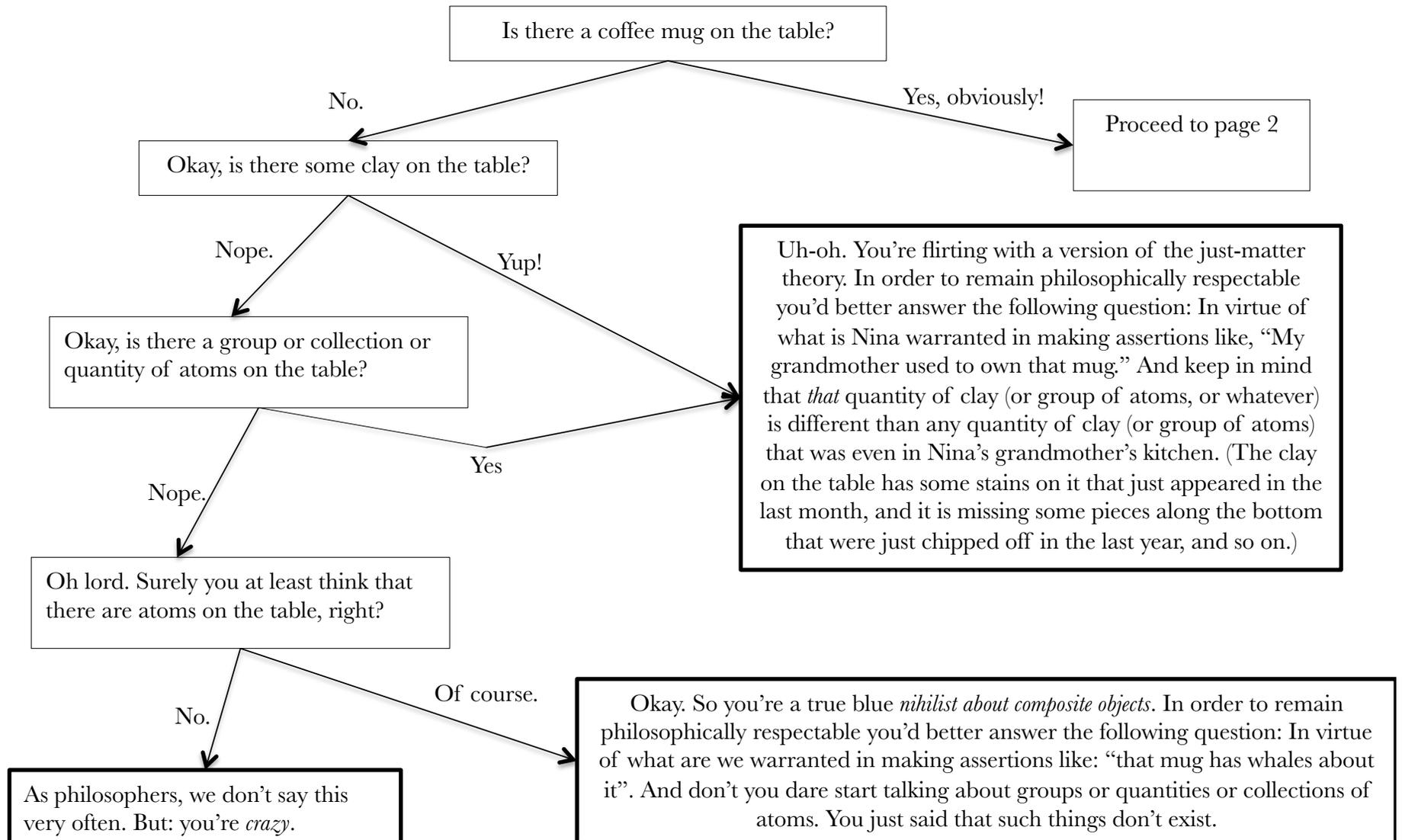
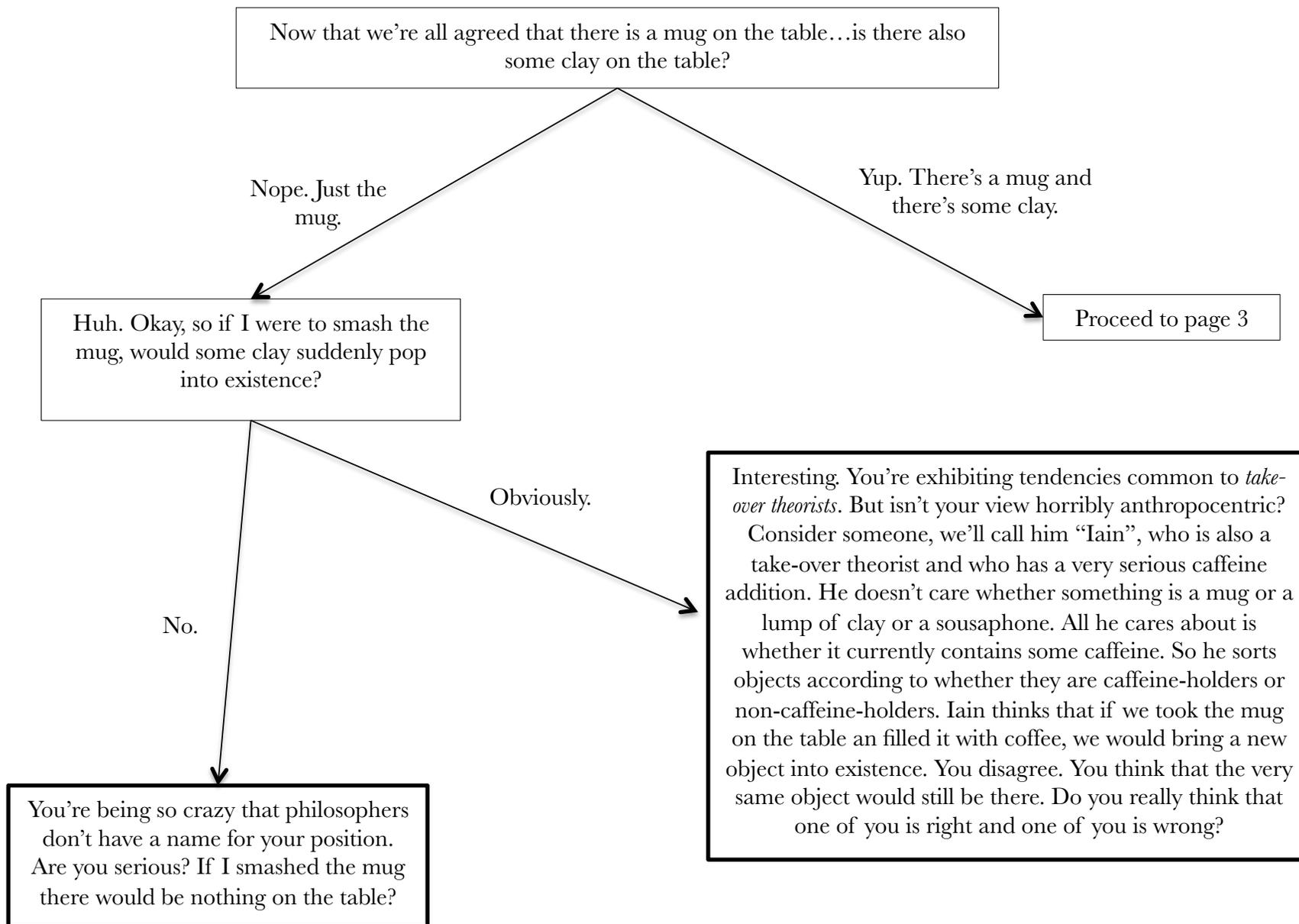


Choose your own metaphysical adventure:
Composition and co-location.





Now that we're all agreed that there is a mug and some clay on the table...do you think the mug and the clay are the same thing?

No. They are two different things.

Yup. The mug is identical to the clay

Okay. You've just endorsed *cohabitation*. But now you've got some explaining to do. In particular, you had better tell us what explains the differences between the mug and the clay. To start with, why don't you tell us what explains the temporal differences between the mug and the clay (e.g. the fact that the clay existed before the mug.

Congratulations! You've decided to *give up on the indiscernibility of identicals*. After all, the mug and the clay have different properties. (For instance, the clay existed before the mug.) Please explain to the rest of us what it means for x and y to be identical if it doesn't mean that everything that is true of x is also true of y.

Facts about other temporal parts of the mug and the clay.

Nothing. It's just a brute fact.

Well, at least you're being honest. But if you're willing to posit brute facts like these, where do you stop?
And anyway, you still have to proceed to page 4.

Ah, a *temporal parts theorist* in our midst. Didn't Quine ever tell you that simplicity is a virtue? And do you really believe that the things that we interact with are continually disappearing, only to be replaced by very similar, but different, things? When Nina points to the mug and says "my grandmother owned that", is she making a claim about a mug, or just about a part of a mug?
And anyway, temporal parts don't seem to do much good. You still have to proceed to page 4.

Imagine some other mug, call it Mugliath, and some other clay, call it Bunchl. Mugliath and Bunchl come into existence at the same time, are co-located for as long as they exist, and then go out of existence at the same time.
Are Mugliath and Bunchl the same thing?

Nope. They are two different things.

Yup. Mugliath is identical to Bunchl.

Okay. You've just endorsed *cohabitation*. But now you've got some explaining to do. In particular, you had better tell us what explains the differences between Mugliath and Bunchl. For instance, what explains the fact that Bunchl could survive being smashed but Mugliath could not.

Congratulations! You've decided to *give up on the indiscernibility of identicals*. After all, Mugliath and Bunchl different properties. (For instance, Bunchl could survive being smashed. Mugliath could not.) Please explain to the rest of us what it means for x and y to be identical if it doesn't mean that everything that is true of x is also true of y.

Nothing. It's just a brute fact.

Facts about Mugliath and Bunchl's counterparts in other possible worlds.

Well, at least you're being honest. But if you're willing to posit brute facts like these, where do you stop?

Woah. You've just started talking about other possible worlds. Are we supposed to take you seriously? There are other worlds out there besides the actual world? Please explain to us what sorts of things these other worlds are, and how we come to know anything about them. And by the way, haven't you grossly violated the Quinean maxim to keep your ontology as simple as possible?