Scope or focus? Normative Focus and The Metaphysics of Normative Relations

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Abstract:
A prolonged debate about the nature of norms has been conducted in terms of the scope of a modal operator. Here I argue that the features of what I call Normative Focus are more fundamental than scope.We shall see limitations of scope contrasted with better analysis in terms of Normative Focus. Some authors address such limitations by extending what they mean by scope. I show that scope is still not doing the work: what does it is their elicitation of our tacit knowledge of Normative Focus. Finally, I show that scope cannot capture Normative Focus because scope allows us to make only one distinction where we need to make three. So we should leave scope to the philosophers of language and turn instead to the ontology of Normative Focus.

There has been a prolonged debate about the nature of norms that has been conducted in terms of speaking of the scope of a modal operator. The purpose of this paper is to argue for a new conceptual model, a model of features that are more fundamental than scope, that I call the features of Normative Focus. We shall see that the expressive resources of scope are insufficient to express accurately these features and for that reason cannot address certain problems. By contrast, my model expresses these features and can be used to address the problems whilst preserving and explaining the insights into normativity developed through the analysis of scope.

I shall be showing limitations of scope and contrasting those limitations with the ease of better description using better concepts. In so doing, whilst I shall be mentioning various elements of the debate over norms and making use of some of the moves therein, I am not here taking a position in it. The point is not to have refuted the use of distinguishing scope, since complex enough semantics and contextual presuppositions can always be wheeled on stage in the attempt to make scope do a particular job that an author wants doing. So we shall not need to address the literature that appeals to such machinery. What matters is what that machinery is attempting to capture.We need to stop talking about the syntax in which we express the norms and stop massaging the semantics and pragmatics until we have a normatively modal conditional to be true-in-our-theory. Instead we should be talking about the nature of the normative relations. In short, we need to abandon the linguistic turn and take the ontological turn. In doing so here, we will see

both why we attempt to express the norms as modal conditionals, what feature of the norms the scope is supposed to capture and why we fall into the problems that we do. Some authors are aware of the problems I shall mention and have in part addressed them by attempting to extend what they mean by scope. They may, for example, want to make claims about symmetries and asymmetries of attitude formation and revision, or about the difference between agent-neutral and agent-relative reasons, and attempt to do

so by giving the official story in terms of the narrowness of the scope of a modal operator, accompanied by hedging intended to avoid the problems that we shall see. Whilst understandable, this is unhelpful and misleading because scope is not doing the work. To the extent they are thought to have got round the problems, it is because the hedging appeals implicitly to our knowledge of the nature of the normative relations involved. Having invoked that knowledge, the failure of scope to articulate it is ignored. To state that knowledge explicitly, however, requires my concepts of the underlying normative features.

At this point it might be wondered whether these concepts have not already been thought about by the use of analogous extension of the concepts of scope, even if somewhat obscurely and without being clearly distinguished from the logical concepts. To some extent that may have happened, and I will later (§ X) suggest what the concordance might be if that is what has happened. However, insofar as that might be right, we shall also see why it could only have been done confusedly. Towards the end (§§ VIII, IX and X) I will show how the features named herein allow us to articulate underlying issues that speaking of scope cannot, for the simple reason that in each case scope allows us to make only one distinction where we need to make two. In fact, I shall give four different examples of this inability, in each of which scope confounds a pair of distinctions out of a total of three different distinctions.[1]

I. NORMS AND THE SCOPE OF A NORMATIVELY MODAL OPERATOR

A standard way to express a rational or moral norm is as a normatively modal conditional. This faces a problem of the detachment of normative consequents from such conditionals. On the one hand, we have cases where we think that the truth of the antecedent suffices to detach a normative consequent. For example,

1. If Fred is starving then you ought to feed him
2. Fred is starving
3. Therefore you ought to feed him.

This seems formally valid. Given only that he is starving, the normativity attaches to or focuses on feeding him and for this reason we are content with the detachment of the normative consequent that is licensed by modus ponens.

On the other hand, we have cases where we do not think that the truth of the antecedent suffices to detach a normative consequent. For example,

4. If you want to kill Auntie for her money then you ought to poison her.
5. You want to kill Auntie for her money.
6. Therefore you ought to poison her.

This too seems formally valid. The first premiss could be a truth of instrumental rationality and the second premiss could be contingently true. Yet we would not want

[1] In case the reader wishes later to track this: Distinction A: ground versus target; distinction B: focused versus unfocused; distinction C: directed versus undirected (all these terms explained later). In the first two examples (in sections VIII and IX) scope confounds A and B and in the second two examples (in sections IX and X) scope confounds B and C.

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thereby to concede the truth of the conclusion. Given only your wicked wish, the normativity does not attach to or focus on poisoning her and for this reason we are not content with the detachment of the -normative consequent by modus ponens

So formally these cases look similar but in the second something seems to be going wrong. The second is a simple example of a wider class of "bootstrapping" problems. A more complex example is Forrester's Gentle Murder Paradox.[2] If you murder Auntie you ought to murder her gently. You are going to murder Auntie. Therefore you ought to murder her gently. Murdering her gently entails murdering her so you ought to murder

her. An example explaining the name of the class arises when trying to state the relation between believing that you ought to do something and what you ought to do. Apparently, on pain of akrasia, if you believe you ought to do something, you ought to do it. But if that is right, merely believing you ought to murder Auntie means you ought to, which is false. You cannot bootstrap something into being what you ought to do merely by believing it to be so.

This difference between the Fred and Auntie cases has been explained in terms of taking 'ought' to be a sentential operator and considering its scope, which may be wide or narrow, namely $O(p{\rightarrow}q)$ or $p{\rightarrow}$ Oq. Scope is a syntactic feature which, together with the standard elimination rule of inference for conditionals, determines the syntactic validity of deriving a normative consequent. Taking the antecedent as a premiss, derivation of a normative consequent is valid for a narrow scope conditional but invalid for a wide scope conditional. So the Fred conditional is narrow scope but the Auntie conditionals are wide. For example, we can resist the Gentle Murder Paradox by pointing out that the first premiss is not true unless taken as using a wide scope 'ought'whereas the validity of the inference to the intermediate conclusion depends on taking it as having narrow scope, hence the argument is unsound or invalid.3

So we can sort out the difference between Fred and Auntie on the basis of a difference in syntactic scope. Or at least, so it appears. I shall be showing that the appearance is misleading, that variance in scope is a problematic way to capture fully the difference in theory of norms, being secondary to the features picked out by the concepts I am introducing. Before we turn to that I am going to use this pair of examples to explain those concepts and features.

II. NORMATIVE FOCUS

The big normative difference between feeding Fred and poisoning Auntie is the difference between being and not being what I call a *normative focus*. It is feeding Fred being a normative focus that makes it true that you ought to feed him. It is because poisoningAuntie is not a normative focus (despite there being some normative involvement in the case) that it is false that you ought to poison her.

A *normative focus*, as I use this phrase, is that to which the normativity applies, the object of the normativity; it is what we say is required, obliged, permitted, and so on.

A *directed relation* is a normative relation that holds between a *target*, a *ground*, 4 and a *background*.5 The metaphor here is of standing on a ground and directing one's attention

2 James William Forrester, "Gentle Murder and the Adverbial Samaritan," *Journal of Philosophy* LXXXI, 4 (1984), pp. 193–97.

3 We can also resist the final step by rejecting $O(p){\wedge}$

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towards the target. In the Fred and Auntie cases, the grounds are Fred starving and wanting to kill Auntie for her money and the targets are feeding Fred and poisoning Auntie. Backgrounds are themselves complex, including persons and circumstances. The latter may have normative significance6 but are not themselves normative. More analysis is needed but it cannot conducted here. For brevity we will usually assume that backgrounds obtain.

An object is *available* to be a normative focus by virtue of being the target of a directed relation.Whether an object *is* a normative focus depends on whether the directed relation of which it is a target is itself *focused*. A *focused relation* is one for which the ground obtaining suffices7 for the target being a normative focus. An *unfocused relation* is one for which the ground obtaining does *not* suffice for the target being a normative focus: rather, it requires *also* that the ground itself be a normative focus.8 The metaphor here is that one's ability to focus on the target is influenced by the nature of the ground on which one

stands.

Consequently I take the terms *target*, *ground*, *focused*, and *normative focus* to be conceptually basic: they can be exemplified but not defined.

There is some complexity that we would ultimately need to resolve in circumscribing exactly what it is to be normative focus. On some accounts it might turn out that being a normative focus and monadic instantiation of a normative property are correlated. This would fit with the temptation to think that in saying 'feeding Fred is required', '…is required' is predicated monadically, whilst in saying 'poisoning Auntie is required', it is predicated only relationally, with mention of relata suppressed. On other accounts, however, the Fred case is one of you standing in the relation of obligation to feeding him, so is not a monadic instantiation. If that were right perhaps the difference is correlated with the contrast between direct and indirect relations to obligation (or perhaps first and higher order relations to obligation). In the Auntie case the relation between you and poisoning her is not the direct relation of obligation but an indirect relation. For example, you stand in a relation such that you would be obliged to poison her were you obliged to want kill her for her money.[9] It may also link to the debate over ought to be versus ought to do. In the former case the normative focus would be you feeding Fred whereas in the latter it would be that feeding Fred is the normative focus for you. I incline to the latter but resolving this level of detail is not essential for our purposes here so we shall leave it at this point.[10]

Why is feeding Fred a normative focus? Because there is a directed relation between his starving and feeding him. His starving is the ground of the relation, the background

[5] Types and tokens will do some work here and when a type has a token I will talk about it obtaining.

[6] I have in mind here, for example, those functioning as enablers/disablers and intensifiers/attenuators for reasons. See Jonathan Dancy, *Practical Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). and Ralf Bader, "Conditions, Modifiers, and Holism," in Errol Lord and Barry Maguire eds., *Weighing Reasons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 27-55.

[7] Strictly, the background must obtain too, but we are assuming that it does.

[8] Whether the ground is itself a normative focus is *not* part of the background. Otherwise we would lose the distinction being drawn here.

[9] Compare with Korsgaard's view of the hypothetical imperative (Christine M. Korsgaard, "The Normativity of Instrumental Reason," in G Cullity and B Gaut eds., *Ethics and Practical Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 215–54.).

[10] For useful work on this detail that has influenced the thought here, see chapter 7 of Hector-Neri Castañeda, *Thinking and Doing: The Philosophical Foundations of Institutions* (Dordecht: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1975). and especially his Definition 1 on page 209. See also Mark Andrew Schroeder, "Ought, Agents, and Actions," *Philosophical Review* CXX, 1 (2011), pp. 1–41.

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includes the circumstances such as that you can do something about it and may also include normative matters such as you bearing a responsibility towards Fred, and the target is feeding Fred. The reason feeding Fred is a normative focus is that the relation in this case is focused, and so the ground obtaining suffices for the target to be a normative focus.

Why is poisoningAuntie not a normative focus despite there being some normative involvement in the case? The normative involvement is captured by there being a directed relation holding between wanting to kill her (ground) and poisoning her (target) but in this case the relation is unfocused and that is why wanting to kill her does not suffice to make poisoning her a normative focus. That would require wanting to kill her to be itself a normative focus which it is not. By contrast, (arguably) wanting to kill a tyrant was a normative focus and for certain people in certain circumstances poisoning him was a

normative focus. This is the pattern for hypothetical imperatives and suggests that the relation between means and ends is also an unfocused directed relation. 11

A similar case is that of non-akrasia. Our intuitions about the case are that believing you ought to feed Fred does not suffice for the truth of that you ought to feed Fred, but that if you also ought to so believe then it does suffice.12 This pattern is also explained by the relation between believing you ought to feed Fred and feeding Fred being a directed but unfocused relation. The ground (you believing you ought to feed Fred) merely obtaining does not suffice for feeding Fred to be a normative focus but the ground also being a normative focus does.

Many norms of rationality and morality are directed relations but many are not. By *undirected relations* I mean those normative relations for which the target being a normative focus may depend on a background but does *not* depend on a ground (in my sense). So undirected relations do not have grounds and the target could be called simply the object of the relation. 13We shall not need to consider whether directed and undirected relations are exhaustive of normative relations. At the risk of getting ahead of ourselves, an example that we will later make use of is the difference between the consistency norm and the believing implications norm. Arguably, consistency is simply required, that is to say, consistency being a normative focus does not depend on a ground, and so the consistency norm is undirected. The other norm is directed with the ground being

11 In both these cases there is, of course the question of *why* the directed relation involved is focused or unfocused. Certainly an answer is needed for a full explanation. Nevertheless, it is a *further* question, part of the general question about why directed relations are focused or unfocused. The purpose of the examples, however, is simply that we know that the ground obtaining suffices for feeding Fred to be a normative focus whereas it does not suffice for poisoning Auntie to be a focus whilst there is yet normative involvement. Distinguishing focused and unfocused relations shows how that can be and that is all we need here. My thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this point.

12 Here I am applying the norm that truth is a necessary condition on what ought to be believed. The thought that evidence, even if misleading, might suffice for what ought to be believed, takes us into some tricky questions about the relation of the ethics of belief and knowledge. I have addressed them elsewhere (see Nicholas Shackel, "Unethical Knowledge, Practicalism and Intellectualism," (MS).) so do not address such complications here. My thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this point.

13 An anonymous referee pointed out that there are interesting questions about supervenience bases for these relations, and for the other relations. Addressing them requires a paper in its own right so they will not be further mentioned here.

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believing a proposition and that it implies another and the target being believing the implied proposition.14

So the topic of *Normative Focus* (capitalised to avoid confusion with the property of being a normative focus) covers *targets* being *normative foci*, how that depends on the *grounds* of *directed relations* through the latter being *focused* or *unfocused* and finally how that may contrast with the *targets* of *undirected relations*.15

III. NORMATIVE FOCUS IS NEW BUT NOT ALIEN

I shall now show why, whilst new, Normative Focus is not an alien imposition on our understanding of normativity. I shall show how our prior understanding in the literature is already latching onto some elements of Normative Focus and then show how Castañeda in particular is foreshadowing some of my concerns.

Following my description of the Fred and Auntie cases in terms of the concepts introduced is not hard. Furthermore, the analysis in terms of directed relations explains *why* distinguishing scope could allow us to correct the problematic inferences. More

importantly, the fact that we knew, quite independently of thinking about modal scope fallacies, that bootstrapping was a fault rather than an important discovery, means our thoughts were driven by knowledge of the directed relations and how they determined whether something was a normative focus. It was so driven despite that knowledge being inadequately expressed by normatively modal conditionals.

Indeed, with the directed relations in mind we can now see in what way speaking of scope was latching onto them. The bootstrapping problem was that cases of genuine normative involvement expressed by normatively modal conditionals seemed to lead to spurious obligations due to the truth of the antecedent formally sufficing to detach the normative consequent. The distinction in syntax that allowed us to track semantically valid inferences, and thereby avoid bootstrapping, was that between wide-scope and narrow-scope normatively modal conditionals. The bootstrapping cases were then diagnosed as instances of a modal scope fallacy. From our point of view, the problematic cases are ones in which we have directed relations. What made wide-scope conditionals true were unfocused directed relations and what made narrow-scope conditionals true were focused directed relations. Conceiving of the wide-scope/narrow-scope distinction was therefore in part conceiving of the difference between unfocused and focused directed relations.

Sometimes what Ross calls the ground of a duty corresponds to what I mean by a ground, such as his example of someone being my benefactor grounding a duty.[16] In many cases it would be natural to call the ground a reason. This works for the first Fred case, where the reason that feeding him is a normative focus is the ground that he is starving. But this does not always work. In the case of not being akratic, the reason that you ought to feed Fred is not that you ought to believe you ought to feed him. Arguably it is the other way round, a reason you ought to so believe is that you ought to feed him: certainly there is another directed relation, this time a theoretical rather than practical norm, for which that you ought to feed him is (at least part of) the ground and you so believing is

[14] A tempting question to raise is whether the Auntie case is really a case of an undirected relation rather than a directed but unfocused relation. Later we will see the difference between these types of normative relations doing work that distinguishing scope cannot, so I won't take this further here. The quick answer is that the Auntie case uses an hypothetical imperative, so is like the believing implications norm rather than the consistency norm. My thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this point.

[15] My thanks to Jon Webber for very helpful comments on this section.

[16] W.D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930).

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the target. And yet that you believe you ought to feed him is the ground of the practical directed relation that is the non-akratic norm and that you ought to feed him is its target. So this is why we needed a more general term than reason.

Part of the difference between grounds and backgrounds is brought into view by Dancy speaking of the reason relation. Reasons are facts that stand in the reason relation to the acts they favour (in my terms, facts are the grounds and acts are targets of the reason relation). Dancy draws attention to the nature of enabling and disabling conditions and to the importance of not confusing them with reasons.[17] In doing this he is acknowledging the existence of the background of the reasons relation and drawing attention to parts of the background (such conditions) that can be confounded with the ground (the reason). More recently, Bader articulates the complexity of this part of the background, noting that Dancy's conditions should also be distinguished from attenuating and intensifying modifiers of the weights of reasons.[18]

Cling has used 'target' as I use it:

An account of reasons… must …give an account of the relationship that

must obtain between …reasons and their specific targets….An account…must explain the connection between a given mental state and a specific target that would make that state a…reason for that target….What makes mental states reasons for their targets are norms that identify beliefs that it is permissible to hold in the light of mental states with the specified characteristics. A norm specifies both the required relationship between reasons and their targets and the conditions required for mental states to have the standing to be the kinds of reasons governed by that norm.[19]

Cling is speaking of theoretical norms whose grounds are reasons, whose backgrounds include the mentioned conditions of standing and is using 'target' in my sense. (For those who hold reasons to be facts rather than mental states, this would be another case in which grounds were not reasons.)

Turning to Castañeda, we find a project closer to mine, namely, someone concerned about formal normative phenomena that do not fit well with the standard logic of modal operators and which yet are attempted to be analysed in terms of the latter. Castañeda introduced a distinction between what is practically considered versus what is considered as a circumstance[20] which he later called deontic focus and deontic circumstance.[21] Castañeda showed that his distinction was marked syntactically by "the infinitiveindicative duality in the scope of deontic prefixes" ,[22] where the infinitive marks "an action deontically considered as the focus of obligatoriness"[23] and the indicative marks

[17] Dancy, "Practical Reality," *op cit.*

[18] Bader, "Conditions, Modifiers, and Holism," *op cit.*

[19] Andrew D Cling, "Reasons Require Reasons," in John Turri and Peter D. Klein eds., *Ad Infinitum : New Essays on Epistemological Infinitism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 55-74.

[20] Castañeda, "Thinking and Doing," *op cit.*, at pp.209−10.

[21] Hector-Neri Castañeda, "Moral Obligation, Circumstances, and Deontic Foci (a Rejoinder to Fred Feldman)," *Philosophical Studies* LVII, 2 (1989), pp. 157-74., at p. 14.

[22] Hector-Neri Castañeda, "The Paradoxes of Deontic Logic: The Simplest Solution to All of Them in One Fell Swoop," in Risto Hilpinen ed. *New Studies in Deontic Logic: Norms, Actions, and the Foundations of Ethics* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1981), pp. 37–85., at p. 41.

[23] Ibid., at p. 42.

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deontic circumstance. Finally he showed how attending to the marking of the distinction in this way solved well known deontic paradoxes .[24]

Deontic circumstances are the kind of thing I call grounds. In its first outing, deontic focus corresponds to what I call a target but later it melds that with what I call being a normative focus. Here is Castañeda discussing Chisholm's contrary to duty paradox:

(OF)(1) If x does A, then x ought to do B….thus doing B is the *focus* of obligatoriness…; doing A functions…as a mere *circumstance* functioning as a sufficient condition for doing B .[25]

Examination of his analytical use of his concepts allows us to get closer.

In fact, there seems to be no difference in normative content between Chisholm's [wide-scope conditional] and (OF)(1). If these are equivalent, and we recognize the logical difference between deontic circumstances, which can move out of the scope of deontic operators, and deontic foci, which are bound to stay within the scope of deontic operators and we understand [Feldman's principle] as building on the logical implications between deontic foci, then we cannot apply [Feldman's principle to make the deontic circumstance also a deontic focus] . This is a simple solution of the problem;[26]

Chisholm's wide scope conditional is supposed to express the normative relation in play. Castañeda's first point is a version of my claim (argued below) that wide versus narrowscope is not capturing what we need to distinguish.

In the idea of deontic circumstances moving out of scope while deontic foci are bound to stay within scope I think we see a sensitivity to accompanied by a partial confounding of my distinctions. In speaking of a deontic circumstance being able to "move" out of scope Castañeda is mixing metaphysics and syntax, in which noting a syntactic fact adverts to something about the role of a deontic circumstance in the normative relation in play. This may seem to be about the difference between focused and unfocused directed relations but I think it is more about a distinctive feature of being a ground. A deontic focus being bound to stay within scope is in part a matter of it *being* a normative focus but also of *being and remaining available* to be a normative focus in virtue of the directed relation in play.Whereas that availability is *not* had by the deontic circumstance, at least so far as the directed relation in play is concerned, and this is what leaves it free to "move" out of scope. That distinction in availability is for me part of what makes the difference between being a target and being a ground. It is this difference that does the work for him and then has implications for how the logic must be formulated. Because deontic circumstances (grounds) are not deontic foci (targets), applying to deontic circumstances the formal deontic logical principles based on implications between deontic foci (normative foci)27 is illicit because deontic circumstances are not available to become a normative foci. Once we rule this out the paradox is blocked. So here I see Castañeda using concepts closely related to those of Normative Focus (as indicated) to better

24 Ibid., at p. 51ff. and Castañeda, "Moral Obligation, Circumstances, and Deontic Foci " *op.cit.*, at p. 18ff.

25 Hector-Neri Castañeda, "Paradoxes of Moral Reparation: Deontic Foci Vs. Circumstances," *Philosophical Studies* LVII, 1 (1989), pp. 1-21., at pp. 8−9.

26 Ibid., at p. 9.

27 This bracket and the last one show how deontic focus does not clearly distinguish being a target and being a normative focus.

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describe and thereby solve a deontic paradox that he argues distinguishing scope does not solve.

IV. NORMATIVE NECESSITY SOMETIMES POORLY EXPRESSED BY OPERATORS

Before I get to the main arguments I want to start with an argument that sometimes normative necessity is poorly expressed by natural language modal operators and yet we recognise what is being a normative focus for all that.

Consider, for example, the Holmesian inference: once we have eliminated the impossible, "whatever remains, however improbable, *must* be the truth".28 The logic of this is based on some sense of necessity, perhaps natural necessity, under which it is not possible for these events to occur and for Fred not to be the murderer (say), which is wide scope. But we conclude that Fred *must* be the murderer and we must so conclude.What is the force of this 'must'? On the one hand, we do not think it is a metaphysically or naturally necessary truth that Fred is the murderer. But on the other hand, the events have occurred, they cannot be undone, and because of that the necessity is focused on Fred's guilt. Now perhaps there is a notion of necessity under which, despite the apparent modal fallacy, we can get that logically regimented as:

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here.32 This argument is suggestive rather than conclusive. In the sections that follow we will examine much stronger arguments.

V. COUNTEREXAMPLE TREADMILL

We now turn to looking at the inadequacies of expressing norms by using normatively

modal conditionals of various scopes and the correlate virtues of Normative Focus. My general point shall be that we see where conditionals and scope let us down because of our sensitivity to the features of Normative Focus, a sensitivity that is only partially articulable in terms of scope. That sensitivity is why we have extended what we think scope is about and also informed our tinkering with the semantics and pragmatics in attempting to fix the inadequacies of normatively modal conditionals. All of this is more clearly articulated by Normative Focus. Finally this will lead us to the examples of too many distinctions for scope to articulate. We start with the counterexample treadmill.

A while ago philosophers would routinely express norms of rationality like this

Instrumental norm: if you want an end then you ought to take the means

Believing implications norm: if you believe p and believe p implies q you ought to believe q.

Non-akrasia norm: if you believe you ought to X then you ought to X

Before looking at the treadmill we should register the naturalness of these expressions and note that no one objected to them for a long time because they clearly get something right. The treadmill does not arise from the problem of bootstrapping (although sometimes scope can help with the treadmill) but from the ease with which it was possible to show the antecedents were insufficient and the consequents were misdirected. Starting with the instrumental norm: You may want an end but it is going be attained anyway, so it would be wasteful for you to take the means. We have the question of necessary means, sufficient means and quality of means. It may be thought that the act itself, as opposed to the intention to act, is not within rational control. We meet further complications where the means interacts peculiarly with the end, such as the Toxin Paradox .[33] There is the point that perhaps you neither know nor believe what the means are, or when entertaining what the means are find doubts arising about the end; on the other hand, there is the question of whether there is any requirement to take what is only falsely believed to be the means. Turning to believing implications, we are not required to believe all the implications of our beliefs and certainly not without at least bringing them to mind.[34] Even if we bring them to mind, entertaining p and p implies q might lead you to wonder about the basis on which you believe them and them being suspended (this is an example where scope can help). If whether q does not matter the antecedent is insufficient and yet there is no requirement to get rid of the antecedent beliefs (so scope cannot help here). Realising that q followed might lead you to doubt p. All of these possibilities make it easy to construct counterexamples. For similar points about the non-akrasia norm, see Broome [35] and also see his attack[36] on Kolodny's version[37] of the believing implications norm.

[32] For an examination of the epistemology, see Alexander Bird, "Abductive Knowledge and Holmesian Inference," in Tamar Szabo Gendler and John Hawthorne eds., *Oxford Studies in Epistemology* (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 1-31.

[33] G Kavka, "The Toxin Puzzle," *Analysis* XL (1983), pp. 33-36.

[34] Beliefs include those that are occurent and dispositional. A belief brought to mind or entertained was dispositional but is now occurent.

[35] John Broome, *Rationality through Reasoning* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). Chapter 9.

[36] John Broome, "Wide or Narrow Scope?," *Mind* CXVI, 462 (2007), pp. 359-70.

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Fixing the treadmill can result in needing something like the following to express the norms:

Generalized Instrumental Requirement. Rationality requires of N that, if

(1) *N* intends at *t* that *e*, and if

(2) *N* believes at *t* that, if none of m or *n* or *p* or… were so, because of that *e* would not be so, and if

(3) *N* believes at t that, if she herself were not then to intend *m*, because of

that *m* would not be so, and if she herself were not then to intend *n*, because
of that *n* would not be so, and if she herself were not then to intend *p* ,
because of that *p* would not be so, …, then
(4) *N* intends at t that *m*, or intends at t that *n*, or intends at *t* that *p*, or…[38]
And even this is still on the treadmill: suppose you have but do not entertain any meansend beliefs, or have contradictory means-end beliefs, or find yourself prompted to acquire further evidence without losing your means-end beliefs. Even if these are irrationalities, they are not instrumental irrationalities and yet this requirement dubs them so.
Now I am not denying that Broome (for example) is expressing important facts about instrumental rationality when attempting to countenance the counterexamples. I think, however, there is a more accurate way to do it: to distinguish ground, background and target of the norms (and to countenance in terms of focused and unfocused directed relations what he addresses in terms of scope—but we will come to that) . Even though a full statement of the normative relation would have to state the background, we are responsive in our reasoning to the norms *when the background obtains* (knowledge of which may remain entirely tacit!) and consequently the background is presupposed when thinking about norms. So the reason we expressed the norms with the old simplicity is that, when reasoning, what matters is the relation between ground and target. It is our sensitivity to the ground requiring the target that we have in mind and so that is what we state. The antecedents express the grounds and the consequents express the targets.
The presupposed background is complex and so by reaching into it and considering cases in which various parts of the background do not obtain we have an endless supply of counterexamples to the normative conditionals. The analysis in terms of directed relations, however, suggests that attempts to fix the counterexamples by packing the background into the antecedent amounts to confounding ground and background. All conjuncts of an antecedent are as such equal. Furthermore, our knowledge of backgrounds being tacit may be because backgrounds are uncodifiable. Remove that confound and it is no longer clear there is anything to fix. Suitably complex semantic and pragmatic machinery is available[39] to deal with the presupposition and then the original conditionals will come out true again. So if we retreat from the idea that the norms *are* or are *expressed by* normatively modal conditionals and accept the analysis in terms of Normative Focus, we can get off the treadmill because we know the conditionals are only supposed to express a part (the relation of ground and target) rather than the whole of the norm.

[37] Niko Kolodny, "Why Be Rational?," *Mind* CXIV, 455 (2005), pp. 509-63.
[38] Broome, "Rationality through Reasoning," *op cit.*, p. 170
[39] see, for example, Alex Silk, "Why 'Ought' Detaches: Or, Why You Ought to Get with My Friends (If You Want to Be My Lover)," *Philosophers' Imprint* XIV, 7 (2014).

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VI. SCOPE NOT SUFFICIENT FOR DISTINGUISHING THEORIES OF RATIONALITY

A difference in theories of rationality has been thought to be expressible in terms of whether certain rational requirements are wide or narrow-scope modal conditionals .[40] Broome[41] has recently shown that under his definition of a possible world semantics for 'rational requirement', defining being totally *X*-scope rational as consistency with all *X*scope rational requirements, and formulating rational requirements in terms of wide or narrow-scope, leads to the identity of the proposition that someone is totally wide-scope rational with the proposition that someone is totally narrow-scope rational.[42] So Broome's challenge is that, supposing wide or narrow-scope modal conditionals express different requirements, the difference in scope of requirement does not result in a difference in evaluation of the person as being totally rational or not. That is a significant blow to the thought that scope can express the intended difference in theory of rationality, a

"remarkable turn of events",[43] as Kolodny notes .

Despite showing that scope cannot distinguish theories of total rationality, Broome still thinks that scope can articulate a difference in theory at the level of individual rational requirements.

In the code sense [of 'rationality', whilst] the wide-scope and narrow-scope formulations agree about the property of [total] rationality, …they disagree in other ways.[44]

For example, he thinks that a difference in theory of rationality between whether, when you believe you ought, you can rationally fail to do it by giving up your belief, can be captured by disagreeing over the scope of the ought in "if you believe you ought to *X* then you ought to *X*".[45] I shall now show that this is not true. The difference in scope fails to express the disagreement over individual normative constraint at issue.

Consider the relations between believing p, believing $p{\rightarrow}q$ and believing q.[46] Suppose that you believe p, believe $p{\rightarrow}q$ but have no belief concerning q. We stipulate that you are in a circumstance in which having complete beliefs about these three propositions is required. There are eight options for completion and a transition from believing only p and $p{\rightarrow}q$ to believing one of those eight is required. Only four of the eight are consistent:[47]

1. believing p, believing $p{\rightarrow}q$ and believing q;

2. believing p, believing $\neg(p{\rightarrow}q)$ and believing $\neg q$;

3. believing $\neg p$, believing $p{\rightarrow}q$ and believing q;

[40] see, for example, S Shpall, "Wide and Narrow Scope," *Philosophical Studies* 163 (2013), pp. 717-36; Jonathan Way, "Defending the Wide-Scope Approach to Instrumental Reason," *Philosophical Studies* CXLVII (2010), pp. 213-33; Kolodny, "Why Be Rational?," *op.cit*; Simon Rippon, "In Defense of the Wide-Scope Instrumental Principle ", *Journal of Ethics & Social Philosophy* V, 2 (2011); Mark Andrew Schroeder, "The Scope of Instrumental Reason," *Philosophical Perspectives* XVIII, 1 (2004), pp. 337-64.

[41] John Broome, "Requirements," in Toni Rrnnow-Rasmussen, et al. eds., *Homage to Wlodek Rabinowicz* (Electronicfestschrift, 2007); Broome, "Wide or Narrow Scope?," *op.cit.*
[42] That is to say, for all agents: {worlds at which a given agent is totally narrow-scope rational} = {worlds at which that given agent is totally wide-scope rational}

[43] Niko Kolodny, "State or Process Requirements?," *Mind* CXVI, 462 (2007), pp. 371-85., at p. 375.

[44] Broome, "Wide or Narrow Scope?," *op.cit.*, p. 364

[45] At the end of the paper he also raises the possibility that wide and narrow scope accounts might be theories of "a different sub-sense of 'rationality requires'" ibid., p. 368.

[46] We assume p and q are logically independent.

[47] For simplicity I'm using the material conditional.

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4. believing $\neg p$, believing $(p{\rightarrow}q)$ and believing $\neg q$.

Formulating the rational requirement that applies in terms of narrow-scope was supposed to capture (for those who think it true) that rationality requires the transition to the first rather than to any of the others. Those concerned about the dangers of bootstrapping, for example, who hold that unjustified belief in p and $p{\rightarrow}q$ should not suffice for a requirement to believe q, would instead formulate the requirement in terms of wide-scope. So let us consider the standard wide and narrow scope versions of what believing p and believing $p{\rightarrow}q$ require.

W: Required: if you believe p, believe $p{\rightarrow}q$ then you believe q.

N: If you believe p, believe $p{\rightarrow}q$ then required: you believe q

Amistake here is to think that if the conditional plays the correct role in an inference then

it captures the nature of the norm intended by its respective proponents. Playing that correct role does not suffice. To capture the nature of the norm intended needs both that what is required is compatible with the conditional and that what is ruled out is incompatible with it (whereas the inferential role requires only the first).

W is compatible with all four consistent belief states because consistency is what *W* demands. 1 is compatible with *N* — but so are 2, 3 and 4, simply because in these states you do not satisfy the antecedent of *N*. So *N* does not express a more confining constraint. Consequently, the notion of narrow-scope alone simply does not capture the claimed asymmetry that narrow-scopers were after in opposition to wide-scopers: that believing *p* and *p→q* requires *believing q*, rather than anything else. So neither of the standard wide and narrow scope versions of what believing *p* and believing *p→q* require rule out any of the four consistent options.

Narrow-scopers may at this point appeal to a notion of violation, or appeal to the distinction between conforming to and escaping a requirement. This does not help, if we keep clearly before our mind that *N* is supposed to *be* or *fully express* the *rational requirement itself.*

to take the requirements that will be my main concern…we have: ….
(Closure-N) If you believe that p and believe that if p then q, then rationality requires that you believe q. By contrast, theWide-Scope view….the above requirements become: ….(Closure-W) Rationality requires that [if you believe that p and believe that if p then q, then you believe that q].[48] .[49]

Narrow-scopers may want to say that moving to 4 violates *N* despite 4 being *N*compliant,[50] but this is based in confusing playing the correct inferential role with capturing the norm. It will not make 4 a violation of *N* just because reasoning with *N* leads to the correct conclusion that believing *q* is required. Yes, but that is merely repeating what is presupposed by the narrow-scoper, that believing *p* and *p→q* requires believing *q*, and of course, *N* trivially plays the correct inferential role for that. But *N* fails to *impose* believing *q*. To impose it, it would need to exclude worlds at which I change the

[48] Jonathan Way, "The Symmetry of Rational Requirements," *Philosophical Studies* CLV, 2 (2011), pp. 227-39., at p. 228

[49] See also Shpall, "Wide and Narrow Scope," *op.cit*; Schroeder, "The Scope of Instrumental Reason," *op.cit*; Kolodny, "Why Be Rational?," *op.cit*; Rippon, "In Defense of the Wide-Scope Instrumental Principle " *op.cit*; John Brunero, "Instrumental Rationality, Symmetry and Scope," *Philosophical Studies* CLVII, 1 (2012), pp. 125-40; John Brunero, "The Scope of Rational Requirements," *The Philosophical Quarterly* LX, 238 (2010), pp. 28-49.

[50] See Kolodny, "State or Process Requirements?," *op.cit.*, discussed further below.

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antecedent beliefs, but it does not do that simply because all such worlds are compatible with the truth of N.[51] So when *N* is supposed to *be* or *fully express* the *rational requirement itself*, the only sense to be made of violating *N* is to be incompatible with *N* and 4 does not violate *N* in that sense.

Similarly, narrow-scopers may want to say that 4 is escaping *N* whereas 1 is conforming.[52] But again, the question arises of what sense is to be made of this distinction when *N* is supposed to be or fully express the rational requirement itself. Repeating the presupposition and the trivial capacity of *N* to get the inferential role right will not help here anymore than in the previous case. You cannot make compatibility do the double duty required.

So however successful these appeals to violation or escape are at conveying a difference in theory, their success has nothing to do with *N* being or fully expressing the norm. The appeals only gain their cogency by eliciting knowledge of the norm that goes

beyond what N is or can express. I suggest that it is knowledge of the directed relation in play and a view on whether that relation is focused or not, namely, that it is focused. If it is a focused normative relation then believing q is the normative focus (because the ground obtains). That giving up belief in p is a violation or escape of the requirement is based in what it is for something to be a normative focus: the normativity being focused on *it* means that the required change is to *fit it* rather than to get out of the relation as a result of which it is the normative focus.[53]

It might be thought there is a danger of the directed relation falling into the problems that N falls into: that giving up the ground of believing p, for example, would mean the relation no longer held. First, that would be a violation in the sense just explained, a sense not explainable in terms of N alone. Moreover, the case is more complex than the case of compatibility with the conditional. We'd have to look further into the details of the relation to know whether, once the ground had obtained, that token of the ground ceasing to obtain meant the relation no longer held.[54] Furthermore, the narrow-scoper is trying to capture the idea that the rational requirement imposes the target and does not permit giving up the ground in order to evade that imposition, this last being what they think the wide-scoper gets wrong. But in knowing this, they know important facts about the nature of the directed relation in question, facts that constitute the directed relation not falling into the problem that N falls into. Finally, even if the relation no longer held that does not mean that believing q would cease to be a normative focus. Once something is a normative focus it is a further and often very complex normative matter as to what could occur that would make it cease to be a normative focus. Giving up part of the ground that made it a normative focus in the first place may be completely irrelevant. So long as believing q is a normative focus it remains true that you ought to believe q. By contrast, if the norm were or were fully expressed by N, it would cease to be true as soon as and because you gave up believing p.

Now the kind of considerations of the last two paragraphs are what the narrow-scopers are appealing to in wanting to distinguish violation from compliance and escaping from conforming. So whilst narrow-scopers can hedge their way round the problems with N by

[51] Standard semantics for if A then ought B include all worlds at which A&B and all not A worlds.
[52] For example,. Errol Lord, "The Real Symmetry Problem(S) for Wide-Scope Accounts of Rationality," *Philosophical Studies* CLXX, 3 (2014), pp. 443-64., at p. 458.
[53] On this view, N is made true by the directed relation in play and that is why it gets the inferential role right
[54] In part, this takes us into the issues that Kolodny raised in distinguishing state and process requirements (Kolodny, "State or Process Requirements?," *op.cit.*), see more below.

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making such appeals, doing so amounts to conceding that the mere truth of the modal conditional fails to capture what is going on. In doing so they must abandon their official story that N (or something very like it) is or expresses the norm. In helping themselves to these hedges narrow-scopers are making an implicit commitment to directed relations and the target being a normative focus.

Having this implicit knowledge of the directed relation in mind is important, because it is why the point I have made about these conditionals has been neglected. The dialectic between wide-scopers and narrow-scopers grew, to some extent, out of the problem of boot-strapping, a problem of invalid inference. Solving that by wide-scope conditionals blocks the inferences that narrow-scopers are committed to being valid. So the dialectic was attending to inference, to which the question of the scope of conditionals is directly responsive, and it became routine to express the requirement as conditionals without examining exactly what constraint the conditional itself placed. The normative constraint in mind, however, is given by the directed relation on which the truth value of the

conditional depends.

So we have seen that scope with a standard modal semantics[55] cannot distinguish these differences in theory of rationality whilst the concept of normative focus can. The narrow scopers think that the normative relation has believing p and $p{\rightarrow}q$ as ground, believing q as target, and that it is a focused relation. The wide-scopers differ in thinking the relation to be un-focused.[56]

It is now evident that this difference between a normative relation being focused and unfocused captures the normative difference Kolodny intends between process requirements and state requirements when discussing the failure of scope that Broome showed.

it seemed to me that there was an important difference between narrow and wide scope, because first, there is an important difference when the relevant requirements are process requirements and second, I was implicitly taking the relevant requirements to be process requirements. I was implicitly asking: 'If you believe at t that p, [and q follows obviously] what are you rationally required to do *going forward from t*?' The narrow-scope interpretation says that you are rationally required to believe that q going forward .[57]

Now we know that narrow-scope conditionals do not say this, we can see that what Kolodny means is that believing q is the normative focus and therefore that the relevant rational requirement is a focused normative relation.

Finally, it is true that heroic epicycles can always be added to a failing theory. See, for example, my paper[58] for one that can get round *some* of the problems we have seen; it did so, however, by using knowledge of the directed relation to determine the accessibility relation across worlds. One might go further and try introducing a special semantics of what it is to "obey" a conditional that departs from the devices of standard modal semantics.[59] One would attempt to lodge obeying in the right way within the semantics of normatively modal conditionals. So, yes, we can perhaps massage and gerrymander the

[55] By which I mean the general approach of giving a semantics of modality in terms of truth conditions at accessible worlds rather than any particular version applied to normative modality.
[56] In section IX below we will see why they won't want to think the relation to be undirected.
[57] Kolodny, "State or Process Requirements?," *op.cit.*, p. 375.
[58] Nicholas Shackel, "The Normativity of Rationality," *Teorema* XXXIV, 2 (2015), pp. 167-89.
[59] I owe this suggestion to an anonymous referee.

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semantics to make conditionals get the right answer somehow some of the time.[60] Nevertheless, the very practice and necessity of doing so proves my point.

The application of scope based on standard modal semantics shows normatively modal conditionals failing to be or fully express the norms. That on its own shows that whatever is sought to be captured by scope is not in any straightforward sense a matter of the logical form of normatively modal conditionals.[61] This last explains why the debate in those terms became both moribund and analogically extended.[62] Gerrymandering the semantics in the ways discussed for the sake of rescuing modal conditionals from their failures does not work so far as our concerns run. Insofar as it succeeds, it amounts to disguising the role of directed relations by burying them in the semantics. And that simply proves that the logical distinction of scope is entirely secondary to what is really doing the work in these norms, the directed relations.

VII. SCOPE DOES NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF BOOTSTRAPPING

Greenspan and (more recently) Dancy have shown that there are cases in which wide scope does not save us from the very problem it is supposed to save us from: the

bootstrapping problem. In the Auntie case above, the normative conditional seemed to allow us to "bootstrap" spurious normativity just on the basis of my wicked wish. It looks as if reading the conditional as wide-scope gets us out of the problem— but suppose my wicked wish is "unalterable", as Greenspan puts it. Then

It will follow…that I ought to [poison Auntie]; and our ought can be shown
to be detachable without appeal to any deontic statements besides
'$O(p \supset q)$'.[63]

Dancy considers the subtle way the problem arises when we consider "a rational requirement that one does what one believes one has most reason to do".[64] Read as widescope conditional this does not immediately bootstrap us into having most reason to do something just because we think we do. However, assuming that "if we are rationally required to Φ we have a conclusive reason to Φ"[65] and thinking about what that reason could be leads Dancy to conclude that

Believing that one has most reason to Φ is a conclusive reason for either
ceasing to believe this or Φ‐ing .[66]

And now we are in trouble:

what is the difference between a complex reason either to ensure that this
reason no longer obtains or to Φ on the one hand, and a simple reason to Φ
on the other? In either case, so long as the reason continues to obtain, one
should Φ. So the belief that we have most reason to Φ makes itself true
again, being a conclusive reason to Φ. So despite the temporary respite
offered by reading the relevant requirement as wide-scope, eventually we

[60] Later, in sections VIII, IX and X, I will show why even a gerrymandered semantics of normatively modal conditionals cannot capture the features of Normative Focus.

[61] That is to say, insofar as it is supposed to be a purely logical feature shared with other modalities.

[62] More on this last in section X.

[63] P. S. Greenspan, "Conditional Oughts and Hypothetical Imperatives," *Journal of Philosophy* LXXII, 10 (1975), pp. 259-76., at p. 265

[64] "Reasons and Rationality," *Spheres of Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 93-112., at p. 104

[65] Ibid., p. 104

[66] Ibid., p. 105

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come back to the same point: believing that one has most reason to Φ is (or gives one) conclusive reason to Φ. This is the bootstrapping point again.[67] [68]

So narrow-scope gets into immediate difficulty over bootstrapping but on further analysis so does wide-scope. But what exactly is the difficulty? It can be stated simply and directly if we deploy the concepts of Normative Focus. The relevant directed relations are unfocused so any attempt to express those relations which permits the derivation of normativity focused on the target given only the ground cannot be right. The fact that both narrow-scope and wide-scope attempts at expressing the relation fall into this difficulty show that the expressive resources of scope are insufficient to express accurately the normative relation between ground and target when that relation is unfocused.

Of course, I am not suggesting that there is no further to go in the controversy over the kind of argument Greenspan and Dancy have put forward.[69] For example, Castañeda's work on Chisholm's paradox bears here. He suggests that the problem originates in the operator of standard deontic logic being a "distortion…[of] our ordinary-language canonical ought operator"[70] and may be resolvable by renouncing the distortion. He also explicitly discusses Greenspan's ideas. But in explaining the distortion he is deploying his

concept of deontic focus[71] and what he has to say therefore, even if it might resist Greenspan and Dancy's argument, is grist to my mill.

My purposes are served simply by the fact that Greenspan and Dancy's arguments have a cogency based in assuming the role of normativity can be captured in terms of a standard deontic logical operator. Consequently fixing the problem of wide-scope conditionals still allowing bootstrapping, if it can be done, will be done by importing our knowledge of directed relations into our specification of the semantics. Indeed, I have offered the resources to do just that in a paper[72] when I distinguish morally proper worlds from fallen worlds. As remarked above, however, such possibilities are grist to my mill since the *way* they work proves that scope is secondary to Normative Focus.

VIII. NORMATIVE FLOW LEFT OUT BY SCOPE

If taken as the expression of the relevant norms of rationality, there is something that wide-scope modal conditionals do not capture. Suppose we take the norm that akrasia contravenes to be:

O(believe you ought to $\Phi \rightarrow$ you Φ).

This can be satisfied by either Φ-ing or giving up your belief. Dancy remarks that

there is an asymmetry involved…which cannot be captured in disjunctive terms….There is…a sort of normative flow from believing as he did to acting in some other way and I do not think that we have managed to capture it.[73]

[67] Ibid., p. 105

[68] One may contend whether Dancy needs the reason to be unalterable for this argument to go through, in which case it is a version of Greenspan's. I owe this point to an anonymous referee.

[69] For more discussion see Kieran Setiya, "Cognitivism About Instrumental Reason," *Ethics* CXVII, 4 (2007), pp. 649-73., at pp. 656-7 and Broome, "Rationality through Reasoning," *op cit.*, pp. 125-6 among others.

[70] Hector-Neri Castañeda, "Ought, Time, and the Deontic Paradoxes," *Journal of Philosophy* LXXIV, 12 (1977), pp. 775-91.at p. 778

[71] Not with that word, since he hadn't introduced it yet.

[72] Shackel, "The Normativity of Rationality," *op.cit.*

[73] "Reasons and Rationality," *op cit.*, p. 103-4

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Schroeder also points out a problem with the disjunctive satisfaction condition: that "changing your beliefs about what you ought to do simply in order to avoid doing it is *not* acceptable"[74] : indeed, it is the vice of rationalization.

At first this would seem to be a point to be directed in favour of narrow-scope accounts. In fact, Schroeder advances it precisely to serve that end. However, this problem applies also to the alternative narrow-scope modal conditionals:

believe you ought to $\Phi \rightarrow$ you ought to Φ.

This too can be met by giving up your belief.[75]

So neither conditional captures what Dancy means by 'normative flow'. What Dancy is alluding too has, I think, been mentioned by others, for example, see Broome's remark " '*p* reasons *q*' is '*p→Rq*' with *determination added*, from left to right" .[76] More widely, normative flow may in part distinguish the deontic from the evaluative in normativity; if that is right, then the normative feature of interest to Kolodny in contrasting process requirements with state requirements is in part about normative flow .[77] Not much has been made of normative flow, however, and I think part of the reason for this are the limitations in the expressive power of scope that we have seen above. These limitations means that analysis in terms of scope leaves normative flow out.

To make something of normative flow requires articulating the difference between

being a ground and a target and the difference between being a focused or unfocused directed relation. Dancy's notion of *normative flow* and Broome's notion of *determination added* are in part about the first difference and in part about the second. The difference between ground and target gives the direction of normative flow or determination. The difference between being focused or unfocused is about how that flow or determination operates, about the conditions under which it flows or determines. So the distinct features of normative flow, having a direction and operating in different ways, are expressed in terms of ground and target, and the focus of directed relations, respectively. Here we have two different distinctions and so scope, which is a single distinction, cannot countenance this.We shall now see this failure recurring more widely.

IX. TWO DISTINCTIONS CANNOT BE COUNTENANCED BY ONE

At this point we have in view something more fine grained than can be expressed in terms of scope and can now give perhaps the strongest argument in favour of the concepts of Normative Focus. At the same time we can see the root of the difficulties for scope. Scope is being used to attempt to articulate two distinct features of normative relations: the difference between being a ground and a target of a directed relation and the difference between being a focused and unfocused directed relation. Attempting to articulate them by a single distinction of scope means they get elided. Note also that this point is not confined to scope as a matter of the syntax of modal conditionals. Even if people have extended what they mean by scope, it is still a single distinction being used where we need two. So for example, the discussion of wide-scope versus narrow-scope based on noting the "asymmetry in the rationality of the different ways one can escape

74 "The Scope of Instrumental Reason," *op.cit.*, p. 349

75 Standard semantics. Again, the failure to notice this is evidence of the narrow-scoper having something further in mind in addition to the narrow-scope conditional, namely, a thought about the relevant directed relation being focused.

76 John Broome, "Normative Requirements," in J Dancy ed. *Normativity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 78-99., at p. 80, his emphasis.

77 Kolodny, "State or Process Requirements?," *op.cit.*, pp. 371-2

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from a state of means-end incoherence"78 has also elided two distinctions into one. For there are in these issues two asymmetries to consider, the asymmetry between ground and target and the asymmetry of focused relations versus the symmetry of unfocused relations. Narrow-scope accounts are trying to capture the significance of being the target of a normative relation: the instrumental principle is directed at *taking the means*, the believing implications requirement is directed at *believing the consequent*, the avoidance of akrasia principle is directed at *doing what you believe you ought*. Narrow-scope accounts get the targets properly in view at the cost of bootstrapping the target as a normative focus. They bear this cost just because on the narrow-scope account, having the target expressed *as such* is done by placing the sentential normative operator in the consequent and so doing automatically makes the target a normative focus when the ground obtains.

Wide-scope accounts apparently avoid this by dissociating the sentential normative operator from the target. Unfortunately they do this at the cost of losing track of the target *as such*. For example, the difference between the general requirement of consistency of belief and the believing implications requirement is that the latter has believing the consequent as target, on the ground of believing the antecedent and the conditional. Yet the wide-scope conditional, supposedly capturing the believing implications requirement, requires consistency alone and thereby fails to pick out the consequent as target.Worse, as a result the supposed disagreement in theory with the narrow-scoper is lost since the widescoper

has no believing implications requirement, properly so called, but merely a special case of a general consistency requirement, on which both agree anyway.

Worse still, there exists a further distinction between the general requirement of consistency and the believing implications requirement that is confounded by the widescope formulation. Whilst the latter is a directed relation the former (arguably) is not. Consistency is always a normative focus, so does not depend on a ground, and so the requirement of consistency is an undirected relation.

Both sides can avoid these problems by making use of the concepts of Normative Focus. The wide-scoper can include in their theory the difference between a general requirement of consistency and the believing implications requirement by distinguishing ground and target and directed and undirected relations. They can maintain their disagreement with the narrow-scoper over the believing implications requirement by holding it to be an unfocused directed relation, whilst the narrow-scoper holds it to be a focused directed relation. In doing all this we have entirely left behind the scope of a modal operator and any sense in referring to the respective theories as wide versus narrow-scope.

X. ANALOGOUS EXTENSION OF SCOPE

In 2007 Broome[79] showed the identity of the proposition that someone is totally widescope rational and the proposition that someone is totally narrow-scope rational. It has been evident since then that scope has a problem in capturing the philosophical issue it has been used to analyse. Yet despite this, the official story and much of the argumentation have continued to be given in precisely these terms, that is to say, in terms of the logical difference, whilst at the same time hedging explanations have been added in the hope of ameliorating the failures of scope. My claim is that these hedging explanations elicit our implicit knowledge of normative focus. Insofar as we should understand the authors to have introduced an analogously extended concept of scope it

[78] Brunero, "Instrumental Rationality, Symmetry and Scope," *op.cit.*, p. 126
[79] Broome, "Requirements," *op cit*; Broome, "Wide or Narrow Scope?," *op.cit.*

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can be understood as giving partial expression of Normative Focus. I give a few illustrations here and, in demonstrating their shortcomings, show why we should abandon the concept of scope and move instead to normative focus. We will first see how replacing scope with an analogously extended concept threatens the validity of an earlier argument conducted in terms of scope. We will then see how even such an analogously extended concept of scope would confound a potentially important difference between what Kolodny and Schroeder wish to speak of in terms of scope.

What I think has not been realised is the extent to which the analysis in prior literature is hobbled if we understand these authors to have entirely given up on the literal meaning of scope and be operating only from an extended analogous concept latching onto the features of Normative Focus given here. The argument in, for example, Schroeder's 20004 paper[80] would be subtly beside the point.

Schroeder thinks the standard logical role of 'ought' poses a problem to "proponents of wide scoping".[81] He criticises Broome on the grounds that Broome is committed to 'ought' being a sentential operator when really it is a relational term that requires to be conjoined with personal names and names of action types and uses this to argue for a narrow-scope modal conditional for the instrumental principle.

Now it is not that I oppose arguments from logical form, and Schroeder's argument certainly deserves addressing in its own terms. However, in the light of my proposed formulation it is no longer clear that the issue about instrumental rationality *could* be settled in the way that Schroeder is trying to settle it. The nature of the normativity of

instrumental reason might be unfocused, in my sense, without that implying that 'ought' must be a sentential operator in our common tongue. Hence his argument against the last would not give him a premiss for modus tollens against instrumental reason being widescope. This is because 'wide-scope' is now being used, not to mean the requirement is a wide-scope modal conditional, but to mean the requirement is an unfocused directed relation. You cannot refute (or prove) that by arguing over the syntactic role of 'ought'. Moving on, Kolodny responds to Broome's point and introduces his distinction between state requirements, synchronic requirements of consistency of mental states, and process requirements, diachronic requirements about revising mental states. He suggests that the former are wide-scope and at least some of the latter are narrow-scope because there is an asymmetry in the requirements on the revision of attitudes. Here we have an example in which Kolodny is attempting to stretch what he means by the distinction of scope. Nevertheless, the official story is still (with some hedging) that the process requirement is or is expressed by a narrow-scope modal conditional.

(NP) Necessarily, if you believe at t that you ought to X, but you do not intend at t to X, then rationality requires you to form going forward from t, on the basis of the content your belief, the intention to X.[82]

Kolodny thinks that from this he gets a difference in violation between this and the corresponding wide-scope version. The extra content in the consequent, however, does not get round the problem shown in section VI since exactly the same analysis applies here as it did to N there. Nevertheless, examining the hedging shows that he wants to claim a formal difference which in my terms is straightforwardly expressed and gives him what he wants for a difference in violation. He says that there are two versions of the believing implications requirement, the state requirement and the process requirement. We saw in

[80] Schroeder, "The Scope of Instrumental Reason," *op.cit.*

[81] Ibid., p. 338.

[82] Kolodny, "State or Process Requirements?," *op.cit.*

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the previous section why, if his subject is to be that of the believing implications requirement as opposed to the consistency requirement, we must speak of a directed relation. The formal difference that will get him the difference in violation he seeks is therefore the formal difference in the relation of ground to target: that state requirements are unfocused directed relations whereas process requirements are focused.

For a comparison with someone else who extends the notion of scope, let us turn to Schroeder. Schroeder concludes that "the picture…[explored] in this paper exploits the narrow scope of these rules" ,[83] which would normally be understood to mean that the rules are narrow scope modal conditionals. If one looks at the content of his paper, however, the status of modal operators is not doing much work overtly and the use of 'wide-scope' and 'narrow-scope' is losing its grip on modal operators.[84] This is because Schroeder is aware of the problems with scope and announces at the beginning that "the…wide/narrow dispute is not about how to interpret sentences of some kind, but about the underlying explanation of whatever is true, in this domain" .[85] (I agree with that, of course.) As a consequence, he uses the terms 'wide-scope' and 'narrow-scope' for the formal difference between "the rules of rationality [that] are universal in their domain/specific in their domain [respectively]" .[86][87] So the terms have become placeholders for a formal difference between the normative relations in play and Schroeder is offering an explanation of how the substance of the requirements being universal or specific in domain explains the formal difference in the case of rationality. There is an obvious way in which what Schroeder distinguishes in terms of wide and narrow-scope fits with what Kolodny distinguishes: the state requirements could be

understood as having universal domain whilst the process requirements have the specific local domain of the rational agent. This thought, however, ignores the possibility of an important difference between Kolodny's thesis and Schroeder's thesis. It does so because it is another example of how scope furnishes us with only one distinction when two are needed.

If in Schroeder's mouth the terms were placeholders for distinguishing the formal difference between unfocused and focused relations, then the aforementioned fit would be in place. Kolodny is speaking of believed implication requirements and the distinction he wants to draw between the wide and narrow-scope versions for state versus process requirements is also that between unfocused and focused directed relations.

There is, however, another interpretation of what Schroeder's distinction between universal and specific domain amounts to formally: the difference between relations that lack rather than have grounds. That distinction is not a distinction between kinds of directed relations but is, rather, the distinction between normative relations that are undirected and those that are directed. Rules that are universal in domain have an object that is a normative focus and so being does not depend on a ground. The general consistency requirement could be our example here. Rules that are specific in domain have a target whose being a normative focus depends on a ground. The believing implications requirement could be our example here.

83 Mark Andrew Schroeder, "Scope for Rational Autonomy," *Philosophical Issues* XXIII, 1 (2013), pp. 297-310.at p. 309.

84 Broome's uses of 'wide-scope' and 'narrow-scope' in his book (Broome, "Rationality through Reasoning," *op cit.*) have also sometimes left their moorings in modal syntax in a similar way.

85 Schroeder, "Scope for Rational Autonomy," *op.cit.*, p. 297.

86 Ibid., p. 298.

87 Earlier he drew a similar comparison with agent neutrality versus agent relativity: Schroeder, "The Scope of Instrumental Reason," *op.cit.*, p. 340.

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In this last case Kolodny and Schroeder would be at odds with one another over what is going on. Moreover, it brings to our attention again the further confound that wide-scope can fall into. The wide-scope theorists with whom they88 disagree may be advancing two very different kinds of theory, one in which the norm is an unfocused directed relation and the other in which it is an undirected relation. Additionally, some norms may be of the first kind and some of the second and the concept of wide scope, whether extended or not, will not distinguish them. Here, then, distinguishing only scope will be significantly obscuring our view.

So I have two points here. On the one hand, on either interpretation Schroeder's analogous extension of scope fits with the distinctions made by my concepts and is thereby another instance of the elicitation of our implicit knowledge of normative focus, a knowledge that is better articulated in my terms. On the other hand, confining ourselves to expressing the issues in terms of an analogous extension of scope means we can confound the profound difference between those two interpretations.

In the last two sections we saw the single distinction of scope failing to draw the two distinctions of ground versus target and focused versus unfocused directed relations. Here and in the last section we have also seen it failing to draw the two distinctions of focused versus unfocused directed relations and directed versus undirected normative relations. Putting those together we have three significant and different distinctions that the single distinction of scope has been applied to and can only confound.

This last point alone suffices to show that to whatever extent authors are using analogous extensions of the logical concepts of scope to speak of the form or substance of Normative Focus, and granted that they can have some success in that direction, those

extensions cannot encompass Normative Focus properly. The explanatory resources I introduced are needed and it would be better if we spoke in their terms.

XI. CONCLUSION

This paper is not about solving the problems of scope and detachment nor is it about taking a position in the debate between wide and narrow-scopers. This paper is about articulating features of the normative relations upon which depend the truth of normatively modal conditionals and the validity of detachment, and in terms of which what is at issue between wide and narrow-scopers is better understood. In the paper I argued for the necessity of the concepts of Normative Focus. The argument is essentially that what we have been trying to capture in terms of scope is richer than can be captured in those terms alone and this is why so much of the dialectic using such conditionals relies on supplementation by detailed hedging.

In the Holmesian inference case we saw an example of normative necessity that is hard to get right in terms of the logic of a deontic operator and yet which is plainly a matter of believing something being a normative focus. We saw how the discussion of rational norms had been on a treadmill because the background of directed relations is replete with material from which to construct counterexamples against articulation of the norms in terms of the ground and the target. We saw that the attempt to use the distinction between wide and narrow-scope conditionals to articulate different views of rationality and to avoid the bootstrapping problem does not achieve what it sets out to achieve and has been taken to achieve. In fact, it may only be the covert evocation of our tacit appreciation of Normative Focus that led us to think the debate over scope was getting at the issue and solving the problem. We saw arguments that scope does not even solve the bootstrapping problem that it was originally introduced to solve and that our discussion here was based
[88] Kolodny and Schroeder

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in tacit appreciation of Normative Focus. Finally, we saw a deeper problem for scope, that in hoping to countenance what is going on with the distinction of scope we are trying to use one distinction to capture two distinctions and that this can happen in a number of different ways. First, there was the feature of normative flow and how scope could not separate out the elements of this to do with the direction of normative flow (given by distinguishing ground and target) and those to do with how that flow operates (given by distinguishing focused and unfocused relations). Second, we saw how a similar confound played out in the scope debate over rational norms. Finally we saw a different confound, between focused versus unfocused relations and directed versus undirected relations, occurring in the latter debate and also in the literature using the analogously extended concept of scope.

The features of Normative Focus are formal features and it is for that reason that, expressing something of their nature in terms of the logic of modal operators, we have mistakenly thought it can be entirely expressed in those terms. Scope addresses Normative Focus only indirectly by talking about syntax and captures only the extent to which Normative Focus determines valid and invalid inferences to normatively focused conclusions. When it tries to do more it gets into the difficulties we have seen, in part because scope cannot help but confound the question of being a normative focus with the difference between ground and target and consequently cannot express normative flow. This was also the reason that analogous extensions of the logical concept can only get so far. So the debate about the scope of rational requirements is an awkward way of addressing the real issue in the theory of norms. After all, we know bootstrapping is wrong and we know when normativity should focus. The problem is not in the logic and yet that is where the terms of scope make it appear to be, in particular, when the diagnosis given is

that of a modal scope fallacy. The problem is in understanding the nature of the directed relations in play and the analysis in terms of Normative Focus makes that clear.

My suggestion is that the history of bootstrapping and the continuing influence of the linguistic turn made us speak about the logic of normatively modal conditionals rather than speak about the metaphysics of the normative relations in play. It does not matter that there will be some way of massaging the syntax, semantics and pragmatics of such conditionals to make the right ones true and formally define the inferences we know to be valid. Only so much can be achieved in this methodology. This paper is about turning away from it and articulating the metaphysics of the directed relations upon which depend the truth or falsity of such conditionals and the validity of detachment. Giving an account of the semantics of the latter is secondary to the metaphysics and can be handed over to the philosophers of language who are interested in that question. The metaphysics offered here explains what we already recognise about the correctness or otherwise of using normatively modal conditionals to express the normative relations and furthermore we have known this all along or we would not have recognised the correctness or otherwise. MacBride has pointed out that "analytic philosophy has taken an 'ontological turn'"[89] and that is what I am taking here. I am articulating the new conceptual model of Normative Focus, showing that it does not fall into the kind of problems that hobbles the linguistic methodology, and showing the reader that insofar as they understand the debates about the theory of norms conducted in terms of scope, they must already understand the metaphysical relations that my model captures.

[89] Fraser MacBride, "How Hochberg Helped Us Take the Ontological Turn: An Introduction," *Dialectica* LXVIII, 2 (2014), pp. 163-69., at p. 163.

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My argument, at its most general, is that to advance the theory of norms that has been discussed in terms of scope, what matters is the nature of the normative relations in play. We need to think in terms of Normative Focus: the property of being a normative focus, focused and unfocused directed relations with their grounds, backgrounds and targets, and undirected relations whose objects being normative foci may depend on a background but does not depend on a ground. Nor need this require being a realist about such properties and relations (although I am). That is a further metaphysical question and one could just a well be a nominalist or a fictionalist about them.

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