

Positive and Negative Logic

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ABSTRACT: Acts of criticism characteristically display a negative and a positive dimension. I undertake a qualified defense of the thesis that both dimensions are essential, at least in the case of *logical criticism* – criticism that relies either implicitly or explicitly on the resources of logic. Such criticism presupposes at least a minimal grasp on what is involved in ‘getting it right’ in the domain that is subjected to critique. In making the case I distinguish between positive and negative logic. Traditional logic is positive insofar as it takes as primitive a positive notion, typically truth. I consider to what extent logic might be reconstructed on an exclusively negative basis – as a tool for avoiding falsity and fallacy. Negative logic faces serious obstacles which suggest a prima facie case that logical criticism is essentially, not just accidentally, positive.

KEYWORDS: logic, criticism, critique, truth, fallacy, natural deduction

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