- Popper's Critical Rationalism compared to Critical Fallibilism
  - CR rejects
    - positive args
    - amounts of support/evidence/ justification for ideas
    - induction
  - CR says
    - We learn by conjectures and refutations (literal evolution)
    - There is an asymmetry between positive and negative args
      - You can refute a universal scientific theory with one counter example
      - You can't prove a theory true with a million data points

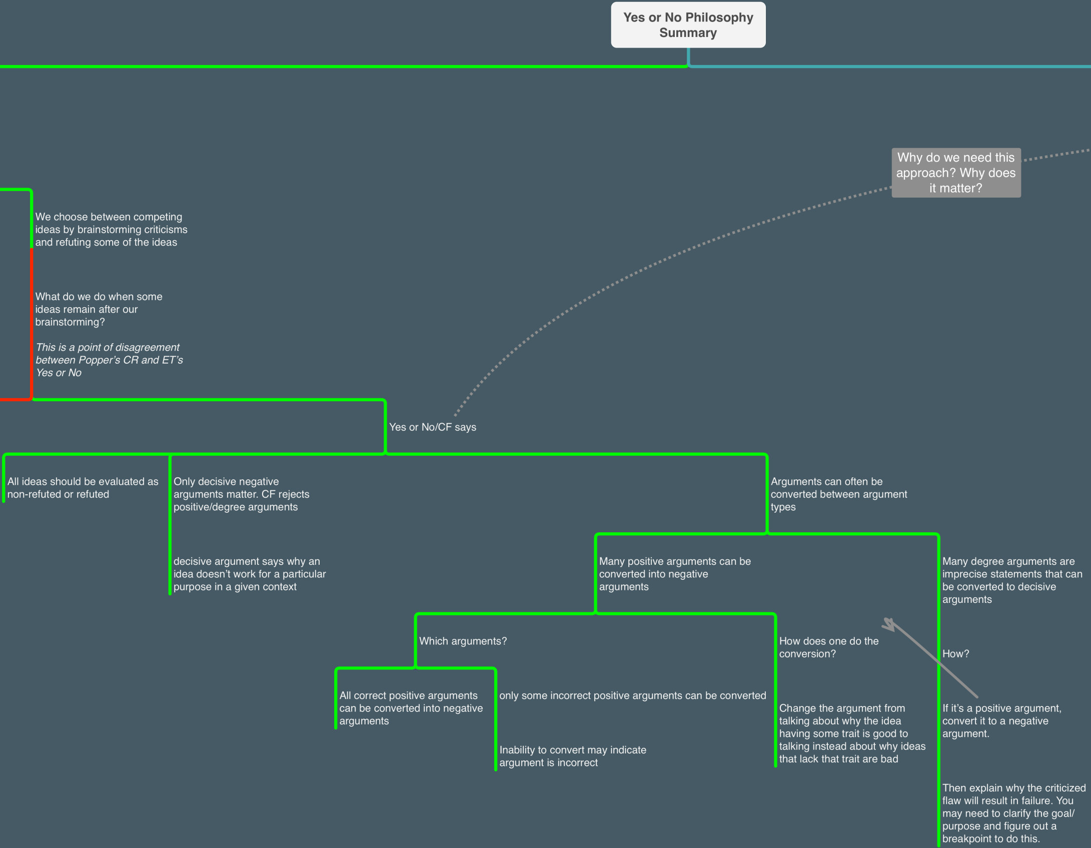
- CR says

  Refute what you can using negative arguments. Taking negative arguments into account, make a judgment about which non-refuted idea is best. How good it is, compared to other ideas?
- Standard View says

  Come up with both positive and negative args. Use negative arguments to refute what you can. Taking both positive and negative arguments into account, make a judgment about which non-refuted idea is best. How good it is, compared to other ideas?

Both judge arguments by amounts of goodness

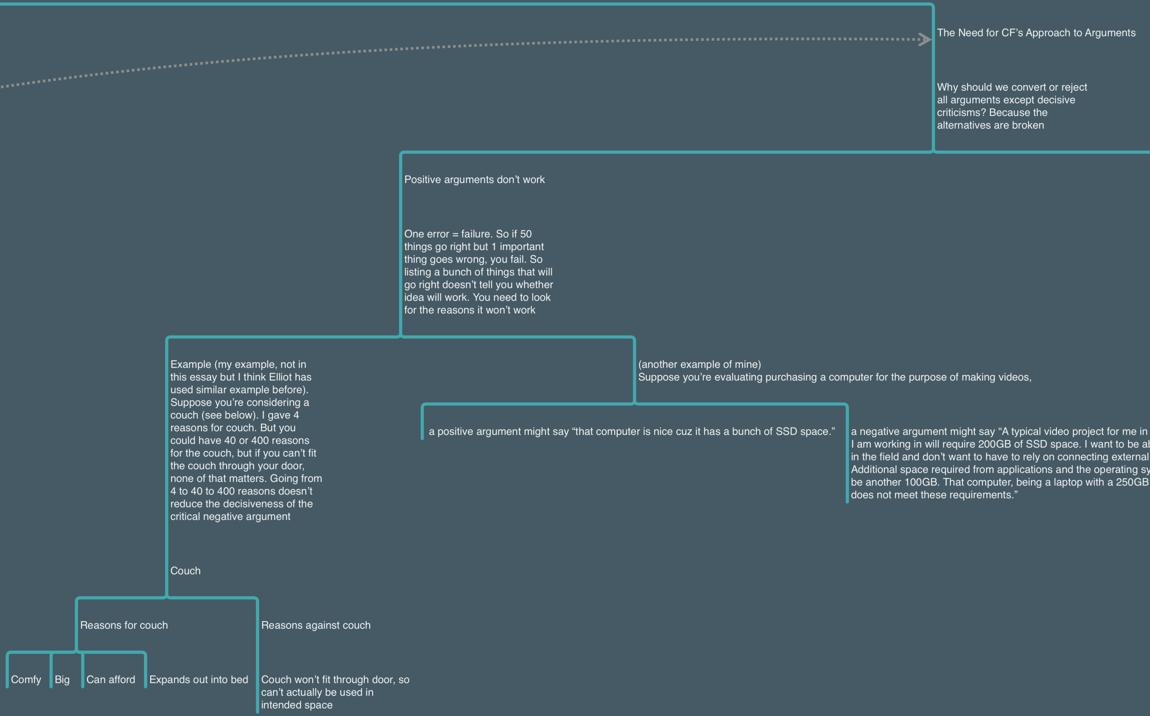
Yes or No Philosophy Summary



Why do we need this approach? Why does it matter?

- We choose between competing ideas by brainstorming criticisms and refuting some of the ideas
- What do we do when some ideas remain after our brainstorming?

  This is a point of disagreement between Popper's CR and ET's Yes or No
  - Yes or No/CF says
    - All ideas should be evaluated as non-refuted or refuted
    - Only decisive negative arguments matter. CF rejects positive/degree arguments
      - decisive argument says why an idea doesn't work for a particular purpose in a given context
    - Arguments can often be converted between argument types
      - Many positive arguments can be converted into negative arguments
        - Which arguments?
          - All correct positive arguments can be converted into negative arguments
          - only some incorrect positive arguments can be converted
            - Inability to convert may indicate argument is incorrect
        - How does one do the conversion?
          - Change the argument from talking about why the idea having some trait is good to talking instead about why ideas that lack that trait are bad
      - Many degree arguments are imprecise statements that can be converted to decisive arguments
        - How?
          - If it's a positive argument, convert it to a negative argument.
          - Then explain why the criticized flaw will result in failure. You may need to clarify the goal/purpose and figure out a breakpoint to do this.

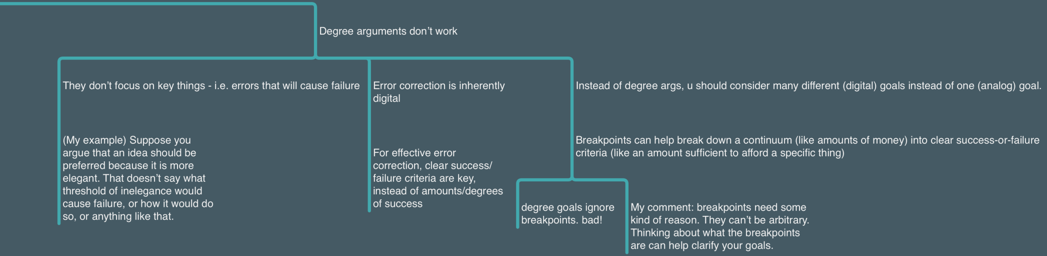


- The Need for CF’s Approach to Arguments

  Why should we convert or reject all arguments except decisive criticisms? Because the alternatives are broken
  - Positive arguments don’t work

    One error = failure. So if 50 things go right but 1 important thing goes wrong, you fail. So listing a bunch of things that will go right doesn’t tell you whether idea will work. You need to look for the reasons it won’t work
    - Example (my example, not in this essay but I think Elliot has used similar example before). Suppose you’re considering a couch (see below). I gave 4 reasons for couch. But you could have 40 or 400 reasons for the couch, but if you can’t fit the couch through your door, none of that matters. Going from 4 to 40 to 400 reasons doesn’t reduce the decisiveness of the critical negative argument

      Couch
      - Reasons for couch
        - Comfy
        - Big
        - Can afford
        - Expands out into bed
      - Reasons against couch
        - Couch won’t fit through door, so can’t actually be used in intended space
    - (another example of mine)
      Suppose you’re evaluating purchasing a computer for the purpose of making videos,
      - a positive argument might say “that computer is nice cuz it has a bunch of SSD space.”
      - a negative argument might say “A typical video project for me in
        I am working in will require 200GB of SSD space. I want to be ab
        in the field and don’t want to have to rely on connecting external
        Additional space required from applications and the operating sy
        be another 100GB. That computer, being a laptop with a 250GB
        does not meet these requirements.”



Degree arguments don’t work

They don’t focus on key things - i.e. errors that will cause failure

(My example) Suppose you argue that an idea should be preferred because it is more elegant. That doesn’t say what threshold of inelegance would cause failure, or how it would do so, or anything like that.

Error correction is inherently digital

For effective error correction, clear success/failure criteria are key, instead of amounts/degrees of success

Instead of degree args, u should consider many different (digital) goals instead of one (analog) goal.

Breakpoints can help break down a continuum (like amounts of money) into clear success-or-failure criteria (like an amount sufficient to afford a specific thing)

degree goals ignore breakpoints. bad!

My comment: breakpoints need some kind of reason. They can’t be arbitrary. Thinking about what the breakpoints are can help clarify your goals.

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