

Chapter 1 : Pyrrhonism and Maadhyamika

Sextus Empiricus, a Pyrrhonist, the greatest skeptic of ancient times, set forth in Ten Tropes arguments by the ancient skeptics against the possibility of knowledge. because what one perceives or thinks it to be is always in relationship to, never independent of, that perceiver.

Later he was diverted to philosophy by the works of Democritus , and according to Diogenes Laertius became acquainted with the Megarian dialectic through Bryson , pupil of Stilpo. This exposure to Eastern philosophy seems to have inspired him to adopt a life of solitude; returning to Elis, he lived in poor circumstances, but was highly honored by the Elians and also by the Athenians, who conferred upon him the rights of citizenship. His doctrines were recorded in the writings of his pupil Timon of Phlius. Unfortunately these works are mostly lost. First, how are pragmata ethical matters, affairs, topics by nature? Secondly, what attitude should we adopt towards them? Thirdly, what will be the outcome for those who have this attitude? Therefore, neither our sense-perceptions nor our doxai views, theories, beliefs tell us the truth or lie; so we certainly should not rely on them. Rather, we should be adoxastoi without views , aklineis uninclined toward this side or that , and akradantoi unwavering in our refusal to choose , saying about every single one that it no more is than it is not or it both is and is not or it neither is nor is not. Regardless, several centuries after Pyrrho lived, Aenesidemus lead a revival of the philosophy. Pyrrhonism was one of the two major schools of skeptical thought that emerged during the Hellenistic period, the other being Academic skepticism. Their main goal is to cure suffering and unhappiness through achieving suspension of judgment. This leads the Pyrrhonist to the conclusion that there is an unresolvable disagreement on the topic, and so the appropriate reaction is to suspend judgement on the topic. Reaching epoche results in ataraxia , or freedom of worry, which relieves the practitioner of the causes of unhappiness. Pyrrhonism fell into obscurity in the post-Hellenic period. These are the ephectic a "suspension of judgment" , zetetic "engaged in seeking" , and aporetic "engaged in refutation". Some elements of scepticism were already present in Greek philosophy, particularly in the Democritean tradition in which Pyrrho had studied prior to visiting India. Richard Bett heavily discounts any substantive Indian influences on Pyrrho, arguing that on the basis of testimony of Onesicritus regarding how difficult it was to converse with the gymnosophists, as it required three translators, none of whom understood any philosophy, that it is highly improbable that Pyrrho could have been substantively influenced by any of the Indian philosophers. Philosophers of the time used his works to source their arguments on how to deal with the religious issues of their day. This resurgence of Pyrrhonism has been called the beginning of modern philosophy. Historical Pyrrhonism emerged during the early modern period and played a significant role in shaping modern historiography.

Chapter 2 : Pyrrhonism - Wikipedia

Pyrrhonism was a school of skepticism founded by Pyrrho in the fourth century BC. It is best known through the surviving works of Sextus Empiricus, writing in the late second century or early third century AD.

In the ancient world there were two main skeptical traditions. Academic skepticism took the dogmatic position that knowledge was not possible; Pyrrhonian skeptics refused to take a dogmatic position on any issue— including skepticism. Radical skepticism ends in the paradoxical claim that one cannot know anything— including that one cannot know about knowing anything. Skepticism can be classified according to its scope. Local skepticism involves being skeptical about particular areas of knowledge, e. Skepticism can also be classified according to its method. In the Western tradition there are two basic approaches to skepticism. Agrippan skepticism focuses on the process of justification rather than the possibility of doubt. According to this view there are three ways in which one might attempt to justify a claim but none of them are adequate: Philosophical skepticism is distinguished from methodological skepticism in that philosophical skepticism is an approach that questions the possibility of certainty in knowledge , whereas methodological skepticism is an approach that subjects all knowledge claims to scrutiny with the goal of sorting out true from false claims. Schools[edit] Philosophical skepticism begins with the claim that the skeptic currently does not have knowledge. Some adherents maintain that knowledge is, in theory, possible. It could be argued that Socrates held that view. He appears to have thought that if people continue to ask questions they might eventually come to have knowledge; but that they did not have it yet. Some skeptics have gone further and claimed that true knowledge is impossible, for example the Academic school in Ancient Greece well after the time of Carneades. A third skeptical approach would be neither to accept nor reject the possibility of knowledge. Skepticism can be either about everything or about particular areas. Academic global skepticism has great difficulty in supporting this claim while maintaining philosophical rigor, since it seems to require that nothing can be known— except for the knowledge that nothing can be known, though in its probabilistic form it can use and support the notion of weight of evidence. As for using probabilistic arguments to defend skepticism, in a sense this enlarges or increases scepticism, while the defence of empiricism by Empiricus weakens skepticism and strengthens dogmatism by alleging that sensory appearances are beyond doubt. Much later, Kant would re-define "dogmatism" to make indirect realism about the external world seem objectionable. While many Hellenists, outside of Empiricus, would maintain that everyone who is not sceptical about everything is a dogmatist, this position would seem too extreme for most later philosophers. Nevertheless, A Pyrrhonian global skeptic labors under no such modern constraint, since he only alleged that he, personally, did not know anything and made no statement about the possibility of knowledge. Local skeptics deny that people do or can have knowledge of a particular area. They may be skeptical about the possibility of one form of knowledge without doubting other forms. Different kinds of local skepticism may emerge, depending on the area. A person may doubt the truth value of different types of journalism, for example, depending on the types of media they trust. Skeptics argue that the belief in something does not necessarily justify an assertion of knowledge of it. In this, skeptics oppose dogmatic foundationalism , which states that there have to be some basic positions that are self-justified or beyond justification, without reference to others. The skeptical response to this can take several approaches. First, claiming that "basic positions" must exist amounts to the logical fallacy of argument from ignorance combined with the slippery slope. Foundationalists have used the same trilemma as a justification for demanding the validity of basic beliefs. This skeptical approach is rarely taken to its pyrrhonian extreme by most practitioners. Several modifications have arisen over the years, including the following [1]: Fictionalism would not claim to have knowledge but will adhere to conclusions on some criterion such as utility, aesthetics, or other personal criteria without claiming that any conclusion is actually "true". Philosophical fideism as opposed to religious Fideism would assert the truth of some propositions, but does so without asserting certainty. Some forms of pragmatism would accept utility as a provisional guide to truth but not necessarily a universal decision-maker. There are two different categories of epistemological skepticism, which can be referred to as mitigated and

unmitigated skepticism. The two forms are contrasting but are still true forms of skepticism. Mitigated skepticism does not accept "strong" or "strict" knowledge claims but does, however, approve specific weaker ones. These weaker claims can be assigned the title of "virtual knowledge", but must be to justified belief. Unmitigated skepticism rejects both claims of virtual knowledge and strong knowledge. Pierre Le Morvan has distinguished between three broad philosophical approaches to skepticism. The second he calls the "Bypass Approach" according to which skepticism is bypassed as a central concern of epistemology. Le Morvan advocates a third approach—he dubs it the "Health Approach"—that explores when skepticism is healthy and when it is not, or when it is virtuous and when it is vicious. Skeptical hypotheses[edit] A skeptical hypothesis is a hypothetical situation which can be used in an argument for skepticism about a particular claim or class of claims. Usually the hypothesis posits the existence of a deceptive power that deceives our senses and undermines the justification of knowledge otherwise accepted as justified. Skeptical hypotheses have received much attention in modern Western philosophy. At the end of the first Meditation Descartes writes: It supposes that one might be a disembodied brain kept alive in a vat, and fed false sensory signals, by a mad scientist. The " dream argument " of Descartes and Zhuangzi supposes reality to be indistinguishable from a dream. The five minute hypothesis or omphalos hypothesis or Last Thursdayism suggests that the world was created recently together with records and traces indicating a greater age. The simulated reality hypothesis or " Matrix hypothesis " suggest that everyone, or even the entire universe, might be inside a computer simulation or virtual reality. History of Western skepticism[edit] Ancient Greek skepticism[edit] Pyrrho. The Western tradition of systematic skepticism goes back at least as far as Pyrrho of Elis b. However, "The 5th century sophists develop forms of debate which are ancestors of skeptical argumentation. They take pride in arguing in a persuasive fashion for both sides of an issue. First, how are pragmata ethical matters, affairs, topics by nature? Secondly, what attitude should we adopt towards them? Thirdly, what will be the outcome for those who have this attitude? Therefore, neither our sense-perceptions nor our doxai views, theories, beliefs tell us the truth or lie; so we certainly should not rely on them. Rather, we should be adoxastous without views , aklineis uninclined toward this side or that , and akradantous unwavering in our refusal to choose , saying about every single one that it no more is than it is not or it both is and is not or it neither is nor is not. Pyrrhonists are not "skeptics" in the modern, common sense of the term, meaning prone to disbelief. The idea was to produce in the student a state of indifference towards ideas about non-evident matters. Since no one can observe or otherwise experience causation, external world its "externality" , ultimate purpose of the universe or life, justice, divinity, soul, etc. The Pyrrhonists pointed out that, despite claims that such notions were necessary, some people ignorant of them get by just fine before learning about them. They further noted that science does not require belief and that faith in intelligible realities is different from pragmatic convention for the sake of experiment. For each intuitive notion e. They added that consensus indicates neither truth nor even probability. The Roman politician and philosopher, Cicero , also seems to have been a supporter of the probabilistic position attributed to the Middle Academy, even if the return to a more dogmatic orientation of that school was already beginning to take place. What is useful to one animal is harmful to another. Each human has a different assortment of preferences, abilities and interests. Each sense gives a different impression of the same object. There is no reason to think one is sane while others are insane—the opposite could be true. Cultures disagree regarding beauty, truth, goodness, religion, life and justice. There is no consistency in perception. His examples were that the color purple will show different tints depending on the lighting, a person looks different between noon and sunset, and a very heavy rock on land is lighter when in water The senses can be shown to be deceptive. From a distance, the square tower looks round and the sun looks small Things that strengthen in moderation will weaken when taken in excess, like wine and food. When a thing is rare, it surprises people. When a thing is common, it does not surprise people. Inter-relations among things are of course relative, and by themselves are unknowable. In the centuries to come, the words Academician and Pyrrhonist would often be used to mean generally skeptic, often ignoring historical changes and distinctions between denial of knowledge and avoidance of belief, between degree of belief and absolute belief, and between possibility and probability. The common anti-skeptical argument is that if one knows nothing, one cannot know that one knows nothing, and so may know something after all. It is worth noting

that such an argument only succeeds against the complete denial of the possibility of knowledge. Considering dogmatic the claims both to know and not to know, Sextus and his followers claimed neither. Instead, despite the apparent conflict with the goal of ataraxia , they claimed to continue searching for something that might be knowable. Empiricus, as the most systematic author of the works by Hellenistic sceptics which have survived, noted that there are at least ten modes of skepticism. These modes may be broken down into three categories: Subjectively, both the powers of the senses and of reasoning may vary among different people. And since knowledge is a product of one or the other, and since neither are reliable, knowledge would seem to be in trouble. For instance, a color-blind person sees the world quite differently from everyone else. Moreover, one cannot even give preference on the basis of the power of reason, i. Secondly, the personality of the individual might also influence what they observe, since it is argued preferences are based on sense-impressions, differences in preferences can be attributed to differences in the way that people are affected by the object. This is manifest when our senses "disagree" with each other: In that case, our other senses defeat the impressions of sight. But one may also be lacking enough powers of sense to understand the world in its entirety: Given that our senses can be shown to be unreliable by appealing to other senses, and so our senses may be incomplete relative to some more perfect sense that one lacks , then it follows that all of our senses may be unreliable. But it is entirely possible that things in the world really are exactly as they appear to be to those in unnatural states i. The positions, distances, and places of objects would seem to affect how they are perceived by the person: Because they are different features, to believe the object has both properties at the same time is to believe it has two contradictory properties.

Chapter 3 : Philosophical skepticism - Wikipedia

It is the Pyrrhonist who encounters the undecidable dispute, and because of it, it is the Pyrrhonist who is unable to decide on the issue under dissension. The result is suspension of judgment: by the Pyrrhonist, of course.

Specialists in ancient philosophy have explored the complex history of the Greco-Roman skeptical traditions and discussed difficult philological and exegetical issues. But they have also assessed the philosophical significance of the various ancient skeptical outlooks. In this first paper, I provide a general presentation of this area of study, while in the two subsequent articles I will focus on some of the topics that have been the object of much attention in the recent literature on ancient skepticism. General Presentation Nowadays, hardly anyone familiar with the extant fragments and works of the ancient skeptics and with other sources of information about their thought, such as reports and summaries, would question the philosophical import of the different strands of ancient skepticism. However, this was not always the case, since until quite recently most scholars of ancient philosophy undervalued the Greco-Roman skeptical traditions. Not only has there been, as in the Renaissance, a strong revival of interest in ancient skepticism, but also the historical accuracy and the interpretive and analytic insight of scholarly studies have been, in general terms, superior to those of previous work. In this development a crucial part has, of course, been played by the competence of scholars, but also important has been the academic exchange made possible by the holding of several conferences and the publication of dozens of books and papers. We are now witnessing the consolidation of a tradition of highly specialized scholarship on ancient skepticism. Ancient philosophy knew two main skeptical traditions, the Pyrrhonian and the Academic, which originated in the Hellenistic era and continued into the Imperial age. In pre-Hellenistic philosophers it is possible to detect skeptical inclinations, themes, and arguments. This is particularly so in the case of the Academic skeptics, who believed that their skepticism was the culmination of a gradual development initiated with the Presocratics,³ and that it was perfectly in keeping with the tradition of Socrates and Plato. Overview interested in ancient skeptical thought. It is true both that they were not interested in epistemological issues per se but only insofar as these were relevant to their ethical theory, and that they did not draw all the skeptical implications of their epistemology which they could have drawn. But their epistemological views seem to be more elaborate and subtle than those of the pre-Hellenistic philosophers in whom it is possible to discover skeptical elements, and their philosophical relations with Academic and Pyrrhonian skepticism are closer. A detailed examination of the skeptical aspects of Cyrenaic epistemology and its philosophical relations with Academic skepticism, Pyrrhonism, and modern skepticism can be found in a relatively recent book by Voula Tsouna, who also provides a translation of all the relevant testimonies. It grew and changed and developed. This accurate judgment applies equally well to Academic skepticism. When dealing with ancient skepticism, therefore, it must be borne in mind that it was not uniform, not only because there were two main skeptical traditions, but also because there were important transformations within each of them. This cautionary reminder, which may be obvious but is sometimes forgotten, may help one appreciate the richness of ancient skepticism as well as explain some of the discrepancies between our sources or within a single source, even though it is often difficult to give a precise account of the distinct brands of ancient skepticism and of how they influenced each other or diverged from each other. Indeed, some skeptics namely, Pyrrho, Arcesilaus, and Carneades wrote nothing and the works of most of those who did are lost to us. In these cases, we must content ourselves with fragments, reports, and summaries which, as one would expect, are usually meager, sometimes of doubtful reliability, and on occasion hard to reconcile. In the case of Pyrrhonism, the position of Pyrrho of Elis (c. 360 BC) more precisely, the position ascribed to him primarily by his leading disciple Timon of Phlius (c. 320 BC) differs in important respects from that of the later Pyrrhonian movement. In the case of Arcesilaus, we can safely say that he adopted a radical form of epistemological skepticism characterized by universal suspension of judgment. In Carneades, skepticism was extended to other domains such as ethics and theology, but it may also have been mitigated by his espousal of a kind of fallibilism as we will see in the third article on ancient skepticism, it is a matter of dispute whether his outlook is to be construed this way or even whether he

adopted any epistemological stance in propria persona. After Clitomachus, who defended a strong skeptical outlook which he ascribed to his teacher, Academic skepticism began to soften. Philo first defended a radical skepticism but later held that it is possible to have knowledge, albeit not of the type proposed by the Stoics Acad. II 18, PH I II 69â€”70, , PH I He considered himself to belong to the tradition of the skeptical Academy and espoused a moderate form of skepticism. However, we know that Favorinus of Arles 80â€” AD claimed to be an Academic skeptic and was influenced by Pyrrhonism. It is commonly agreed that only in the early second century AD did this word come to be generally employed as a designation of the Pyrrhonist,³¹ although it was also applied to the Academics. In addition, our sources state that both Arcesilaus PH I , cf. PH I 30 conceived of suspension of judgment as the end telos. Let us finally note that the similarities between the two skeptical traditions explain, at least in part, why in the second century AD authors like Seneca, Epictetus, Galen, Lucian, and even Favorinus tended to assimilate Academic skepticism to Pyrrhonism. Indeed, we know that several Pyrrhonists were Empirical doctors. Overview already observed, there exist close similarities between Pyrrhonism and Academic skepticism and the latter exerted a strong influence on the former. Recent Translations and General Studies Progress in the study of ancient skepticism has to a large extent been possible thanks to the publication, in the past fifteen years, of an important number of translations of our primary sources for both Academic and Pyrrhonian skepticism. Bury â€” has become dated. As for the six books of the *Adversus Mathematicos* AM , David Blank has offered a translation of its voluminous first book. Of the five surviving books of the *Adversus Dogmaticos* AD ,⁴¹ Richard Bett has translated the fifth book Bett as well as the first two Bett , and he is at present working on a translation of the two remaining books. Thus, he is for Academic skepticism what Sextus is for Pyrrhonism. There, he presents both the controversy between Stoics and Academics about the attainability of knowledge and the possibility of action without assent, and the controversy that took place within the skeptical Academy about what form of skepticism radical or mitigated should be adopted. Until recently, the only available complete English translation was that by H. In the past few years, several general presentations of ancient skepticism have appeared in print. Among them, one must first mention Robert J. A more introductory presentation by Harald Thorsrud has been published very recently Thorsrud The approach of these two books is of course historical, but they also attempt to understand the sense of the various skeptical stances and to evaluate their soundness and philosophical implications. Overview other Pyrrhonists and the most important Academic skeptics Bailey In addition, Bett has just edited an authoritative companion to ancient skepticism which contains contributions by some of the leading specialists in the field Bett There is also a volume of essays by Emidio Spinelli which together constitute a good introduction to ancient Pyrrhonism. In the two subsequent articles on ancient skepticism, I will present and discuss some of the issues that have attracted the most attention from specialists in recent years. The first article will deal with the thought of some of the members of the Pyrrhonian movement Pyrrho, Aenesidemus, and Sextus , and the second with the outlooks of certain representatives of the Academic tradition Arcesilaus, Carneades, and Philo. I would also like to thank Dale Chock for correcting some infelicities of my English. Short Biography Diego E. His areas of research are ancient skepticism, epistemology, and metaethics. His publications related to skepticism include: For an overview of these topics, see Hankinson Of value are also the relevant chapters in Brochard For a complete collection of texts referring to Pyrrho, see Decleva Caizzi So far two of the three projected volumes have appeared in print: Harold Tarrant, by contrast, has argued for an earlier date, namely, the late first century BC Tarrant See also Decleva Caizzi See also Allen , Overview 36 For a list of all the possible Pyrrhonian doctors of whom we have some information, see Barnes For the possible historical and sociological reasons for the association of Pyrrhonism with medical Empiricism, see Polito For a discussion of his relationship with the Empirical medical school which takes into account previous literature, see Machuca , Section II. See also Allen This designation has its origin in the fact that, in our manuscripts, AD is attached to the end of the six books of AM, even though it is clear that they are two different works. I prefer not to follow this conventional designation not only because it is incorrect, but also because it still creates confusion among non-specialists. II 32, he talks about those who affirm that all things are uncertain: It is much more plausible, however, that Cicero is referring to Arcesilaus: Works Cited Allen, J. Cambridge University Press, *Ancient Debates About the Nature of Evidence*. Oxford

University Press, Greek text, French translation, and commentary. Les Belles Lettres, Cornell University Press, English translation with an introduction. Cambridge University Press, Sextus Empiricus and Pyrrhonian Scepticism. Greek text, Italian translation, and commentary. Essays on Philosophy and Roman Society. The Philosophy of Pyrrhonism. Berlin and New York: Critical notice of Ioppolo Observations on the Scepticism of Sextus Empiricus. Contra los profesores libros Iâ€™VI. Spanish translation with an introduction. The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism. Critical notice of Brunschwig b. Pyrrho, His Antecedents, and His Legacy. English translation with an introduction and commentary. Cambridge University Press, Academici e Platonici Il dibattito antico sullo scetticismo di Platone. Studi di filosofia antica. Cisalpino La Goliardica, b. La testimonianza del commentario anonimo al Teeteto. Miscellanea di studi IV.

Chapter 4 : Sextus Empiricus (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

the Pyrrhonist ends up being unable to decide between the opposing views. Suspension of judgment then emerges. There is a philosophical motivation in support of the irrelevance of.

In fact, not all eleven books united under the title *Against the Mathematicians* belong together: Janacek argues that *M VII*–*XI* form part of a larger work which was a lengthy elaboration of all the parts of *PH*; if this is right, then we have lost the book or books of that work which correspond to book *I* of the *Outlines*. The observation that the larger work was an elaboration of *PH* is non-committal as to the order of composition of the two works. Janacek thought *M* was written after *PH*; against this, see Bett. Often, Sextus refers to the books we know as *PH* or *M* using other descriptions. For instance, at *M VI* 52 he says: However, a couple of times Sextus refers to his writings in ways which suggest that there are some treatises we no longer have in addition to the part of *M* corresponding to *PH I*: When you investigate whether *P*, there are three possibilities: For the sincerity of this last claim, see Palmer and Perin. This, continues Sextus, is why Sceptics get their name *I 7*: If Pyrrhonian Sceptics are still investigating any matter you like, there is no distinctive set of beliefs which mark them out as a school. Holding these beliefs is partially constitutive of what it is to be an Aristotelian or a Platonist. Sceptics have not yet found answers to those questions, because they are still investigating them. It follows that to be a Sceptic is not to subscribe to a set of beliefs in the way that members of the other Philosophical Schools do. Yet there must be something about them that makes them count as Sceptics. What, then, is Scepticism? Sextus presents scepticism as a kind of philosophy, distinguished from others not by the content of its doctrines there are none, but apparently by its attitude to philosophical problems and theses. Scepticism is an ability to set out oppositions among things which appear and are thought of in any way at all, an ability by which, because of the equipollence in the opposed objects and accounts, we come first to suspension of judgment and afterwards to tranquillity. So, a Sceptic is someone who has the ability to find, for any given argument in favour of a proposition *P*, a conflicting argument *i*. This connects with investigation in the following way: One assesses whether *P* or not-*P* on the basis of weighing up these arguments, and seeing which side carries more weight: You pursue an inquiry insofar as you draw up possible solutions to the problem it addresses, consider what reasons might be adduced in favour of the different solutions, and attempt to assess the force of those reasons in order to pick out the correct solution. For if *P* is a proposition that *x* has never given any thought to, then it might be true that *x* neither believes *P* nor believes that not-*P*. Note further that Sextus assembles arguments in favour of an affirmative answer, and arguments in favour of a negative answer. The two sets of arguments exactly balance one another. It would not be enough, for instance, to look at one argument in favour of *P* and then reject that argument as invalid; while doing so would indeed leave one neither believing *P* nor not-*P* assuming one had no further evidence either way, one would not have considered both sides of the question, since one would not yet have considered any arguments in favour of not-*P*. This condition will be important later when we consider the Modes of Scepticism—see below, 3. Sextus offers an answer in *PH I* People have become Sceptics because they are seeking tranquillity. Presumably Sextus has in mind that one might be troubled by the various discrepancies that the world offers, such as this one taken from *PH III* By considering these two facts, one has both the impression that tattooing is bad and the impression that it is good: Sextus seems to be explaining how it is that someone could come to be investigating questions with the sort of single-mindedness the sceptic has, a single-mindedness which results in the intense scrutiny of all sides of a question. This will in turn explain how it is that anyone would end up with the sceptical skill: So if we are smart and energetic we seek intellectual tranquillity, or freedom from the troubles which come from being assailed by the many contradictions the world seems to offer. But rather than this making them even more troubled, they discovered—to their surprise—that in fact tranquillity followed after all! They did not find the answers they had been looking for, because the Sceptical skill will preclude you from finding such answers; nonetheless, tranquillity did ensue. Sextus illustrates this fortuitousness with a story about Apelles the painter: *PH I* 28 You search for tranquillity, and it will come, just not in the way you were expecting. The idea behind the shadow image seems to be that

tranquillity will indeed follow suspension of judgment, but it is not the thing you were expecting. So, burning with curiosity, you engage in the investigation whether P, expecting to find tranquillity when you discover whether P; you end up not discovering whether P but rather suspending judgment whether P, and much to your surprise, tranquillity still follows. Will being a Pyrrhonian Skeptic bring you tranquillity, as Sextus advertises? Two objections have been brought against it. Sextus obviously does not think there is such a thing as the goal of life no self-respecting Pyrrhonian Skeptic could have such a theoretically loaded view. But then how can Sextus talk consistently of the goal of the Skeptic being tranquillity? Such is the penalty of arguing, on the one hand, that there is no such thing as a goal of life [â€¦], and on the other, that Pyrrhonism is the only way to it. That thought is missing because of course the Skeptic does not have any beliefs about what is good or bad, and indeed Sextus himself touts Pyrrhonism as having the advantage over other philosophies, and over the belief systems of ordinary people, that Pyrrhonists shed the additional opinion that each of these things [sc. PH I 30; cf. The Pyrrhonists would have done better, I believe, to stay out of the competition for guides to the happy life, and limit themselves to the field of epistemology. He must become a global skeptic, and not just a local one. And quite apart from the apparent unavailability of this particular belief to the Skeptic, there is also the general worry that the Skeptic has no beliefs whatsoever thus precluding him from believing that no enquiry will ever produce an answer. It is to this question that we shall turn next. Since Sceptics spend their time taking the dogmatists to task for settling on their beliefs too quickly and not persevering in their enquiries, it is a natural question to wonder whether the Sceptics themselves have any beliefsâ€”if so, they seem open to the very charges they level at the dogmatists. There are two ways in which the Sceptics might appear to have beliefs. First, they offer a wealth of counterarguments to the positions of the dogmatists. Where the dogmatists argue that P, the Skeptic argues that not-P. It can easily appear that the Skeptic is in fact endorsing the conclusion, i. But we should distinguish between two cases of arguing something, say, C: Presumably, the Skeptic is doing the second. Still, you can see how the misunderstanding might have arisen for more on this, see section 4. A second way the Sceptics might appear to have beliefs is that they went about their everyday lives in the way we all do, eating, drinking, sleeping, and avoiding oncoming wagons and dangerous-looking dogs, etc. This was a common charge levelled against the Sceptics by their opponents in antiquity see Vogt Rather, we say that they do not hold beliefs in the sense in which some say that belief is assent to some unclear object of investigation in the sciences; for Pyrrhonists do not assent to anything unclear. The question of how to interpret this little paragraph, and thus settle the question of whether the Skeptic has any beliefs, is the question that much contemporary scholarship concerning Sextus has focussed on see for instance the papers collected in Burnyeat and Frede ; with Fine ; Barnes ; Perin b , yet there does not seem to be a consensus. Frede argues that what is meant is that the Skeptic accepts the judgment of phantasia; at least, he raises no objection against its verdict; if it says things are thus or thus, he does not challenge this. In other words, the Skeptic, like everyone, has impressions which represent the world as being a certain way, and these are forced upon the Skeptic, so there is no avoiding them, and these impressions in turn have a certain pull which inclines the Skeptic to assent to them and which he does not counteract. Texts such as I 13, I 22, and I 29â€”30 emphasize that the impressions are forced on us. Other texts emphasize that impressions bring with them a pull which is sufficient to cause assent, e. These beliefs are not forced upon one, but arise through the rational weighing up of evidence on either side of a question. As far as the second part of our passage is concerned, it says only that the sceptic may not have beliefs of a certain kind, viz. Or again, contrast someone who believes that it is day outside because they run through an argument such as this in their heads: The belief that you should eat something right now, where this belief is formed immediately from the feeling you have of being hungry. The belief that you should make the table in this way, where this belief is formed from your craft-experience. Imagine the apprentice carpenter who simply follows the example set by his teacher, without actually holding that the way his teacher does things is the correct one. Or perhaps you make the table this way just because every time you have made a table this way it has stayed upright. These examples are deliberately chosen in order to reflect the fourfold sources of appearances guiding our actions that Sextus relates in PH I 21â€”24, which Frede will take to be a fourfold source of beliefs open to the Skeptic, providing him with the wherewithal to lead an ordinary life: By the necessitation of feelings, hunger

conducts us to food and thirst to drink. By the handing down of customs and laws, we accept, from an everyday point of view, that piety is good and impiety bad. By teaching of kinds of expertise we are not inactive in those expertises which we accept. Many other texts in Sextus suggest that in fact, the Pyrrhonian Skeptic does have beliefs. Jonathan Barnes has a slightly different interpretation of the pronouncements of the Skeptic: He is avowing something: Barnes and Burnyeat have the same goal: That argument is sketched below section 4. What do Barnes and Burnyeat say about the kind of life the Skeptic leads? How can the Skeptic respond to the charge that he cannot lead a recognisably human life unless he has beliefs? Many texts in Sextus suggest that the Skeptic does not have any beliefs. Finally, it is worth noting another position that some scholars have taken: The skeptic does indeed have beliefs: When X is in that state, X has the impression or appearance that P. The question which concerns us is this: According to Frede, assenting to this feeling is a matter of believing the world to be as the state represents it as being. Or, more punchily, assenting to the feeling forced upon one by appearances entails accepting the content of that state. For Barnes and Burnyeat, to assent to the appearance that P is a matter of acknowledging that one is in the state of being appeared to that P. What gets acknowledged or accepted is that one is in that mental state, not the content of the state. Fine and Perin agree with Barnes and Burnyeat that the Skeptics acknowledge that they are in a certain mental state rather than accepting the content of the state, but Fine and Perin are prepared to say that the skeptic does thereby believe something, namely that it appears to him that P, and that this belief is the only kind of dogma the Skeptic has. In deciding this debate, one has to keep two issues apart see e. The second of these points is a matter of philosophical definition, but the first is a properly interpretational dispute. But what we are interested in here is the larger question of just what it means to have a dogma of the acceptable kind. So who is right about what the acceptable kind of dogma is?

Chapter 5 : Pyrrho - Wikipedia

Get this from a library! Ancient epistemology. [Lloyd P Gerson] -- "Ancient Epistemology explores ancient accounts of the nature of knowledge and belief from the Presocratics up to the Platonists of late antiquity.

Sextus Empiricus and Greek Scepticism [Cambridge: What is more, philosophical skepticism is hardly limited to the ancient world and the twentieth century. But even this is too limiting. Most philosophers, however adamantly idealist they may be, will call upon skeptical methods and arguments when practicing their discipline. This article explores these methods and arguments in their original form as expressed by Sextus Empiricus in his work *Outlines of Scepticism*. Then it gives a gloss of pre-Sextus skeptical development. A Skeptical Setting For the eight centuries between the time of Plato and Aristotle in the fourth century BC and the time of Augustine in the fifth century AD, there are no significant political philosophers of note—and few enough of any other sort either. Rather, there were two issues that acted as a restraint on philosophy in general, and political philosophy specifically. First, in terms of general philosophy, it was believed that Socrates had already said everything which needed to be said on the subject. Comparing Epicurus and Zeno, W. Both therefore went back behind Plato and Aristotle to Socrates. Refinement rather than creation was the philosophical order of the day. Second and more relevant for the purposes of this article, in terms of political philosophy the collapse of the independent polis and the rise of the bureaucratic empires negated the need for discussion about the virtues of the various forms of government. What good is political philosophy in an era of powerful Hellenistic despots and Roman caesars? The Platonic idea of a state unified around the vision of wisdom virtuously reflected through the whole of a society certainly appealed to the political leaders of the day, [6] but discussion of the merits of this idea or any other political idea requires both contrast with other possible states and the possibility of change, transformation, and revolution in existing states. When there is no hope for fundamental change in government, there is no need for discussion of the ideal state. That is, the goal of philosophy during this time was to find a way for the individual—indeed, for all individuals—to live a fully human life regardless of political circumstance. Such a way must be found that applies not only to the citizens of the Greek world, but to all human beings. This is the idea of cosmopolitanism, which became important as first the Greek empires and then Rome came to encompass ever-greater diversity of peoples and cultures within their borders. A philosophical belief system that applied as well to Bactria Afghanistan as to Carthago Nova Cartagena but did not challenge the political status quo was necessary. While each proposed a different answer, they all shared at least two broad goals: A human being living authentically would be at peace within himself such that this peace could not be removed, whatever the state may choose to do to the individual and whatever political disaster might befall the nation. It is in this context—that of the search for personal and authentic peace in the face of an inflexible and nonnegotiable political system—that skepticism arose. As was everyone else in Hellenistic and Roman philosophy, these thinkers were heavily influenced by Socrates and the Socratic method. Socrates was famously highly suspicious of established dogma and spent much of his time asking questions such that the problems and weaknesses of conventional wisdom were clearly exposed. They relentlessly exposed the groundlessness of the assumptions made by the great minds of the day. Paul Elmer More writes: The great philosophies, however rich their contents may be, rest finally on the simplest common-places of experience; and it is the honour of Pyrrho that he grasped the conscious sense of ignorance inherent in the minds of all men, penetrated to its source, and applied it relentlessly where other men faltered or drew back. The founders of skepticism insisted on a rigorous and implacable ignorance as the backbone of their philosophical method. At the end of the second century BC, Stoicism was quickly becoming the dominant philosophy of the Mediterranean basin—a position it would hold until finally uprooted by Christianity and Neoplatonism. Apparently with some delight, Carneades wrapped the teachings of Pyrrho in the garments of Plato and used them as a bludgeon against the dogmatic declarations of the Stoics. One cannot know truth contra Stoicism, but one can guess closely enough to get by peacefully in the real world, and that is far more than the false claims of the Stoics could ever hope to offer. Plotinus and Augustine Ascendant Despite energetic and spirited resistance, skepticism never gained ground against the quickly spreading

Stoicism. In part, this was because of the limitations built into skepticism itself. Only a handful of minor writers had worked to advance skeptic doctrines, about whom we know functionally nothing outside of what Sextus Empiricus ca. Sextus is the great articulator of skeptical doctrine, which will be examined below. While his writings have survived only in part, he provides the most thorough exposition of skeptical history and beliefs, especially in contrast to the philosophical enemies of the skeptics. Sextus had no more luck than Carneades in expanding skepticism and toppling his dogmatic enemies, and by the fourth century new schools of thought arose and brought the Hellenistic model of skepticism to an end. Christianity had risen to power in the Roman Empire and was in the process of developing a complex and comprehensive body of philosophy. By the time Augustine wrote his response to skepticism, *Against the Academics*, he was well aware that his writing was directed at a philosophy which had passed its prime centuries before and was rarely seriously held in his own day. The other came from within paganism itself through the growth of Neoplatonism. As Christianity grew within the Roman Empire, paganism experienced a doctrinal renaissance. Platonic texts and teachings were reinterpreted and expounded by the greatest philosopher between Aristotle and Augustine, Plotinus ca. The other bodies of thought had largely fallen by the wayside. Skeptical Foundations Skeptical philosophy has two fundamental foundations. If properly employed, these foundations so Sextus claimed lead to the goal of personal peace. I Do Not Know The first foundation is the realization that all dogmatic claims are based on an assumed relationship between appearance and reality. The problem, the skeptic comes to realize, is that this assumption cannot be proven and must be accepted in order for argument to proceed. This is the great trick the dogmatists pull on their audience and that which the skeptics must see behind. Hankinson provides a useful summary of how the useful summary of how the skeptics pursue this argument: There is yet a further nuance to the skeptical method. Claim X Proposed by discussant 1. Claim Y Proposed by discussant 2. Evidence presented by discussants in defense of their own claims and against the opposing claims. At this point, a dogmatic thinker will say that the next steps are as follows: A comparison of X and Y followed by a decision in favor of one and against the other. Truth has been achieved, and peace will follow. This is where the skeptic will accuse the dogmatist of cheating. When asked to judge between X and Y, the skeptic points out that such a judgment can be made only if the judge already knows the answer to begin with. That is, to pronounce that something is absolutely true, the truth must already be known. The point of the argument in the first place, however, was that the truth is not known. In order to decide the dispute which has arisen about the criterion [standard of truth], we must possess an accepted criterion by which we shall be able to judge the dispute; and in order to possess an accepted criterion, the dispute about the criterion must first be decided. And when the argument thus reduces itself to a form of circular reasoning, the discovery of the criterion becomes impracticable, since we do not allow them to adopt a criterion by assumption, while if they offer to judge the criterion by a criterion we force them to a regress ad infinitum. And furthermore, since demonstration requires an approved demonstration, they are forced into circular reasoning. And what is philosophy if not an exploration of those unprovable foundations? When one begins to explore the absolute claims made by the dogmatists, reason—“even rightly used and properly applied”—fails and leads to either infinite regress or circular reasoning. Again, the fundamental problems with the dogmatic claims concerning truth are first that they are basing those claims on appearances rather than reality, and second that those appearances cannot stand as a foundation for reason since they are unproven and unprovable. Sextus himself gives numerous examples of this perceived weakness, including the following: For we cannot ourselves judge between our own impressions [of reality] and those of animals, since we ourselves are involved in the dispute and are, therefore, rather in need of a judge than competent to pass judgment ourselves. Besides, we are unable, either with or without proof, to prefer our own impressions to those of irrational animals. For in addition to the probability that proof is, as we shall show, a nonentity, the so-called proof itself will be either apparent to us or nonapparent. If, then, it is nonapparent, we shall not accept it with confidence; while if it is apparent to us, inasmuch as what is apparent to animals is the point in question and the proof is apparent to us who are animals, it follows that we shall have to question the proof itself as to whether it is as true as it is apparent. Obviously, there are serious problems with the strict logical structure of this skeptical formulation, but there are just as obviously great rhetorical strengths to this method. Both these problems and these strengths will be

discussed in more detail below. If one can never get beyond appearances and has no reasonable foundation for argumentation to stand upon, what is the skeptic to do? Taking up the second example above, Sextus provides a different model of argumentation: Suspension of judgment *epoche* by stepping back from the question into as fully neutral a space as possible. In other words, the true skeptic will realize that a foundation of appearances on both sides of the argument mean that each argument is of equal validity. It is also the point where Sextus reveals what he believes to be the true strength of his philosophy and what sets it apart from the dogmatists in a way that makes it a worthwhile pursuit: Bob Plant gives an excellent synopsis of this whole process: Subsequently, a state of indecision *epoche* is brought about where the choice between either view proves arbitrary. Finally, having paralysed reason, unperturbedness *ataraxia* ensues. *Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 2, no. The equal validity of the claims resulting from their being based solely on appearances leads to a suspension of judgment, which in turn results in the *ataraxia* which was originally being sought. For the skeptic, having set out to philosophize with the object of passing judgment on the sense impressions and ascertaining which of them are true and which false, so as to attain quietude thereby, found himself involved in contradictions of equal weight, and being unable to decide between them suspended judgment; and as he was thus in suspense there followed, as it happened, the state of quietude in respect of matters of opinion. What is more, even the part of his nature which seeks peace in the first place has been satisfied: For the man who opines that anything is by nature good or bad is forever being disquieted: On the other hand, the man who determines nothing as to what is naturally good or bad neither shuns nor pursues anything eagerly; and, in consequence, he is unperturbed. An important caveat must be presented here: Sextus does not deny the objective reality of good and evil, nor does he affirm it. Where the dogmatists will claim that peace comes through achieving the good and avoiding the evil and then usually proceed to debate among themselves over whose definitions of good and evil are the right ones, the skeptic claims that the benefits of a moral lifestyle are "i. Once one retreats from this impossible effort, one finds the peace that had been lost in pursuit of unattainable higher goods. The desires of the individual readjust accordingly, and the human being is once again in harmony with reality as authentically experienced" experience springing from a state of acknowledged ignorance. Peace, for the skeptic, comes not through acceptance of truth but rather through the acceptance of the reality of human and personal epistemological limitations. The authenticity of humanity does not have to do with having true knowledge at all—it has to do with the inaccessibility of knowledge and the peace of a soul that has stopped attempting the impossible. These methodological claims will be taken up in the conclusion. The obvious question which arises from this skeptical conclusion is that of practice: When in Rome? If one is at peace without knowing or relying on any transcendent truth about the physical world, the mental world, or ethical practice, an obvious question is going to be: The criterion, then, of the skeptic school is, we say, the appearance, giving this name to what is virtually the sense presentation? Adhering, then, to appearances we live in accordance with the normal rules of life, undogmatically, seeing that we cannot remain wholly inactive.

Chapter 6 : Bibliography on Skepticism - Diego E. Machuca

Balaguer's response, on the other hand, is based on the claim that to demand that platonists explain how humans could know that FBP is true is exactly analogous to demanding that external-world realists (i.e., those who believe that there is a real physical world, existing independently of us and our thinking) explain how human beings could.

Bryn Mawr Classical Review Academic Tendencies in Middle Platonism. Let me also note that the book may not be very widely distributed, and that for this reason I have decided to summarize it in some detail. Ancient philosophers who saw themselves as belonging to the school founded by Plato called themselves by different names. At least through the time of Antiochus of Ascalon in the first century BC they called themselves "Academics"; but from perhaps the first century AD onward most of them not all, and not always preferred to name themselves directly after the founder, as "Platonists. While I am not sure exactly what Opsomer means by "Academic tendencies" in middle Platonism -- he is not claiming that the authors he studies were sceptics -- he at least wants to show that the concerns raised by Arcesilaus and Carneades did not die out at the end of the Hellenistic period but continued to be important for at least some members of the school through the end of the second century AD. Opsomer pits himself against what he suggests is the standard scholarly view, namely that Antiochus, by rejecting scepticism, became the founder of "middle Platonism" and that Platonists after him simply took it for granted both that Plato had been a dogmatist i. Opsomer grants that some second century AD figures such as Alcinous and Apuleius, often taken as paradigms of Middle Platonism, do seem to be dogmatists unworried about sceptical challenges or about sceptical interpretations of Plato. But other figures, such as Plutarch and the second-century self-proclaimed Academic Favorinus, practice argument on both sides of a question, stress the limits of human knowledge and often advocate suspension of judgment on disputed questions, and readily acknowledge the New Academic part of their heritage. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that any second-century Platonist or Academic would have had warm feelings about Antiochus. Now while all of these points in Opsomer are perfectly correct, they had also all been made by Harold Tarrant in his *Scepticism or Platonism?* So Opsomer sometimes seems to be attacking a straw man. Opsomer does not give a comprehensive survey of these themes -- it is disappointing that there is no discussion of Galen, who is surely a middle Platonist and who attacks the sceptical Academic Favorinus but who can himself sound strikingly "Academic," as in his ostentatious suspension of judgment on the immortality of the soul. He is also able, in Chapter 5, to use Plutarch to shed new light on the anti-Academic polemic of Epictetus and on the Academic counter-polemic of Favorinus. A New Academic will say that Plato wrote his dialogues not to assert or demonstrate positive doctrines but merely to try out arguments or to refute rash claims of knowledge, and he will be able to point to Platonic passages that support this interpretation. While the *Commentary* has conventionally been dated to the second century AD, Tarrant now joined by Sedley has argued for an earlier date, in the late first century BC or early first century AD. While the text does not itself take a sceptical position, it has a lively engagement with sceptical readings of Plato and shows more sympathy to the New Academy than we might expect from a typical second-century Middle Platonist like Alcinous; Tarrant thought that bringing the date back to an earlier period set the text in the proper context of sceptic-anti-sceptic debates, and that its position belonged with the "Fourth Academy" of Philo of Larisa. He has some arguments turning on the vocabulary of the *Commentary*, which he does not claim to be decisive p. The Anonymous *Commentary* also rejects the Cornford-like view that the *Theaetetus* shows what knowledge is not of, namely sensible things, and the Sophist what knowledge is of, presumably the Forms whose combinations the Sophist discusses Opsomer, following Sedley, calls this view the "object-related interpretation". Against these views, the *Commentary* holds that the *Theaetetus* is about neither the criterion nor the object of knowledge, but the essence of knowledge, and that Plato in the *Theaetetus* maintains but for pedagogical reasons never explicitly asserts the *Meno* account of knowledge as true opinion tied down by reasoning out the cause. Opsomer tries to use this dispute to reconstruct some of the history of the reading of Plato, seeing the *Commentator* as mediating between a sceptical Academic reading and a strongly dogmatic reading. Certainly the object-related interpretation would come from a dogmatic metaphysical Platonism -- Opsomer attributes it to Antiochus p.

Opsomer also thinks that the "criteriological" interpretation of the Theaetetus would come from a strongly dogmatic Platonism pp. Perhaps he thinks that this is what would make philosophical sense, but I do not understand why. Or perhaps he is relying on the Bastianini-Sedley text, according to which the Commentary says at II, that the people who maintain the object-related interpretation are the same people who think that the Theaetetus is about the criterion; but this text depends on a conjectural reconstruction of an illegible portion of line 33, based in turn on the judgment that this is what would make philosophical sense, and again I do not understand why. I would think that someone who thinks the Theaetetus is an argument that there is no knowledge of sensible things would think that it is about knowledge rather than about the criterion.

Chapter 7 : Bryn Mawr Classical Review

In espousing the withholding of belief the Pyrrhonist is obviously opening himself up to the argument that they introduce an untenable position, in that without belief.

Origins[edit] Pyrrho of Elis c. Pyrrhonism as a school was either revitalized or re-founded by Aenesidemus in the first century BC. As in Stoicism and Epicureanism , eudaimonia is the Pyrrhonist goal of life, and all three philosophies placed it in ataraxia or apatheia. Pyrrhonists withhold assent with regard to non-evident propositions, that is, dogma. They disputed that the dogmatists had found truth regarding non-evident matters. For any non-evident matter, a Pyrrhonist tries to make the arguments for and against such that the matter cannot be concluded, thus suspending belief. According to Pyrrhonism, even the statement that nothing can be known is dogmatic. They thus attempted to make their skepticism universal, and to escape the reproach of basing it upon a fresh dogmatism. The core practice is through setting argument against argument. To aid in this, the Pyrrhonist philosophers Aenesidemus and Agrippa developed sets of stock arguments. The ten modes of Aenesidemus[edit] "The same impressions are not produced by the same objects owing to the differences in animals. The same temperature, as established by instrument, feels very different after an extended period of cold winter weather it feels warm than after mild weather in the autumn it feels cold. Time appears slow when young and fast as aging proceeds. Honey tastes sweet to most but bitter to someone with jaundice. A person with influenza will feel cold and shiver even though she is hot with a fever. The moon looks like a perfect sphere to the human eye, yet cratered from the view of a telescope. Snow appears white when frozen and translucent as a liquid. If they do not differ, then they too are relative; but if they differ, then, since everything which differs is relative to something According to Sextus, they are attributed only "to the more recent skeptics" and it is by Diogenes Laertius that we attribute them to Agrippa. Dissent " The uncertainty demonstrated by the differences of opinions among philosophers and people in general. Progress ad infinitum " All proof rests on matters themselves in need of proof, and so on to infinity. Relation " All things are changed as their relations become changed, or, as we look upon them from different points of view. Assumption " The truth asserted is based on an unsupported assumption. Circularity " The truth asserted involves a circularity of proofs. According to the mode deriving from dispute, we find that undecidable dissension about the matter proposed has come about both in ordinary life and among philosophers. Because of this we are not able to choose or to rule out anything, and we end up with suspension of judgement. In the mode deriving from infinite regress, we say that what is brought forward as a source of conviction for the matter proposed itself needs another such source, which itself needs another, and so ad infinitum, so that we have no point from which to begin to establish anything, and suspension of judgement follows. In the mode deriving from relativity, as we said above, the existing object appears to be such-and-such relative to the subject judging and to the things observed together with it, but we suspend judgement on what it is like in its nature. We have the mode from hypothesis when the Dogmatists, being thrown back ad infinitum, begin from something which they do not establish but claim to assume simply and without proof in virtue of a concession. The reciprocal mode occurs when what ought to be confirmatory of the object under investigation needs to be made convincing by the object under investigation; then, being unable to take either in order to establish the other, we suspend judgement about both. In a sense, they are still irresistible today. Whoever wants eudaimonia to live well must consider these three questions: First, how are pragmata ethical matters, affairs, topics by nature? Secondly, what attitude should we adopt towards them? Thirdly, what will be the outcome for those who have this attitude? Therefore, neither our sense-perceptions nor our doxai views, theories, beliefs tell us the truth or lie; so we certainly should not rely on them. Rather, we should be adoxastous without views , aklineis uninclined toward this side or that , and akradantous unwavering in our refusal to choose , saying about every single one that it no more is than it is not or it both is and is not or it neither is nor is not. The outcome for those who actually adopt this attitude, says Timon, will be first aphasia speechlessness, non-assertion and then ataraxia freedom from disturbance , and Aenesidemus says pleasure. Influence[edit] The Pyrrhonist school influenced and had substantial overlap with the Empiric school of

medicine. Many of the well-known Pyrrhonist teachers were also Empirics, including: It is, in effect, a modernized extension of Pyrrhonism.

Chapter 8 : Hellenistic Monarchs & Sketches in the History of Western Philosophy

edge and belief from the Presocratics up to the Platonists of late 3 The Pyrrhonist revival 1 Introduction 2 The Platonist's response to the.

Roman Epicurus bust Epicureanism is a system of philosophy based upon the teachings of the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus, founded around BC. Epicurus was an atomic materialist, following in the steps of Democritus. His materialism led him to a general attack on superstition and divine intervention. This would lead one to attain a state of tranquility ataraxia and freedom from fear as well as an absence of bodily pain aponia. The combination of these two states constitutes happiness in its highest form. Although Epicureanism is a form of hedonism insofar as it declares pleasure to be its sole intrinsic goal, the concept that the absence of pain and fear constitutes the greatest pleasure, and its advocacy of a simple life, make it very different from "hedonism" as colloquially understood. Epicureanism was originally a challenge to Platonism, though later it became the main opponent of Stoicism. Epicurus and his followers shunned politics. After the death of Epicurus, his school was headed by Hermarchus; later many Epicurean societies flourished in the Late Hellenistic era and during the Roman era such as those in Antiochia, Alexandria, Rhodes, and Ercolano. Its best-known Roman proponent was the poet Lucretius. By the end of the Roman Empire, being opposed by philosophies mainly Neo-Platonism that were now in the ascendant, Epicureanism had all but died out, and would be resurrected in the Age of Enlightenment. Some writings by Epicurus have survived. Some scholars consider the epic poem *On the Nature of Things* by Lucretius to present in one unified work the core arguments and theories of Epicureanism. Many of the scrolls unearthed at the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum are Epicurean texts. At least some are thought to have belonged to the Epicurean Philodemus. History In Mytilene, the capital of the island Lesbos, and then in Lampsacus, Epicurus taught and gained followers. Epicurus emphasized friendship as an important ingredient of happiness, and the school seems to have been a moderately ascetic community which rejected the political limelight of Athenian philosophy. They were fairly cosmopolitan by Athenian standards, including women and slaves. Some members were also vegetarians as, from slender evidence, Epicurus did not eat meat, although no prohibition against eating meat was made. Another ancient source is Diogenes of Oenoanda, who composed a large inscription at Oenoanda in Lycia. By the late third century CE, there was little trace of its existence. In fact, Epicurus appears to represent the ultimate heresy. In the 17th century, the French Franciscan priest, scientist and philosopher Pierre Gassendi wrote two books forcefully reviving Epicureanism. Shortly thereafter, and clearly influenced by Gassendi, Walter Charleton published several works on Epicureanism in English. Attacks by Christians continued, most forcefully by the Cambridge Platonists. Religion Epicureanism does not deny the existence of the gods, rather it denies their involvement in the world. According to Epicureanism, the gods do not interfere with human lives or the rest of the universe in any way. Some scholars say that Epicureanism believes that the gods exist outside the mind as material objects the realist position, while others assert that the gods only exist in our minds as ideals the idealist position. Rather, Epicurus is said to have viewed the gods as just idealized forms of the best human life,[8][12] and it is thought that the gods were emblematic of the life one should aspire towards. Long and David Sedley in their book, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, in which the two argued in favor of the idealist position. The Riddle of Epicurus, or Problem of evil, is a famous argument against the existence of an all-powerful and providential God or gods. As recorded by Lactantius: God either wants to eliminate bad things and cannot, or can but does not want to, or neither wishes to nor can, or both wants to and can. If he wants to and cannot, then he is weak "and this does not apply to god. If he neither wants to nor can, he is both weak and spiteful, and so not a god. If he wants to and can, which is the only thing fitting for a god, where then do bad things come from? Or why does he not eliminate them? Gleib, it is settled that the argument of theodicy is from an academical source which is not only not Epicurean, but even anti-Epicurean. Epicureanism also resembles Buddhism in its temperateness, including the belief that great excess leads to great dissatisfaction. He viewed recreational sex as a natural, but not necessary desire that should be generally avoided. Justice was deemed good because it was seen as mutually beneficial. In fact, Epicurus referred to life

as a "bitter gift". By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul. It is not by an unbroken succession of drinking bouts and of revelry, not by sexual lust, nor the enjoyment of fish and other delicacies of a luxurious table, which produce a pleasant life; it is sober reasoning, searching out the grounds of every choice and avoidance, and banishing those beliefs through which the greatest tumults take possession of the soul. It believes in the soul, but suggests that the soul is mortal and material, just like the body. Non fui, fui, non sum, non curo "I was not; I was; I am not; I do not care" , which is inscribed on the gravestones of his followers and seen on many ancient gravestones of the Roman Empire. This quotation is often used today at humanist funerals. In the most basic sense, Epicureans see pleasure as the purpose of life. These pleasures involve sensations of the body, such as the act of eating delicious food or of being in a state of comfort free from pain, and exist only the present. These pleasures involve mental processes and states; feelings of joy, the lack of fear, and pleasant memories are all examples of pleasures of the mind. Kinetic pleasure describes the physical or mental pleasures that involve action or change. Katastematic pleasure describes the pleasure one feels while in a state without pain. These desires are limited desires that are innately present in all humans; it is part of human nature to have them. These desires are innate to humans, but they do not need to be fulfilled for their happiness or their survival. These desires are neither innate to humans nor required for happiness or health; indeed, they are also limitless and can never be fulfilled. He defined justice as an agreement made by people not to harm each other. For if the void were infinite and bodies finite, the bodies would not have stayed anywhere but would have been dispersed in their course through the infinite void, not having any supports or counterchecks to send them back on their upward rebound. Again, if the void were finite, the infinity of bodies would not have anywhere to be. Without the swerve, the atoms would never have interacted with each other, and simply continued to move downwards at the same speed. Every object was continually emitting particles from itself that would then interact with the observer. For example, when one places a straight oar in the water, it appears bent. If something is pleasurable, we pursue that thing, and if something is painful, we avoid that thing. Other adherents to the teachings of Epicurus included the poet Horace , whose famous statement Carpe Diem "Seize the Day" illustrates the philosophy, as well as Lucretius , who wrote the poem De rerum natura about the tenets of the philosophy. The poet Virgil was another prominent Epicurean see Lucretius for further details. The Epicurean philosopher Philodemus of Gadara , until the 18th century only known as a poet of minor importance, rose to prominence as most of his work along with other Epicurean material was discovered in the Villa of the Papyri. In the second century CE, comedian Lucian of Samosata and wealthy promoter of philosophy Diogenes of Oenoanda were prominent Epicureans. Julius Caesar leaned considerably toward Epicureanism, which e. If I had time I would add to my little book the Greek, Latin and French texts, in columns side by side. Christopher Hitchens referred to himself as an Epicurean. Humanistic Judaism as a denomination also claims the Epicurean label. Modern usage and misconceptions In modern popular usage, an Epicurean is a connoisseur of the arts of life and the refinements of sensual pleasures; Epicureanism implies a love or knowledgeable enjoyment especially of good food and drink. Because Epicureanism posits that pleasure is the ultimate good telos , it has been commonly misunderstood since ancient times as a doctrine that advocates the partaking in fleeting pleasures such as sexual excess and decadent food. This is not the case. Epicurus regarded ataraxia tranquility, freedom from fear and aponia absence of pain as the height of happiness. He also considered prudence an important virtue and perceived excess and overindulgence to be contrary to the attainment of ataraxia and aponia. While some twentieth-century commentary has sought to diminish this and related quotations, the consistency with Epicurean philosophy overall has more recently been explained. His community also became known for its feasts of the twentieth of the Greek month.

Chapter 9 : Greek Philosophy Skepticism – Pyrrho, Aenesidemus & Sextus Empiricus | Eric Gerlach

The Pyrrhonist develops suspension of judgment as a habitual response to all matters of dispute, achieving a state of "epoche" - a general suspension of judgement about the real nature of things.

When he was thirty-five or forty years old, Pyrrhon followed his master Anaxarchus and accompanied Alexander of Macedon to India. After an unknown length of time in India, Pyrrhon, perhaps forty-five or fifty years old, returned to Greece where he taught for perhaps forty years more and founded the school known as Pyrrhonism or Skepticism. He had no positive tenet, but a Pyrrhonist is one who in manner and life resembles Pyrrhon DL 9. No single thing is in itself more this than that DL 9. Timon of Phlius, a first-generation student of Pyrrhon, seems to have written the earliest account of Pyrrhonism. The answers appear as a formulaic series of negations. Questions one and two are answered with three negative adjectives: As a result, says Timon: Neither our perceptions nor our opinions are either true or false. Question three is answered again with three negative adjectives: We should say of each thing that it no more is than is not, than both is and is not, than neither is nor is not. Those who take this attitude, says Timon, will gain first detachment from language aphasia, then imperturbability ataraxia. This article will discuss selected topics which illustrate the parallelism between these two dialectical systems, will compare their purposes, and will consider the possibilities of historical connections between them. For the Greek side of the parallelism we will rely heavily on Sextus Empiricus, the Pyrrhonist encyclopedist of the second century A. Sextus Empiricus states clearly the purpose of this destruction of opinions: He has not formed even the slightest opinion or conceptualisation about what is here seen, heard or thought Sn. Some parallel passages will highlight the extraordinary similarity in basic attitude. Nothing is more this than that OP 1. In this final truth there is neither this nor that. Tilopa, Vow of Mahaamudraa. It cannot be shown as this or that It has nothing to do with philosophical systems Long-chen-pa. Let us neither grasp at one thing nor flee from another Pyrrhon, ap. All things are by nature equally indeterminable, admitting of neither measurement nor discrimination. For this reason our sense experiences and beliefs are neither true nor false. Therefore we ought not to put our trust in them, but be without beliefs, disinclined to take a stand one way or the other Timon ap. I grasp at nothing; I cling to nothing OP 1. Let him not think something is better or worse or even the same as another Sn. The intention of the Buddha is this: The Tathagata is one who has forsaken all reflections and discriminations A. It is considered perverse to affirm or negate. It is said to be correct only when there is neither affirmation nor negation Chi-tsang. This rejection was supported, in both schools, by a complex dialectic of the reducing or destroying type, designed, as Streng put it, "to redirect energies which were caught in the net of discourse. It is not possible indeed for a cause and effect to be identical. But again it is not possible for them to be different. If the cause and effect were identical, there would be an identity of the producer and the produced. If they were different, however, then the cause would be the same as a non-causal cause MK Sextus formulates the argument at greater length, providing us meanwhile with the fullest explication of the "denial of partial identity": If there exists any cause of anything, either it is separate from the matter affected or it co-exists with it; but neither when separate from it nor when co-existing with it can it be the cause of its being affected, as we shall establish; therefore no cause of anything exists. Now, when separated from its matter obviously it is not a cause, since the matter with respect to which it is termed a cause is not present, nor is the matter affected, since that which affects it is not present with it. But if the one is coupled with the other [then the arguments against contact apply: In order that a thing may act or be acted upon, it must touch or be touched; but, as we shall establish, nothing can either touch or be touched; therefore neither that which acts nor that which is acted upon exists. For if one thing is in contact with another and touches it, it is in contact either as a whole with the whole, or as a part with a part, or as a whole with a part or as a part with the whole Now it is according to reason that a whole does not touch a whole; for if whole touches whole, there will not be contact but the union of both Nor again is it possible for part to touch part. For the part is conceived as a part in respect of its relation to the whole, but in respect of its own limited extent it is a whole, and for this reason again either the whole part will touch the whole part, or a part of it a part. Both Sextus in an argument going back to

Parmenides and Naagaarjuna reject the possibility that the cause somehow "contains" the effect, because in that case, says Sextus, "[the effect] is already in existence and being already in existence it does not become, since becoming is the process toward existence. And as Naagaarjuna put it: If, on the other hand, a cause is not a void with respect to an effect, how could it give rise to the effect? That is, if the cause does not contain the effect, the effect cannot arise from it; if it does contain the effect, then the effect already exists and cannot be said to arise from it. Nor can we get around the problem by saying that the effect is self-produced, or reduplicated, for if the nature of the cause is to reduplicate itself, then the effect, being a duplicate of the cause, will also have that nature, will also reduplicate itself, and so on ad infinitum; the world will be filled with identical objects. The Maadhyamika version is found in the first alternative of MK 1. Sextus makes the same point: One thing is not able to become two. Another Skeptic and Maadhyamika approach to the critique of causality focuses on the problem of time, or succession, and establishes that cause and effect can exist neither simultaneously nor successively, and again, by excluded middle, there is no other possibility. Sextus and Naagaarjuna state the argument in almost identical terms; first Sextus: If anything is the cause of anything, either the simultaneous is the cause of the simultaneous, or the prior of the posterior or the posterior of the prior. Now the simultaneous cannot be the cause of the simultaneous owing to the co-existence of both and the fact that this one is no more capable of generating that one than is that one of this one, since both are equal in point of existence. Nor will the prior be capable of producing that which comes into being later; for if, when the cause exists, that whereof it is cause is not yet existent, neither is the former any longer a cause, as it has not that whereof it is the cause, nor is the latter any longer an effect, since that whereof it is the effect does not co-exist with it. For each of these is a relative thing, and relatives must necessarily co-exist with each other, instead of one preceding and the other following. If the cause gives to the effect a causal nature before extinguishing itself, then there will be a dual causal form of the given and the extinguished. If however the cause does not give the effect a causal nature before extinguishing itself, then the effect, rising after the cause extinguishes itself, will have no cause. If again the effect and the assemblage in. Moreover, if the effect appears prior to the assemblage of conditions containing the cause, then it, without cause and relational condition, will have a non-causal nature. MK If fire is the cause of burning, either it is productive of burning by itself and using only its own power, or it needs for this purpose the cooperation of the burning material. And if it produces the burning by itself, being sufficient of its own nature, then, since it always possesses its own nature, it ought to have been continually burning. But it does not burn always, but burns some things and does not burn others; therefore it does not burn by itself and by using its own nature. But if it does so in conjunction with the suitability of the burning wood, how can we assert that it, rather than the suitability of the wood, is the cause of the burning? For just as no burning takes place if the fire is non-existent, so also no burning takes place if the suitability of the wood is absent. Thus also, if it [fire] is the cause because the effect occurs when it is present and does not occur when it is absent, the suitability [of the wood] too will be the cause for both these reasons. APh 1. This exemplum argues 1 that a cause produces nothing by itself and thus is not a cause, and 2 that a cause is as much an effect as it is a cause, and an effect is as much a cause as it is an effect -- in other words, that it is impossible to distinguish between cause and effect and as impossible to call them one the identity-difference dilemma again. Naagaarjuna devotes an entire chapter of the Kaarikaas to the same exemplum, with the same implications evidently in mind: If wood is the same as fire, then likewise the doer and his deed will be identical. If fire is distinct from wood, then it will exist without wood. If there is no cause for burning, then fire should burn constantly. And there will be no purpose in fire to start i. Being unrelated to an other, it i. Moreover, it will follow that a constantly burning fire would have no purpose of starting i.e. Thus if it is granted that there is wood in the burning process and that only wood is burning, then by what means will it burn? If fire is dependent on wood and wood on fire, then each one must have a prior completed state. Fire does not exist in dependence on wood nor does it exist by non-dependence on wood. Likewise, wood does not exist by dependence on or non-dependence on fire. MK The cause cannot exist without the effect, therefore, the effect is the cause of the cause; each precedes the other in a logical circularity ad infinitum. Finally, cause and effect can neither be logically conceived as the same nor as different, and there is no third possibility. The types of arguments used against causality easily can be converted to critiques

of other topics and were. As Robinson said, "Naagaarjuna states explicitly that the form of his arguments may be abstracted from their content, that other proofs may be performed by substituting different terms within the same pattern. This comes rather close to recognition of the principle of variables. In addition to these uses familiar from Eleatic thought, both Sextus and Naagaarjuna have a critique of proof from infinite regress of premises, which we will present as an example of the type. The thing adduced as proof of the matter proposed needs a further proof, and this again another, and so on ad infinum so that the consequence is suspension of judgment, as we possess no starting point for our argument. And if, for you, there is a source of knowledge of each and every object of proof, then tell how, in turn, for you there is proof of these sources. If by other sources of knowledge there would be the proof of a source -- that would be an "infinite regress"! And this is equivalent to the insight into the emptiness of all dharmas. What is relative is subjective, unreal. No phenomenon, no object of knowledge, escapes this universal relativity. That is to say, a relational "entity" is not a real svabhaava entity, for if it were, the categories of identity and difference would apply to it. We may compare Chi-tsang: Dharmas are neither existent nor non-existent, because they are produced by causes. If existence is not existence by its own nature but depends on causes to be existent, we know that although it appears to exist, it has no true existence. Since it has no true existence, it cannot be called existence in the real sense, although it appears that it exists. Relatives are only conceived and do not exist APh 1.