
4. whether positive support and negative prohibition are already distinguished;
5. what motivates the bridge principle;
6. which objections depend on a shared logical antecedent.

Do not attack a simplified textbook formulation if the strongest published version already accommodates the distinction.

B. CHOOSE THE STRONGEST DEFENSIBLE THESIS

Compare at least these candidate strengths:

WEAK:

Positive and negative bridge principles can be represented using different bilateral relations.

INTERMEDIATE:

Positive and negative bridge principles are best explained by different logical relations.

STRONG:

A consequence relation by itself is insufficient to determine the normative profile of a logic.

VERY STRONG:

The standard project of deriving norms of reasoning from logical consequence is underdetermined in principle, because distinct inferential practices can share a consequence relation while differing in their incompatibility structures and therefore in their rational norms.

Select ONE thesis that the argument can actually support. Do not choose the strongest wording merely for rhetorical effect.

The preferred result is the strongest thesis that survives the literature and objection tests.

C. ESTABLISH THE FORMAL / STRUCTURAL CORE

State precise definitions for the structures doing the work, including as needed:

- committive consequence;
- signed positions;
- incoherence / incompatibility;
- opposite stances;
- In;
- Out;
- Reversal;
- positive bridge principles;

- negative bridge principles.

Then determine whether there is a genuine independence or underdetermination result.

The ideal result would establish something like:

There are two independently plausible inferential structures that agree on all committive consequences while differing over which combinations of commitments and rejections are incoherent.

If possible, also establish the converse direction: structures can agree on incoherence while differing in committive consequence.

Do not treat mere logical possibility as sufficient. The structures must be independently intelligible and philosophically motivated, not artificial countermodels built only to force formal independence.

D. FIND CASES THAT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE PHILOSOPHICALLY REAL

Find at least two cases in which the distinction changes a substantive verdict in the normativity debate.

Possible areas include:

- explosion;
- defeasible consequence;
- nonmonotonic reasoning;
- logical pluralism;
- inconsistent but nontrivial reasoning;
- rational closure / clutter;
- logical obtuseness;
- structural rationality;
- disagreement over logic.

Do not assume the Stage 1 examples are good enough.

For each case, show:

1. what the standard bridge-principle treatment says;
2. which coordination assumption it relies on;
3. what changes once committive consequence and incoherence are separated;
4. why the new verdict is philosophically preferable or required;
5. why this is not merely terminological.

If no case yields a genuinely different substantive verdict, the project should be killed.

E. DEFEAT THE "ONE CONSEQUENCE RELATION CAN GROUND BOTH" REPLY

This is the most important argumentative task.

Do not merely say that consequence and incoherence are formally independent.

Explain why a theorist who uses Gamma |= C as the antecedent for both positive and negative bridges is making an additional substantive assumption.

Determine whether that assumption is:

- a coordination principle like In, Out, or Reversal;
- a hidden claim about the relationship between positive commitment and negative incompatibility;
- a substantive theory of the logical roles of assertion and rejection;
- or something else.

Then show why the normativity debate cannot simply presuppose that assumption.

Ideally, demonstrate a case where two systems agree on Gamma |= C but rationally differ over whether retaining Gamma while rejecting C is prohibited. If that difference is coherent and independently motivated, logical consequence alone cannot settle the negative norm.

If you cannot make this argument work, issue KILL or REFRAME rather than disguising the weakness.

F. NOVELTY TEST

Conduct a focused novelty search on the exact argument, not merely its vocabulary.

Identify at least the 5-10 closest pieces of work and state for each:

- what it already distinguishes;
- whether it already treats positive and negative norms as grounded in different logical relations;
- whether it already argues for normative underdetermination by consequence;
- whether it already uses something equivalent to the proposed independence result;
- exactly what your argument adds.

Search outside bilateralism and proof-theoretic semantics as well. The same idea may exist under vocabulary such as:

- incompatibility;
- exclusion;
- coherence;
- reasons against;
- rational pressure;
- normative consequence;
- structural rationality;
- defeasible commitment;
- multi-attitude consequence.

Classify the result honestly as:

1. genuinely new philosophical idea;
2. new argument for an existing thesis;
3. new formalization of an existing point;
4. rediscovery.

Only (1), or an unusually strong and transformative instance of (2), warrants PROCEED.

G. HOSTILE OBJECTION PASS

Construct the strongest objections before deciding whether to proceed.

At minimum test:

1. REDESCRIPTION OBJECTION:

The bilateral framework merely redescribes norms already expressible using ordinary consequence.

2. GROUNDING OBJECTION:

Even if incoherence is independently specifiable, why must negative norms be grounded in it rather than in consequence?

3. CLASSICAL COLLAPSE OBJECTION:

If Reversal holds for ordinary classical consequence, why should mainstream theories care about cases where it fails?

4. SPECIAL-CASE OBJECTION:

Are defeasible or paraconsistent cases too exotic to support a general thesis about logical normativity?

5. PRIOR-WORK OBJECTION:

Does Simonelli's own prior distinction already contain the substantive conclusion, making the new paper merely an application?

6. TWO-NORMS-ALREADY-KNOWN OBJECTION:

MacFarlane and later authors already combine positive and negative bridges. What exactly is new beyond saying they have different formal grounds?

7. NORMATIVE-INERTNESS OBJECTION:

Why should formal independence entail normative independence?

8. TERMINOLOGY OBJECTION:

Are "committive consequence" and "incoherence" merely two representations of the same underlying constraint once the attitude vocabulary is fixed?

For each objection, give the strongest response available. If a central objection cannot be answered without begging the question, the verdict should not be PROCEED.

H. IDENTIFY THE REAL PAYOFF

Only after the argument survives should you state what changes.

Separate:

- the central philosophical conclusion;
- direct consequences;
- applications;
- speculative extensions.

Do not inflate applications into independent breakthroughs.

The project clears the top-journal bar only if the central conclusion itself is substantial. The strongest hoped-for payoff is not "bridge principles should be rewritten." It is something closer to:

"A logic's consequence relation does not by itself determine its normative significance."

Determine whether you have actually earned a conclusion of that scale.

I. FINAL VERDICT

End with exactly one of:

PROCEED

The exact thesis is defensible, novel enough, philosophically important, and supported by a central argument that survives the strongest objections.

REFRAME

There is a real paper here, but the Stage 1 thesis or target is wrong. State the replacement thesis precisely and explain why it is stronger.

KILL

The distinction is real but does not support a sufficiently novel or important philosophical conclusion, or a decisive objection survives.

Do not reward sunk costs. Stage 2 is successful if it correctly kills a bad idea.

FINAL DOSSIER FORMAT

Use this exact high-level structure:

I. Exact Thesis

II. Target View

III. Central Argument (numbered premises and conclusion)

IV. Formal / Structural Core

V. Case 1

VI. Case 2

VII. Why the Standard Reply Fails

VIII. Novelty Assessment

IX. Strongest Objections and Replies

X. Actual Philosophical Payoff

XI. Top-Journal Assessment

XII. PROCEED / REFRAME / KILL

Keep the memo analytic rather than rhetorical. No abstract, no introduction, no paper outline, and no finished article prose.