

The Pyrrhonist's ἀταραξία and φιλανθρωπία

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The purpose of this article is twofold. First, to examine what beliefs, if any, underlie (a) the Pyrrhonist's desire for ἀταραξία and his account of how this state may be attained, and (b) his philanthropic therapy, which seeks to induce, by argument, ἐποχή and ἀταραξία in the Dogmatists.¹ Second, to determine whether the Pyrrhonist's φιλανθρωπία and his search for and attainment of ἀταραξία are, as scholars have generally believed, essential aspects of his stance. The analysis of these issues will allow us to understand better the Pyrrhonian outlook and to assess its coherence. This is important especially because Pyrrhonism is a philosophy that may still be found attractive and worth adopting.

Beginning with an analysis of Sextus Empiricus' exposition of the Skeptic's search for and attainment of ἀταραξία, I show that he does not hold beliefs about the nature of this state and its connection to suspension of judgment, nor about the nature of perturbation (ταραχή) and its relationship to the holding of beliefs. Section 2 argues that neither the search for nor the attainment of ἀταραξία in matters of belief are essential to Pyrrhonism. Section 3, taking as its point of departure the only passage of Sextus' extant work which presents the notion of φιλανθρωπία as key to understanding the Skeptic's use of different kinds of arguments, examines the possible connection between the Skeptic's philanthropic concern and his ἀταραξία in matters of belief, and shows that his philanthropy does not commit him to any belief about matters of objective fact. Section 4 argues that the adoption of a philanthropic attitude is not intrinsic to Pyrrhonism. In the last section, I summarize the results, identify the defining features of Pyrrhonism, and address some objections to my position.

I

In the Πυρρώνειοι Ὑποτυπώσεις (*PH*), the first reference to the notion of ἀταραξία is found in the definition of σκέψις:

The Skeptical [way of thought] is an ability to set up oppositions (δύναμις ἀντιθετική) among things which appear and

¹ When speaking of the 'Pyrrhonist' or 'Skeptic', I refer specifically to the thinker whose stance is described in the extant writings of Sextus Empiricus. Also, following the general usage of scholars, I employ the term 'Dogmatist' in the sense in which Sextus uses δογματικός, namely, to designate someone who makes positive or negative assertions about the nature of things on the basis of what he considers to be evidence and reasoned arguments.

things which are thought in any way whatsoever, an ability from which we come, through the equipollence (ἰσοσθένεια) in the opposed things and arguments, first to suspension of judgment, and after that to unperturbedness.² (*PH* i 8)

Sextus defines this state of ἀταραξία at which the Skeptic arrives after suspending judgment as ‘undisturbance and calmness of soul’ (*PH* i 10). In later chapters, he explains the part played by ἀταραξία in the origin of the Skeptic’s philosophy. At *PH* i 12 he tells us:

[T]he causal origin of the Skeptical [way of thought] is the hope of becoming unperturbed (τὴν ἐλπίδα τοῦ ἀταρακτῆσαι). For men of talent, perturbed by the anomaly in things and being in *aporia* (ἀποροῦντες) as to which of them they should rather assent to, came to investigate what is true in things and what is false, so as to become unperturbed as a result of this distinction.

The future Skeptic’s search for ἀταραξία is again referred to at *PH* i 25-26, where Sextus describes the unexpected way in which that state of mind was attained:

We say up to now that the Skeptic’s end is unperturbedness in matters of opinion (ἐν τοῖς κατὰ δόξαν ἀταραξίαν) and moderation of affection in things unavoidable (ἐν τοῖς κατηναγκασμένοις μετριοπάθειαν). For, having begun to philosophize with the aim of deciding among the appearances (τὰς φαντασίας) and apprehending which are true and which false, so as to become unperturbed, he encountered an equipollent disagreement (ἰσοσθενῆ διαφωνίαν); being unable to decide it, he suspended judgment. And while he was suspending judgment, unperturbedness in matters of opinion closely followed him by chance (τυχικῶς παρηκολούθησεν).³

At *PH* i 29 we find the same contrast between the way ἀταραξία was initially expected to be attained and the way it finally happened to be attained:

The Skeptics hoped to acquire unperturbedness by deciding the anomaly in the things which appear and which are thought, but being unable to do this, they suspended judgment. And while they were suspending judgment, unperturbedness closely followed (παρηκολούθησεν) them by chance, as it were (οἷον τυχικῶς), as a shadow [closely follows] a body.

² The translations of Sextus’ texts are my own, but I have consulted Bury 1936-1949, Mates 1996, Pellegrin 1997, Bett 1997, and Annas-Barnes 2000.

³ *Adversus Mathematicos* (*AM*) i 6 describes in a similar way the Skeptic’s reason for starting to philosophize and the result of his philosophical investigation. The important difference between *PH* i 25-26 and *AM* i 6 is that in the latter ἀταραξία is neither given as the ultimate reason why the Skeptic approached philosophy nor mentioned as the state that fortuitously accompanied ἐποχή. I come back to *AM* i 6 in section 2.

The texts quoted tell us that, by suspending judgment, the Pyrrhonist unexpectedly attained the goal of ἀταραξία, which at the beginning of his philosophical journey he thought he would reach by the contrary attitude, that is, by assenting to the assertions he would discover to be true, and hence by holding the correct beliefs.⁴ Sextus, however, does not limit himself to reporting this *de facto* result. In the first and third books of *PH*, and above all in the fifth book of *Adversus Dogmaticos* (*AD*), he also explains why the holding of beliefs about how things really are prevents one from attaining a state of peace of mind, offering at the same time an account of how ἐποχή leads to ἀταραξία and εὐδαιμονία.⁵

Sextus conducts his exposition with reference to value beliefs. He observes that the presence of the things one believes to be good and of those one believes to be bad produces perturbation. For when a person lacks that which he regards as good, on the one hand he intensely desires to obtain it and, on the other, he thinks he is ‘persecuted’ by things naturally bad and restlessly tries to escape from them. He then pursues what he considers to be good, but he is troubled if he acquires it, not only because he is irrationally and immoderately exalted, but also because he is afraid of losing it (*PH* i 27, iii 237, 277; *AD* v 116-117, 146). This is why even when he is not directly disturbed by the presence of those things he deems to be bad, he continues to be troubled by the perturbation resulting from his constant guarding against them (*AD* v 117, 129). Another reason why a person is grieved, even when he has that very thing he regards as good, is the jealousy, malice, and envy he experiences towards the other people who possess it. For the value of the thing he regards as good lies in his being the only one to have it (*AD* v 127). Sextus also observes that those who believe that things are by nature good or bad are unhappy or can never attain happiness (*AD* v 111, 113, 118, 130, 144). The reason is that ‘all unhappiness occurs because of some perturbation’ (*AD* v 112, cf. 141), which in turn comes about because of the intense pursuit of the things one considers to be good and the intense avoidance of those one considers to be bad (*AD* v 112-113, 116).

Sextus refers to another way in which belief in anything’s being good can produce unhappiness. He points out that the things regarded as naturally good by certain people bring about the neighboring vices: for instance, those who pursue wealth as being something by nature good may fall, without noticing it, into love of money. Hence, being productive of bad things, those supposed goods too must be deemed to be bad and, therefore, to cause nothing but unhappiness (*AD* v 120-124).

Finally, Sextus remarks that the Dogmatists cannot eliminate the perturbation that arises from the pursuit of things deemed good and the avoidance of things deemed bad by arguing that (a) while the things one has so far pursued have little or no value, there are others which are more valuable and thus to be pursued; and

⁴ At *PH* i 30 and 215 Sextus also refers to ἀταραξία as a τέλος, and at *PH* i 18 he points out that the Skeptic deals with physics for the sake of ἀταραξία.

⁵ It is only in *AD* v where it is said that ἐποχή allows us to achieve εὐδαιμονία. As we will see, it is also there where complete ἀταραξία is implicitly identified with εὐδαιμονία.

(b) while there are things of little use that cause many troubles, there are others much more useful that cause few troubles (*AD* v 132). Sextus points out that, in the first case, one is not eliminating the disturbance, but transferring it, since one has not desisted from the intense pursuit of that which one considers good, but merely replaced one good by another. Furthermore, this procedure could render the situation even worse, since it makes one believe that the new object of pursuit is more valuable than the old one (*AD* v 134-138). In the second case, one is not eliminating the perturbation, but comparing one choice and avoidance with another choice and avoidance. This is absurd because the person who is perturbed wants to eliminate the perturbation, not to assess what is more, or less, perturbing (*AD* v 139).

Contrary to the belief that things are by nature good or bad, the adoption of suspension of judgment on the matter makes it possible to attain unperturbedness and happiness, and hence to live acceptably (*PH* i 28, *AD* v 111, 144, 160, 168; see also *PH* iii 235; *AD* v 147, 150). For those who suspend judgment ‘neither avoid nor pursue anything intensely’ (*PH* i 28). It is important to note that Sextus explicitly states that unperturbedness supervenes upon suspension of judgment about all things (see *PH* i 31, 205; *AD* v 144, cf. 160, 168). I take this to mean that the attainment of ἀταραξία has at least so far occurred *only* when the Skeptic has achieved *complete* ἐποχή. Of course, the Skeptic cannot rule out the possibility that others will attain ἀταραξία by suspending judgment only about some beliefs, but given his past experience, it appears to him that ἀταραξία will be attained only when complete ἐποχή is adopted.⁶

Despite what Sextus states in some of the passages just referred to, he thinks neither that the Skeptic is free from all perturbation nor that all perturbation is due to the intense pursuit and avoidance of the things considered to be good and bad respectively. Indeed, he points out that the Skeptic is disturbed by certain things that impose themselves upon him, such as thirst and hunger (*PH* i 29; *AD* v 143, 148-150, 156-158; cf. *PH* i 13, 24; Diogenes Laertius [DL] ix 108). Yet the Skeptic is better off with regard to these unpleasant affections (πάθη) than the Dogmatist, since he lacks the additional disturbance induced by the belief that such affections are by nature bad, and it is precisely the absence of that belief which makes them moderate and more easily borne (*PH* i 30, iii 235-236; *AD* v 118, 150-155, 161; see also *AD* v 128-129, 145, 156-160). The existence of those involuntary affections is the reason Sextus says that μετροπάθεια in things

⁶ Concerning the relationship between ἐποχή and ἀταραξία, Barnes 1990, 2691 contends: ‘The point of Pyrrhonism is ἀταραξία. A man who suffers only mildly from ταραχή may be a perfect Pyrrhonist; for he may achieve complete ἀταραξία by exercising his δύναμις and reaching ἐποχή in a very modest way. Others, who find the whole of life a sea of troubles, will not be set at rest until they have achieved universal ἐποχή’. As I have just argued, Sextus would not *a priori* rule out that ἀταραξία might be attained by partially suspending judgment. However, he would certainly not accept that the person who suspends judgment only partially may be deemed a ‘perfect Pyrrhonist’, since he points out that even the person ‘who dogmatizes about a single thing, or in general prefers one appearance to another in respect of convincingness and lack of convincingness, or makes assertions about any non-evident thing, adopts the distinctive character of the Dogmatist’ (*PH* i 223).

unavoidable is, along with ἀταραξία in matters of opinion, the Skeptical end (*PH* i 25, 30). As he himself seems to recognize at *AD* v 147-149, the Skeptic does not actually attain complete εὐδαιμονία, simply because he can achieve full ἀταραξία with regard to matters of opinion, whereas he cannot eliminate the perturbation that arises from bodily feelings.⁷

The first thing to note about Sextus' account is that, whereas the texts quoted at the beginning of this section said that the state of mental disturbance was induced by the anomalies the future Skeptic found in things, we are now told that this state is the result of the holding of beliefs. This is not necessarily problematic, since it may appear to Sextus that the state of mental disturbance is induced by both of those factors. What does seem to be problematic is the fact that, even when the Skeptic finds himself in a state of ἀταραξία, the anomalies have not been resolved. It is not possible to solve this difficulty by arguing that the disturbance experienced by the future Skeptic was in reality brought out by his search for the truth, since the full-fledged Skeptic does not give up this search (see *PH* i 1-3). Though there still remains a crucial difference: unlike the future Skeptic, the full-fledged Skeptic does not keep on investigating with the conviction or belief that there certainly is a truth to be found. However that may be, the difficulty in question would not have worried Sextus, since he would have argued that that is just the way things have happened to him and that he is limiting himself to describing it, without trying to construct a theory purporting to give a rational explanation of what has occurred.

Nonetheless, one might object that, in the texts examined, Sextus theorizes about the means for and the hindrance to the attainment of ἀταραξία and εὐδαιμονία, as well as about the nature of some states of mind. First, Sextus asserts that the holding of beliefs directly or indirectly brings about perturbation and unhappiness and must, therefore, be considered objectively bad. This is clearly stated in *PH* iii, at the end of the discussion of whether anything is by nature good, bad, or indifferent. After referring to the different troubles that arise from the belief in the existence of things good and bad (*PH* iii 237), Sextus observes:

From this we conclude that, if what is productive of bad is bad and to be shunned, and if confidence that these things are by nature good and those bad produces perturbation, then to hypothesize and be convinced that anything is by nature bad or good is something bad and to be shunned. (*PH* iii 238)

Second, Sextus believes that the core component of human happiness is ἀταραξία in matters of opinion, and that this state of mind is hence by nature good or to be pursued. He also believes that there exists a causal link between ἀταραξία and ἐποχή, which makes the latter a desirable state.

In what follows, I argue that Sextus does not hold any of the aforementioned beliefs. I analyze *PH* and *AD* separately, beginning with the former.

⁷ Following Sextus, when I speak of ἀταραξία *tout court*, I refer to ἀταραξία in matters of opinion.

As regards the supposedly causal connection between *ἐποχή* and *ἀταραξία*, it is clear that what Sextus seeks to show by his use of the word *τυχικῶς* at *PH* i 26 and 29 is that the Skeptic does not assert that there is such a kind of connection. Sextus wishes to express his Skeptical caution, which prevents him from maintaining that things are by nature such that *ἀταραξία* can only be reached by adopting suspension of judgment. But in speaking of the ‘fortuitous’ link between *ἐποχή* and *ἀταραξία*, he is not denying that there is a necessary connection between them either. Sextus is simply restricting himself to describing what has hitherto occurred to him, without affirming or denying that there exists a causal relationship between both states. This is confirmed by a number of passages. First, as we saw, at *PH* i 8 Sextus limits himself to saying that *ἀταραξία* is achieved ‘after’ suspension of judgment. Also, at *PH* i 10 he tells us: ‘we will suggest in the chapter on the end [of Skepticism] how unperturbedness accompanies (*συνεισέρχεται*) suspension of judgment’. Likewise, at *PH* i 232, when assessing how close to Skepticism Arcesilaus’ stance is, Sextus remarks that for this Academic ‘the end is suspension of judgment, which we said is accompanied (*συνεισέρχεται*) by unperturbedness’. We see that, in both passages, Sextus makes use of the verb *συνεισέρχεται*, thus avoiding any assertion that there is, or is not, a causal link between *ἐποχή* and *ἀταραξία*. The same kind of cautious language is found at *PH* i 31, where it is said that ‘unperturbedness follows (*ἀκολουθεῖν*) suspension of judgment about all things’, and at *PH* i 205, where Sextus observes that *ἀταραξία* ‘supervenes on (*παρυφίστασθαι*) suspension of judgment about all things’.

The image of a shadow following a body at *PH* i 29 seems to indicate that the Pyrrhonist believes there is a causal relationship between *ἐποχή* and *ἀταραξία*, since the connection between a body and its shadow is not at all fortuitous. However, a more careful examination of the passage shows that the Pyrrhonist does not hold that belief. First, in the same sentence in which the image is given, Sextus says that *ἀταραξία* ‘fortuitously’ followed the person who suspended judgment. Second, to compare the way *ἀταραξία* follows the person who suspends judgment with the way a shadow follows a body, Sextus makes use of a verb already employed at *PH* i 26, namely *παρακολουθεῖν*, which not merely means ‘to follow’ (which is the meaning of *ἀκολουθεῖν*), but ‘to follow closely’. Thus, we must not put the emphasis on the fact that a shadow *always* and *necessarily* follows a body when the body blocks light, but on the fact that in this situation there is a *close* connection between them. Sextus’ intention is only to emphasize that up till now the Skeptic’s *ἐποχή* has been *closely* accompanied by the state of *ἀταραξία*. If my interpretation is correct, then at *PH* i 29 Sextus is expressing himself in a way that allows him to avoid any assertion about the relationship between both states. Now, if the Skeptic does not believe or disbelieve that there is a necessary connection between withholding one’s assent from all assertions and being unperturbed, then one may reasonably infer that neither does he believe or disbelieve that there is a necessary connection between giving one’s assent to some assertion(s) and being perturbed.

Finally, we must remember that at *PH* iii 13-29 Sextus deals with the issue of efficient causes and adopts suspension of judgment on the matter. Hence, if we consider that he is consistent with this suspensive attitude, he could not believe that suspension brings about ἀταραξία and that the holding of beliefs produces ταραχή.

Regarding the question of whether Sextus believes that ἀταραξία is by nature good and ταραχή by nature bad, there are several texts that show that this is not the case.⁸ First, in the same chapter in which Sextus discusses the Skeptic's end, he observes that 'he who makes no determination (ὁ ἀοριστῶν) about the things naturally good and bad neither avoids nor pursues anything intensely; this is why (διόπερ) he is unperturbed' (*PH* i 28). Given the explanation of the expression οὐδὲν ὀρίζω at *PH* i 197 (see also that of the phrase πάντα ἐστὶν ἀόριστα at *PH* i 198-199), it is clear that to make no determination means to suspend judgment. Hence, if Sextus explicitly points out, when expounding the Skeptic's goal, that he suspends judgment about the good or bad character usually attributed to things, he could hardly believe that ἀταραξία is inherently good and ταραχή inherently bad. As regards διόπερ, I think that the use of this kind of term is misleading since, as I have tried to show, Sextus does not really affirm the existence of a causal connection between ἐποχή and ἀταραξία.⁹

Another relevant text is the exposition of the Tenth Mode, which 'depends upon ways of life, customs, laws, mythical beliefs, and Dogmatic suppositions' (*PH* i 37, 145), and is mainly concerned with ethics (*PH* i 145), that is, with the distinction between good, bad, and indifferent things (*PH* iii 168; cf. *AD* v 2-3). Sextus illustrates by means of examples the various combinations in which each of those five factors comes into conflict with itself and with the others, thus showing, for instance, that what is considered good or is allowed within a particular framework is deemed bad or is forbidden within others. He concludes his exposition of this mode by observing that, owing to the anomaly he has found, he is not able to determine what things are like in their real nature, but only to say how they appear relative to each of those factors. Hence, he must suspend his judgment about the intrinsic value of anything (*PH* i 163). If this is so, Sextus cannot believe that ἀταραξία is inherently good or to be pursued, and that ταραχή is inherently bad or to be avoided.

Likewise, in the third book of *PH*, Sextus explicitly states that the Pyrrhonist suspends judgment about whether anything is by nature good or bad (*PH* iii 178, 182, 235). This is a further element that should prevent us from attributing to him the belief that ἀταραξία and ταραχή are by nature good and bad respectively. Note that *PH* iii 235 precedes the passage from *PH* iii 238 quoted above, in

⁸ In my discussion of the relevant passages of *PH* and *AD*, I will refer only to ἀταραξία and ταραχή. But, of course, the conclusions we can draw from the analysis of those passages also apply to whether suspension of judgment and the holding of beliefs are deemed to be good and bad respectively.

⁹ Later in this section, I offer possible reasons for the occasional use of terms that seem to imply that the Skeptic does in fact hold beliefs.

which the state of perturbation and the holding of beliefs are deemed to be bad. One may explain this apparent contradiction by saying that in this latter passage Sextus is arguing dialectically, that is, using the Dogmatists' own premises to draw certain conclusions that they reject but are obliged to accept. One may likewise suppose that this is what Sextus is doing in other passages in which he seems to be espousing Dogmatic views.

In addition, at *PH* i 233, when referring to the close similarities between Arcesilaus and the Pyrrhonists, Sextus points out that Arcesilaus

also says that partial suspensions of judgment are good and partial assents bad. Yet someone might say that we say these things in accordance with that which appears to us, and not affirmatively, whereas he [says them] in reference to their nature, so that he says that suspension of judgment is a good thing and assent a bad thing.

This passage is relevant both to the present issue and to the previous question of the relationship between ἐποχή and ἀταραξία. For if Sextus believed that ἀταραξία is by nature good and is entailed by ἐποχή, he would certainly assert that ἐποχή too is something by nature good, since it would be precisely the state of mind which brings about ἀταραξία.

There is another text, probably the most important, that should remove all appearance of Dogmatism from the exposition in *PH* i and iii of the Skeptic's search for and attainment of ἀταραξία. Using the same careful language as at *PH* i 233, at *PH* i 4 Sextus issues a much stronger caveat:

[I]n the present work we will give an outline of the Skeptical way of thought (τῆς σκεπτικῆς ἀγωγῆς), with the caveat that we affirm of none of the things to be discussed that they certainly are just as we say they are, but rather we report descriptively (ἱστορικῶς ἀπαγγέλλομεν) on each thing according to how it appears to us now (κατὰ τὸ νῦν φαινόμενον ἡμῖν).

It follows from this preliminary caveat that Sextus is not to be interpreted as advancing Dogmatic views about the nature of unperturbedness and perturbation, nor about the relationship between suspension and unperturbedness or the connection between the holding of beliefs and perturbation. In each case, he must be understood to be describing how things appear to him at the moment he is doing so.

As for *AD* v, let us first note that there is no reason why Sextus' conception of εὐδαιμονία as ἀταραξία should necessarily be regarded as the manifestation of a belief, since it can be interpreted as an appearance. He is merely reporting that it appears to him both that ταραχή constitutes a hindrance to the attainment of εὐδαιμονία and that this state consists in being completely unperturbed. These non-epistemic appearances may well be the result of the influence of two factors. First, according to the most important testimony preserved about Pyrrho's thought, he seems to have identified unperturbedness and happiness (see Aristocles, in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* xiv 18.1-5). Second, two of the Skep-

tic's main Dogmatic rivals, namely, the Stoics and the Epicureans, considered unperturbedness the principal component of happiness (see McPherran 1989, 138; Striker 1996, 185-188; Bett 1997, 144).

In addition, if Janáček 1963 is right to argue that what we know as *AD* are only the extant books of a work that also contained a part parallel to *PH* i,¹⁰ one may suppose that Sextus probably employed in the lost discussion of the Skeptical end the same kind of careful language used at *PH* i 25-30 and other related passages, and included caveats similar to the one found at *PH* i 4.¹¹ But this being a supposition, the only thing left is to analyze *AD* and see if Sextus makes remarks analogous to or compatible with those we found in *PH*.

As with *PH*, the Skeptical treatment of the issue of efficient causes at *AD* iii 195-358 should prevent us from interpreting Sextus as asserting that the holding of opinions is the cause of perturbation and unhappiness, whereas the adoption of suspension of judgment is the cause of unperturbedness and happiness.

There are several texts of *AD* v that show that the Skeptic does not believe that ἀταραξία and ταραχή are by nature good and bad respectively. At *AD* v 18, after the presentation of the Dogmatists' division of things into good, bad and indifferent, and of the objections that have been directed against it, Sextus considers it necessary to clarify that ἔστι has two meanings: ὑπάρχει and φαίνεται. He then explains:

[W]henever we say (ὅταν λέγωμεν) Skeptically 'Of existing things some are good, some bad, and some between these', we insert 'is' as indicative not of reality (ὑπάρξεως) but of appearance (φαίνεσθαι). For concerning the real existence (περὶ τῆς πρὸς τὴν φύσιν ὑποστάσεως) of things good and bad and neither we have quite enough dispute with the Dogmatists; but we have the habit of calling each of them good or bad or indifferent according to how they appear (κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον τούτων). (19-20)

Thus, *every time* the Skeptic says that something is good, bad, or indifferent, he is not affirming that it is really so, but is only describing how it appears to him. The Skeptic employs the verb 'to be' with the meaning of 'to appear' because, having suspended judgment about whether anything is by nature good, bad, or indifferent, he limits himself to basing his value judgments on the various ways things appear to him. What must be emphasized is that the passage quoted serves as a caveat, before Sextus begins his Skeptical inquiry into the topic at issue.

¹⁰ This would explain the otherwise inexplicable references to previous discussions of certain topics: see *AD* i 1, 29, 345, iii 195, v 144, 167.

¹¹ The fact that there was a chapter on the end is confirmed by the cross-references at *AD* v 144 and 167. Note that in the latter paragraph Sextus says that he has 'spoken more accurately about these matters in the lectures on the Skeptical end'. The topics discussed at 162-166 do not correspond to those dealt with at *PH* i 25-30 ('What is the end of the Skeptical [way of thought]?'), but rather to those treated at *PH* i 21-24 ('The criterion of the Skeptical [way of thought]'). This is a fact that supports Janáček's thesis.

Hence, if at some point of his exposition he seems to affirm or imply that ἀταραξία is by nature good or worth pursuing, and that ταραχή is by nature bad or to be avoided, his words must be understood in the sense that those states appear so to him.

At *AD* v 77-78 Sextus speaks of the private good (τὸ ἴδιον ἀγαθόν) of each person, which ‘is not good by nature nor common to all’. McPherran 1989, 143-144, 154 and McPherran 1990, 135, 142n31 refer to the Skeptic’s endorsement of private goods and maintain that they must be construed as reports of that which appears good to him. Though I agree with McPherran on how to understand that which the Skeptic regards as good, it must be noted that the textual support for his position is less apparent than his exposition suggests. For *AD* v 77-78 is the only text which talks about the notion of private goods, but does not say anything about the Skeptic’s endorsement of them, contrary to what McPherran 1989, 154 claims. Hence, neither does *AD* v 114-118 talk about the Skeptic’s ‘positive endorsement of private πρὸς τι goods’ (McPherran 1990, 142n31). However, the interpretation of the Skeptic’s private good put forward by McPherran is supported by *AD* v 89, where Sextus observes that,

since the intelligence of each person contains judgments discordant with that of his neighbor, it is necessary that each person should regard as good that which appears so to himself (ἕκαστον τὸ φαινόμενον αὐτῷ ἀγαθόν). But that which appears good to each person (τὸ ἐκάστῳ φαινόμενον ἀγαθόν) is not good by nature.

First, it is clear that what is stated here also applies to the Pyrrhonist—that is, that there are things which appear to be good to him—, given the caveat at *AD* v 18-20. Second, it is reasonable to read the expression τὸ ἐκάστῳ φαινόμενον ἀγαθόν as equivalent to the expression τὸ ἴδιον ἐκάστου ἀγαθόν used at *AD* v 78, taking also into account that both goods are said not to be so by nature. Hence, even if *AD* v does not speak of the Pyrrhonist’s ‘private goods’, it seems that Sextus could well have done so. The Pyrrhonist’s possession of personal goods is explained by the fact that, even after suspending judgment, he continues to be affected in various ways owing to the influence of certain factors, such as his cognitive and biological constitution, and the laws and customs of his community (see *PH* i 23-24; *AD* v 162-166). Now, I think that one must interpret ἀταραξία as the Pyrrhonist’s most important personal good, which allows us to explain away any apparent commitment to the intrinsically desirable character of that state (see McPherran 1989, 164-165). For the Skeptic does not assert that the good relative to each person mentioned at *AD* v 77-78 and 89 is a good by nature, so the fact that there are things he regards as good, such as ἀταραξία, cannot be taken as the manifestation of any belief about their true nature.

Finally, in some passages of *AD* v Sextus points out that, unlike those who believe that things are by nature good or bad, the Skeptic suspends judgment (see 111, 144, 160, also 147, 168). It clearly follows from this that the Skeptic does not believe that ἀταραξία is by nature good and ταραχή by nature bad.

I now discuss some passages of *AD v* that seem to commit Sextus to a negative Dogmatic view as well as to a certain kind of moral realism. Both positions would reveal that the Skeptic does hold beliefs about ἀταραξία and ταραχή.

At *AD v* 114 Sextus presents three views to be considered: either everything anyone deems to be good or bad is such by nature, or only a certain one of the things deemed good is good and a certain one of the things deemed bad is bad, or these things are dependent upon their

being somehow in relation to something (ἐν τῷ πρὸς τί πως ἔχειν), and in relation to this person this thing is to be chosen or to be avoided, but in relation to the nature of things it is neither to be chosen nor to be avoided, but at one time to be chosen and at another to be avoided.

That this third view is adopted by the Skeptic seems to be confirmed by the fact that, after referring to the first two, Sextus says that it is the one which leads to ἀταραξία and εὐδαιμονία:

If someone were to say that nothing is by nature more to be chosen than to be avoided, or more to be avoided than to be chosen (since each thing which occurs is somehow in relation to something and, according to differing times and circumstances, turns out at one time to be chosen and at another to be avoided), he will live happily and unperturbedly... This will accrue to him from his holding the opinion (δοξάζειν) that nothing is by nature good or bad. Hence, it is not possible to live happily if one supposes that some things are by nature good or bad. (*AD v* 118)

First, in the two passages quoted, Sextus appears to be adopting the negative Dogmatic view that nothing is by nature good or bad.¹² In this regard, note that in other passages he points out (a) that one can achieve ἀταραξία and εὐδαιμονία only when one has established that nothing is by nature good or bad, which is a teaching peculiar to Skepticism (*AD v* 130, 140); and (b) that he has shown that good and bad things do not exist (*AD v* 185).¹³ Before, I attempted to show that

¹² Sextus explicitly says that this kind of negative view is Dogmatic at *PH* ii 79, *AD* ii 159, and *AM* i 5.

¹³ The passages referred to have led Richard Bett to propose an original interpretation of *AD v*. He thinks that in at least part of this book Sextus expounds a type of Pyrrhonism inconsistent with the one defended in the rest of his work. In Bett's opinion, the crucial difference between *AD v* and the ethical section of *PH* iii is that in the former, from (a) the mere disagreement about what is considered to be good or bad, and (b) the condition that for anything to be really or by nature good or bad, it must be good or bad for everyone and in all circumstances, it is concluded that nothing is by nature good or bad, and that what is one or the other is always relative to persons and circumstances. Bett also argues that in *AD v* the notion of ἐποχή takes on a sense different from the one it has in the rest of Sextus' work. (On Bett's interpretation, see Bett 1997, e.g., xii-xxxiii, 80-82, 97-105, 114-120, 137-144, 192-196; and Bett 2000, ch. 4, esp. section 3.) In my view, Bett's reading of *AD v* gives rise to difficulties which are at least as serious as those it is intended to solve. The main difficulty is that in the same work, i.e., in *AD*, Sextus would be using purposely and without any warning the notion of ἐποχή in

the reading according to which Sextus thinks that ἀταραξία is by nature good and ταραχή by nature bad is mistaken. We are now faced with the contrary situation, since if in the texts under consideration Sextus is adopting the negative Dogmatic stance just mentioned, then he believes that ἀταραξία and ταραχή are neither good nor bad by nature. As a thorough analysis of these and related texts would require an article of its own, I limit myself to a few remarks. In Sextus' other writings one finds the Skeptic's distinctive agnostic attitude coexisting with negative conclusions, just as in *AD v* one finds the claim that he who suspends judgment about everything is unperturbed and happy (*AD v* 111, 144, 160; see also 147, 150, 168) coexisting with the negative claims made in the passages referred to above. In neither case is it easy to determine how such views could fit together. One obvious solution is to claim that, in the texts in which Sextus seems to be arguing for negative Dogmatic positions, the argumentation is *ad hominem*. Another possible solution consists in interpreting those texts in the light of the caveats Sextus sometimes issues. On some occasions he explicitly points out that, when he advances arguments yielding negative conclusions, his intention is not to induce us to give our assent to them. Rather, he wants to show that such arguments appear to be equal in force to their rivals, so we will have to suspend judgment about the truth of the theses that those conflicting arguments purport to establish (see *PH* ii 79, 103; *AD* i 443-444, ii 159-160, 476-477; also *PH* ii 130, 133, 192). One could then argue that Sextus' intention in *AD v* is to advance arguments against the widespread belief that things are by nature good, bad, or indifferent, so as to counterbalance it and reach ἰσοσθένεια (cf. McPherran 1990, 134-135; Hankinson 1994, 66). However, even with the help of this interpretative key, I recognize that it is not always easy to account for all the texts in which Sextus seems to adopt a negative Dogmatic outlook.

Second, even if at first glance it may seem so, the texts quoted above do not license us to affirm that Sextus is adopting a type of relativism according to which things are good or bad only in relation to a particular person in certain circumstances. That is, there is no reason to affirm that he is adopting a kind of moral realism.¹⁴ For as we saw, at *AD v* 19-20 Sextus points out that *whenever* the Skeptic says that some things are good, some bad, and some indifferent, he merely means that they *appear* so to him. The passage does not introduce any distinction whatsoever between something's being good, bad, or indifferent by nature or invariably and its being good, bad, or indifferent in relation to a certain person in a given set of circumstances. On the contrary, the only conclusion we must draw is that *each time* we hear the Pyrrhonist saying that a person, a state, or an action is good, bad, or neither, we must interpret him as reporting an

two radically incompatible senses (see Machuca 2001, 157).

¹⁴ Annas 1998, 199-200 suggests that, in the passages of *AD v* referred to, Sextus is possibly confusing moral realism with moral absolutism, and skepticism with relativism. Bett 1997, 138-139, for his part, argues that Sextus' stance in *AD v* cannot be taken as a form of realism according to the latter's own conception of reality, but he does maintain that Sextus *asserts* that things *are* good or bad in relation to specific persons and situations (see n13).

appearance—he makes no assertion whatsoever about matters of objective fact.¹⁵ The passage from *AD* v 89 already discussed is also of central importance to this question. There Sextus observes that what each person regards as good is what *appears* so to himself, and that what appears good to each person is not so by nature. Hence, when one refrains from affirming that one's personal goods are good by nature, one is not left with real relative goods, but only with one's own appearances of value. The text does not present any third possibility: either we may affirm with certainty how things really are, or we must restrict ourselves to report how they appear to us. *AD* v 89, then, makes it completely clear that Sextus considers that *all* value judgments express the different ways things appear to those who make such judgments (for a similar interpretation, see McPherran 1990, 133-135). Therefore, the Skeptic of *AD* v must not be understood to be asserting that ἀταραξία is objectively good and that ταραχή is objectively bad, either invariably or in particular circumstances.

I hope that the examination of *PH* and *AD* has shown that Sextus has no beliefs about the nature of ἀταραξία and ταραχή or their relationship to suspension of judgment and the holding of beliefs, but that he either argues dialectically or restricts himself to describing how things have so far appeared to him. This is not to deny that, in passages where the argumentation is not dialectical, Sextus occasionally expresses himself in a Dogmatic way; but this is neither strange nor difficult to explain. The Skeptic has learned his language by interacting with the other members of his community, and before becoming a full-blown Pyrrhonist he used it in the same way as anyone else. Even though this language is rich and subtle enough to allow him to express his *sui generis* way of thinking and to make himself understood, it is reasonable to suppose that he is still influenced by the way he used to employ it and, what is more, by the way he needs to employ it even now in his daily life or in less ordinary contexts. In this regard, it is relevant to take into account the remarks concerning the use of language made in *AM* i. Sextus explains that the Pyrrhonist adopts different linguistic practices depending upon the context in which he finds himself: in philosophy he falls in with that of the philosophers, in medicine with that of the doctors, and in everyday life with that which is more usual and local (*AM* i 232-233). He also points out that the Pyrrhonist observes the common usage of language because it contributes to the conduct of life (*AM* i 55). The reason for this attitude is probably that from a practical point of view, if one wants to make communication easier (see *AM* i 234-235), to avoid pointless and fatiguing explanations, or to succeed in persuading others, on some occasions one must adapt to the terminology and the conceptual categories used by one's interlocutors. This would explain, at least in part, why Sextus occasionally expresses himself in a less careful, and hence misleading, manner. Sextus himself is aware of this, since he sometimes stresses the non-committal sense in which the Pyrrhonists use certain words and expressions that seem to imply that they do hold beliefs (see *PH* i 135, 191, 198-199, 200, 202-

¹⁵ For a contrary interpretation of this passage, see Bett 1997, 58-59, also 143, 177.

203; *AD* v 18-20). But we must also bear in mind that the Pyrrhonists are indifferent to and do not fight about the phrases they employ to express what appears to them (see *PH* i 191, 195, 207).

I would like to conclude this section by making a few remarks about some common objections to the plausibility of the Skeptic's philosophical journey. It has been argued that most intellectual puzzles do not bring about anxiety; that it is ridiculous to think that suspension of judgment may eliminate or mitigate the perturbation a person experiences; and that it is doubtful that the attainment of *ἀταραξία* is psychologically possible (see Mates 1996, 63, 75-77; Barnes 2000, xxx-xxxi; Striker 2004, 22).

First of all, those criticisms overlook the fact that it is one's own psychological makeup which determines what makes one anxious and whether or not one is able to attain *ἀταραξία* (by suspending judgment). This is why I think that there are no grounds for considering Sextus' report ridiculous or false, unless one believes that one is entitled to generalize one's own experience and dismiss a person's report of his experience when it is radically different. I am not claiming that one must accept as true every testimony one hears of, but only that one should be extremely cautious in this regard.

Second, I think it is legitimate for Sextus to present Skepticism as a path to *ἀταραξία*. The reason is not, of course, that he can prove that suspension of judgment will continue to have the same effect it has so far produced in a certain number of people. Rather, there is no *a priori* reason which completely rules out both the possibility that the suspensive attitude will allow the Sceptics to maintain the state of *ἀταραξία* in the future and the possibility that it will permit other people who pursue the same goal to reach it. In sum, the Pyrrhonist's attitude may or may not continue to work for him in the future and it may or may not work for other people; it is up to each individual to try it and see, so that there is no room for prejudices about its possible success.

II

In this section, I discuss whether the search for and the attainment of *ἀταραξία* in matters of opinion may be deemed essential to Pyrrhonism. The search for *ἀταραξία* and its attainment must be distinguished for two reasons. First, even if we were to arrive at the conclusion that, to be considered a Skeptic, *ἀταραξία* does not have to be one's aim, it could still be the case that, to be considered a Skeptic, one must attain that state of mind after suspending judgment. Second, it may be the case that, even if the Skeptic did not think that failure to achieve *ἀταραξία* prevents one from being a Pyrrhonist, he would still regard that state of mind as a goal essential to his stance.

According to McPherran 1987, 325; 1989, 165-167 and Annas 1993, 209-210, the Pyrrhonist regards his desire (and hence his search) for *ἀταραξία* as 'natural'. I do not feel comfortable with the application of this term to the Pyrrhonist's search for *ἀταραξία*, given the sense in which Annas and McPherran understand it. Annas 1993, 209, 212 takes it to refer to 'what is necessitated about us', the

‘aspects of us and our lives that are inescapable’ and ‘inevitable’. McPherran 1989, 164 understands it in the same way. If the search for ἀταραξία is natural in this sense, it seems that the Skeptic must regard it as intrinsic to his stance. Contrary to this view, I believe that the Skeptic considers that his choice of ἀταραξία as his goal rests upon fortuitous circumstances, such as his social, cultural, and philosophical background, and hence that the search for that state is not intrinsic to Skepticism. For instance, it is probable that the Skeptic’s choice was in part influenced by two factors. First, ἀταραξία was, if we can trust our sources, an important aspect of Pyrrho’s thought and way of life (see Aristocles, in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* xiv 18.1-5; DL ix 68; see also the quotation from Timon at *AD* i 1, where he is presumably describing Pyrrho). Second, as we said in the previous section, that notion played a key role in the theories of the Stoics and the Epicureans. Notice, in this connection, that the two definitions of τέλος given at *PH* i 25 are standard definitions accepted by Stoics and Epicureans (see Annas and Barnes 2000, 10nn47-48).

As regards the attainment of ἀταραξία, I think that most students of Sextus’ Pyrrhonism would contend that the Skeptic takes it to be intrinsic to his philosophy. One example is Barnes, who, as we saw (see n6), maintains that the attainment of complete ἀταραξία is what makes one a perfect Skeptic. As with the search for ἀταραξία, I think that the achievement of this state is not a defining feature of Pyrrhonism. In what follows, I will show that Sextus’ texts support this interpretation.

Like Annas and McPherran, Martha Nussbaum thinks that the desire for ἀταραξία is a ‘natural inclination’ with which the Skeptic is left after everything else is taken away. She contends that

it is already a natural animal impulse, closely linked to other natural impulses that are part of the ‘observances of life’ ... Just as the dog moves to take a thorn out of his paw, so we naturally move to get rid of our pains and impediments: not intensely or with any committed attachment, but because that’s just the way we go. (1994, 305)

Nussbaum’s view seems to have textual support, given that, while discussing the differences between medical Empiricism and Skepticism, and the similarities between the latter and medical Methodism, Sextus says: ‘that things foreign to nature force [us] to go on to their removal is clear, since even the dog, when a thorn is stuck in him, proceeds to its removal’ (*PH* i 238). One could then think that perturbation in general is ‘foreign to nature’,¹⁶ and hence that everyone tends to get rid of it. However, there are a couple of passages which seem to show that it has not invariably appeared to Sextus that one always and inevitably tends to get rid of one’s perturbation. At *PH* iii 194-196 and *AD* v 96-98 he discusses the Epicurean view according to which the thesis that by nature pleasure is a thing to

¹⁶ Needless to say, Sextus is not putting forward a view about what is objectively natural, but rather describing what appears to him to be so.

be chosen and pain a thing to be avoided is proved by the fact that animals, from the very moment they are born, pursue pleasure and avoid pain. One of the arguments Sextus directs against such a view is that, in some cases, pain is chosen because it allows us to obtain some of the things we pursue, such as knowledge, physical strength, and health. He is therefore aware that some people choose at least some kind of disturbance, so he could not regard the search for *ἀταραξία* as something inevitably imposed upon us. However, it seems plain that, in the passages in question, Sextus is advancing certain arguments only because they allow him to oppose the Epicurean position and reach *ἰσοσθένεια*. If this is so, then those passages cannot tell us anything about whether or not Sextus regards the search for *ἀταραξία* as natural.

It is particularly relevant to the present discussion to examine the definition of *σκέψις* at *PH* i 8 (this text was quoted at the beginning of section 1). As Nussbaum points out, this passage is susceptible to two different readings. According to the first, Skepticism is defined as an ability which opposes things which appear and which are thought in any way whatsoever, ‘and it is then added that Skepticism, so defined, in fact happens to lead to equipoise, suspension, and *ataraxia*’ (1994, 286). According to the second reading, these three results form part of the definition of *σκέψις*, so that Skepticism is the specific ability which produces such results. This reading is supported by *PH* i 25, where, when explaining the Skeptical *τέλος*, Sextus tells us that ‘an end is that for the sake of which all things are done or considered, but which [is not done or considered] for the sake of anything else; or [an end is] the final object of desires’. If *ἀταραξία* is the Skeptic’s end, then his *δύναμις ἀντιθετική* is aimed at achieving that state of mind, so that *ἀταραξία* is to be considered a part of the definition of Skepticism. It seems to follow from this that both the search for and the attainment of *ἀταραξία* are essential to the Pyrrhonian philosophy. However, one cannot conclude from *PH* i 25 that the search for *ἀταραξία* is inherent in Skepticism, given that the fact that all of a person’s actions are aimed at achieving a definite end does not imply that the choice of this end is inevitable, or that it cannot be abandoned and replaced by a different goal. Also, I think that if at some point the Skeptic’s *δύναμις ἀντιθετική* continued to lead to *ἰσοσθένεια* and *ἐποχή*, but not to *ἀταραξία*, he would not regard this as the loss of one of the defining characteristics of his outlook. These two points seem to be supported by *PH* i 7:

The Skeptical way of thought, then, is also called ‘Investigative’ because of its activity concerning investigation and inquiry; ‘Suspensive’ because of the affection that comes about in the inquirer after the investigation; ‘Aporetic’ either because, with regard to everything, it is in *aporia* (*ἀπορεῖν*) and investigates, as some say, or because of its being at a loss in relation to assent or denial; and ‘Pyrrhonian’ because of the fact that Pyrrho appears to us to have attached himself to Skepticism more tangibly and more conspicuously than his predecessors. (cf. *DL* ix 69-70)

We see that in the explanation of none of the four appellations given to the Skeptical attitude is there any reference to ἀταραξία. However, it is possible that this notion is implicitly included in the term Πυρρώνειος since, as we saw earlier, in some sources ἀταραξία is presented as playing an important part in Pyrrho's thought and life. But one may rather understand the explanation of that term in the sense that Pyrrho adopted the attitudes expressed by the other three labels given to Skepticism more thoroughly than anyone before him. Nevertheless, the text relates Pyrrho to σκέψις, which brings us again to its definition at *PH* i 8.

There are three passages which, to a greater or lesser degree, confirm that if ἀταραξία in matters of belief were abandoned as an end, or no longer accompanied ἐποχή, the Skeptics would not deem a vital part of their outlook to have been lost. The first text is found at *PH* i 25, where Sextus remarks that *up to now* (ἄχρι νῦν) the Skeptics consider ἀταραξία to be, along with μετριοπάθεια, their end. What Sextus is saying here is that so far the Skeptics have searched for ἀταραξία, but that in the future they may pursue a different aim. In my view, that passage shows (a) that Sextus is aware that a person's choice of a particular end is conditioned by circumstantial factors, and (b) that he thinks that, if ἀταραξία ceased to appear to the Skeptics as their most valuable personal good on account of the influence of those factors, this would not represent the loss of one of the defining features of their outlook. That is to say, giving up their search for ἀταραξία would not prevent them from continuing to be what they are, namely Skeptics.

The second text is found at *AM* i 6, where, as was noted earlier (see n3), there is no mention of the Skeptic's search for and attainment of ἀταραξία in the story of his philosophical journey. The passage is the following:

[The Skeptics] experienced more or less the same thing with regard to the studies (μαθημάτων) as they did with regard to the whole of philosophy. For just as they approached the latter with the desire of reaching the truth, but suspended judgment when confronted with the equipollent conflict and the anomaly of things, so too with regard to the studies they set out to acquire them, seeking to learn the truth here as well, but when they discovered similar *aporias*, they did not conceal them.

I find this omission suggestive, at the very least, since if the search for and the attainment of ἀταραξία were inherent in Pyrrhonism, one would certainly expect Sextus to mention them in the present passage. Perhaps this is due to a change of viewpoint from *PH* to *AM*, which is generally deemed to be the latest of Sextus' surviving works. Or perhaps it is only due to the fact that in *AM* Sextus is not concerned to give a detailed account of Pyrrhonism, as he is in the first book of *PH*. However that may be, what is undeniable is the fact that ἀταραξία plays no part in the brief story told at *AM* i 6, whereas the most distinctive aspects of the Pyrrhonist's philosophical journey are present: the search for the truth, the anomaly of things, the conflict among equipollent positions, the discovery of *aporias*, and the adoption of suspension of judgment.

Finally, the third text is the passage in which Sextus considers whether Arcesilaus' outlook is the same as the Pyrrhonist's. Sextus points out that Arcesilaus certainly seems to me to share the Pyrrhonian discourse, so that his way of thought and ours are almost one and the same. For he is not found making assertions about the reality or unreality of anything, nor does he prefer any one thing to another in respect of convincingness and lack of convincingness, but suspends judgment about everything. And [he says] that the end is suspension of judgment, which we said is accompanied by unperturbedness. He also says that partial suspensions of judgment are good and partial assents bad. (*PH* i 232-233)

Not only is ἀταραξία not adopted by Arcesilaus as his end, but it also does not accompany his suspension of judgment about everything. These differences between the Skeptic and Arcesilaus with respect to ἀταραξία do not seem to be crucial. On the contrary, such differences are referred to at the very point where Sextus is enumerating the reasons why the Skeptic's and Arcesilaus' attitudes are almost the same. In this regard, note that the text gives the impression that the Pyrrhonist too regards ἐποχή as one of his aims.¹⁷ As we saw in section 1, it is only in the passage that immediately follows the one quoted that Sextus refers to a possible key divergence: unlike the Skeptic, Arcesilaus is said to have made assertions about the nature of ἐποχή and συγκατάθεσις (*PH* i 233). Sextus also mentions that it is said that Arcesilaus, though apparently a Pyrrhonist, was in reality a Dogmatist, because he used his aporetic skill to test whether his companions were fitted to receive the Platonic δόγματα (*PH* i 234). Sextus does not put much trust in those accounts of Arcesilaus' philosophy that present him as a Dogmatist, judging by his opinion of the latter's stance, as expressed in the first sentence of the passage quoted. Such an approving opinion is unusual in the section of *PH* i where Sextus examines what distinguishes Skepticism from neighboring philosophies (the other exception is that of the Methodic doctors at *PH* i 236-241). Still, Sextus, remaining cautious, declares the stance of Arcesilaus to be *almost* (σχεδόν) identical to that of the Pyrrhonist. One may argue that the reason for this caution is precisely the fact that ἀταραξία plays no part in Arcesilaus' philosophy. But perhaps the reason is rather that Sextus does not want to concede a complete identification between Pyrrhonism and the stance of a member of the so-called skeptical Academy. In any case, even if we accept the first hypothesis, the discrepancies between Arcesilaus and the Pyrrhonist regarding ἀταραξία appear to matter little in Sextus' eyes, judging by the slight attention he pays to them.

Certainly *PH* i 232-233 cannot be taken as conclusive evidence that the search

¹⁷ This is confirmed by Sextus' discussion of the Skeptical τέλος, at the end of which he remarks that 'some among the eminent Sceptics have added to them [i.e., ἀταραξία and μετριοπάθεια] also suspension of judgment in the investigations' (*PH* i 30). These Sceptics must be Timon and Aenesidemus, since *DL* ix 107 tells us that, according to them, the Skeptic's end 'is suspension of judgment, which unperturbedness follows as a shadow'.

for and the attainment of ἀταραξία are not essential to Pyrrhonism. But *PH* i 25 makes it completely clear that the search for ἀταραξία is not intrinsic to that philosophy; and *AM* i 6 at the very least suggests that neither the search for nor the attainment of ἀταραξία determine whether someone may be classified as a Pyrrhonist. Thus, the evidence in favor of the view that the search for ἀταραξία is not essential to Skepticism is stronger than the evidence in favor of the view that being unperturbed is not a defining feature of the Skeptic.

III

PH iii 280-281 is one of the most well-known passages of Sextus' extant work, which for instance has been taken to be crucial in the task of explaining the coexistence of 'rustic' and 'urbane' elements in *PH*.¹⁸ There, under the title 'Why does the Skeptic sometimes deliberately propound arguments feeble in their persuasiveness (πιθανότησιν)?', Sextus explains:

The Skeptic, because he is philanthropic, wishes to cure by argument (ἰᾶσθαι λόγῳ), as far as he can, the conceit and the rashness (οἷσιν τε καὶ προπέτειαν) of the Dogmatists. Hence, just as the doctors of the bodily affections possess remedies different in power, and apply severe ones to those who are severely affected and milder ones to those who are mildly affected, so too the Skeptic propounds arguments which differ in strength. And he employs weighty arguments, capable of vigorously healing the affection of conceit of the Dogmatists, in the case of those who are afflicted by a severe rashness, but milder ones in the case of those who possess the affection of conceit superficial and easy to cure, and who are capable of being healed by a milder persuasiveness. This is why he who is motivated by Skepticism does not hesitate to propound sometimes arguments which [appear] weighty in their persuasiveness and sometimes, too, arguments which appear weaker. [He does this] on purpose, since often the latter are sufficient for him to achieve his aim.

One may infer from this passage that the Pyrrhonist's philanthropic concern constitutes an essential part of his philosophy, since it accounts for the characteristically Pyrrhonian practice of employing an immense and heterogeneous set of arguments to undermine the doctrines of the Dogmatists. Also, even though the Pyrrhonist's continuing investigation may be explained by saying that he cannot rule out the possibility of ever discovering the truth (*PH* i 1-3), this does not account for his aim of persuading his dogmatic opponents. For he may discuss with others as a way of keeping on with his inquiry, but there is an additional element in his desire to persuade those with whom he discusses that requires a fur-

¹⁸ See Barnes 1990, 2691-2692. See also Barnes 1988, 76-77, where he refers to *PH* iii 280-281 when examining the coexistence of radical and moderate forms of skepticism in *AM*.

ther explanatory factor, which is precisely the one provided by *PH* iii 280-281.¹⁹

Although Sextus does not explicitly say so, it is clear that the aim of the Skeptical therapy is to induce the state of *ἐποχή* and, through it, that of *ἀταραξία* in his patients. But then a question arises: why would the Pyrrhonist who has reached the state of *ἀταραξία* want to induce it in others? For one may reasonably think that once the Pyrrhonist has found himself in that state, having suspended judgment about all non-evident matters, he has attained that which he desired from the very beginning. Hence, there does not seem to be any reason why he should be concerned about the well-being of others (cf. Annas 1993, 245-246). In order to find a connection between the Pyrrhonist's *ἀταραξία* in matters of opinion and his philanthropic concern, one might argue that what has stood in the way of his attainment of that state of mind is not only his own holding of beliefs but also other people's. In this regard, Annas suggests: 'Perhaps the sceptic's *philanthropia* lies in this, that he can never achieve full *ataraxia* while there are other dogmatic, and therefore unhappy, people around' (1993, 246). Likewise, McPherran thinks that 'it might well interfere with a Skeptic's *ἀταραξία* not to be doing something to reduce the amount of *ταραχή* in those whose lives he comes into contact with' (1987, 325; see also 1989, 166n58). As far as *ἀταραξία* in matters of opinion is concerned, this interpretation does not find support in Sextus' texts. For as we saw in section 1, Sextus points out that the type of disturbance that may be completely eliminated appears to be induced in a person solely by *his* holding of beliefs, not by others' as well (Annas 1993, 246 is aware of this). Hence, the only way in which other people's perturbation may interfere with one's own *ἀταραξία* in matters of opinion is by believing that the suffering of others is something bad in itself, and that one has the moral obligation to do something to improve an objectively bad situation. But in this case the Skeptic can eliminate the disturbance that threatens his *ἀταραξία* by eliminating the beliefs in question rather than the suffering of others. Hence, there are no grounds for supposing that the impression that others are suffering threatens the Skeptic's *ἀταραξία* in matters of opinion.²⁰

However, it may be argued that, although my reasoning is in principle correct, as a matter of fact the Pyrrhonist does hold the aforementioned beliefs, since otherwise his philanthropic therapy could not be accounted for. This is the view held in Bailey 2002, 232-233, where it is maintained that the Pyrrhonist's impression that the Dogmatist suffers from intellectual anxiety is not unpleasant in itself, so that it provides a motive for an action only if one adds a belief about the meaning of this impression, namely, that it is the sign of an undesirable objective situation. If this is so, then the philanthropic Pyrrhonist believes that his patients are objec-

¹⁹ Some peculiar interpretations of this passage have been put forward. It has been claimed that Sextus is here being ironic (Brochard 2002, 335), and even that this final chapter of *PH* is not by him (Mates 1996, 314). I cannot find anything in *PH* iii 280-281 to support such interpretations.

²⁰ In the next section, I examine the possible connection between *φιλανθρωπία* and the perturbation that arises from involuntary affections.

tively ill, and that he must do something about it. Therefore, he does have beliefs that interfere with his achievement of ἀταραξία.

Nevertheless, there is another possible explanation of the Skeptic's desire to heal others of their Dogmatism that avoids ascribing the aforementioned beliefs to him. In the chapter of *PH* i dealing with the criterion of Skepticism, Sextus distinguishes between the criterion of reality and unreality and the criterion of action. He observes that the latter is, in the case of the Skeptic, τὸ φαινόμενον, by adhering to which in daily life he performs some actions and not others (*PH* i 21-22; see also *PH* ii 14, *AD* i 29-30). Sextus then points out that, by adhering to what appears, the Skeptic lives in accordance with the observance of everyday life (ἡ βιωτικὴ τήρησις), which seems to consist in guidance of nature, necessitation of affections, transmission of laws and customs, and teaching of skills (*PH* i 23; see also *PH* i 237). Thus, what Sextus says about this observance is an explanation of the Skeptic's adherence to τὸ φαινόμενον, so the utterances made in accordance with the four aspects of the observance of everyday life manifest the different ways things appear to the Skeptic. This is made clear at *PH* i 17, where Sextus observes: 'we follow a reasoning in accordance with what appears that shows us a life in conformity with traditional customs, laws, ways of life, and [our] own affections'. It is also important to note that at *PH* i 23 Sextus makes two crucial remarks. First, he points out that the Pyrrhonists act in accordance with the observance of everyday life ἀδοξάστως (see also *PH* i 226, 231, ii 102, 246, 254, 258, iii 2, 151, 235), a term that in the Pyrrhonian vocabulary means to restrict oneself to what appears without making any assertion about the real nature of things. Second, he tells us that the only reason the Pyrrhonists follow the fourfold observance of everyday life is that they cannot be wholly inactive (see also *PH* i 226), thus making it clear that there is no epistemic commitment involved. Now, Sextus explains that the third part of that observance, namely, the παράδοσις νόμων τε καὶ ἔθῶν, is that part 'whereby in everyday life we consider piety as good and impiety as bad' (*PH* i 24; see also *PH* iii 2). Also, in the Tenth Mode and the ethical part of *PH* iii, he points out that in his community acts such as adultery, incest, human sacrifice, and cannibalism are prohibited by law (*PH* i 146, 149, 152, 159, 160, iii 205, 207-209, 225), and that it is customary, for instance, to provide for one's children and to avoid sex in public (*PH* i 146, 154, iii 200). One may similarly suppose that the impression that others are suffering from conceit and rashness is unpleasant to the Pyrrhonist because the suffering of others is a bad thing according to the laws and customs of the community in which he lives, and that in such a community one is encouraged to attempt to change this sort of negative situation as far as one can. That is to say, philanthropy was probably an important part of the moral principles underlying the laws and customs of the communities in which the Sceptics portrayed by Sextus lived. If this is correct, then it is not necessary to attribute to the philanthropic Skeptic the type of belief that Bailey ascribes to him, since, as we have just seen, Sextus emphasizes that the Sceptics act in accordance with everyday life without holding opinions and for the sole reason

that they cannot remain utterly inactive. This lack of dogmatic commitment is also clearly expressed in the Tenth Mode, where Sextus tells us that one must suspend judgment about the objective validity of the appearances one has by virtue of the laws and customs of one's community. In sum, the philanthropic Skeptic is acting in accordance with his appearances, without affirming or denying that they correspond to the real nature of things, that is, without affirming or denying that the Dogmatists are objectively ill or that philanthropy is the correct attitude that one must adopt.

There are two other factors that may have determined the Skeptic's non-Dogmatic adoption of φιλάνθρωπία. First, given that Sextus himself was a doctor (see *PH* i 238, *AM* i 260) and that some other Sceptics were too (see Barnes 1990, 2613n20), it is important to keep in mind that in antiquity there was, at least for many physicians, a close link between medical practice and philanthropy (Voelke 1990, 183). One may then argue that the Pyrrhonian doctors were influenced by this tradition. This influence could well be an aspect of the διδασκαλία τεχνῶν explained at *PH* i 23-24, which is that 'whereby we are not inactive in the skills which we acquire' (i 24). Of course, in this case the Skeptic is not committed to any belief, but is simply following the appearances, as with his acting in accordance with the laws and customs of his community. Second, the conception of the philosopher as a 'soul-doctor' was a widespread idea in Greek philosophy (Annas 1993, 246; Barnes 1988, 76; 2000, xxviii), so it is possible that the therapeutic practice described by Sextus was shaped by this conception as well.

If the previous explanation of why the Skeptic adopts a philanthropic attitude is correct, then it is not necessary to suppose that he wants to cure the Dogmatists because their perturbation represents a threat to the attainment and stability of his ἀταραξία.

I finally wish to consider two objections to the Sceptical therapy. The first is that the Pyrrhonist's argumentative therapy implies a number of beliefs about ἐποχή and ἀταραξία: the belief that ἀταραξία is objectively good (otherwise, why does he seek to induce this state in others if he is not himself convinced that it is beneficial?); the belief that ἀταραξία is achieved by suspending judgment; the belief that ἐποχή is brought about by certain kinds of arguments; and the belief that inducing ἐποχή and ἀταραξία in his patients is the objectively adequate treatment to apply when they are afflicted by conceit and rashness.

Regarding the first two beliefs, there is nothing more to be said than what was already expounded in section 1: ἀταραξία simply appears to the Skeptic as a good for himself and others, and he cannot rule out the possibility that this state of mind will continue to accompany the adoption of complete ἐποχή.

As to the third belief mentioned, the Skeptic may argue that he employs certain types of arguments not because he can assure that there is a necessary connection between them and ἐποχή, but simply because they are those which have been successful in inducing this state in himself and others. But this would be only a part of his response, given that, as we saw, at *PH* iii 280-281 Sextus tells us that

the Skeptic will employ any argument that will make it possible to induce *ἐποχή* in the Dogmatists. This shows that the Skeptic will not restrict himself to utilizing the arguments that have induced *ἐποχή* in himself and his past patients, but will also use other arguments that have not had that effect. Or, to put it another way, it shows that the arguments that have been capable of inducing *ἐποχή* in the Skeptic and his past patients may not be able to do the same in the case of his future patients. Hence, the very passage which presents the Skeptic's argumentative therapy makes it clear that he does not believe there is a necessary logical connection between certain kinds of arguments and *ἐποχή*. I think that he does not even believe there is always an argument that is capable of inducing *ἐποχή*.

As regards the fourth belief ascribed to the Skeptic, it is useful to refer to Sextus' explanation of the way in which the Methodic doctor practices medicine, which he considers to be wholly in line with the Skeptical attitude. Sextus observes that the Methodic doctor, 'following the things which appear, gets from them what seems beneficial' (*PH* i 237), and that he is guided 'from the apparent affections...to what seems to correspond to them' (*PH* i 240, see also 238; cf. Galen, *On Sects for Beginners* vi 12 ed. Helmreich). One may maintain that the Skeptic is likewise guided by the conceit and rashness he perceives in the Dogmatists to the use of the arguments which he non-Dogmatically expects will induce the apparently beneficial states of *ἐποχή* and *ἀταραξία* in them. It might be objected that the Pyrrhonist's guiding his actions solely by his appearances, in the way that has just been suggested, would entail his adopting random courses of action. Therefore, if the Pyrrhonist acts in a non-random way, it is because his actions are based upon beliefs about matters of objective fact. Nevertheless, there are examples that show that this objection is not sound. Take the case of dogs, for instance: sometimes they are sensitive to some of their owners' moods, such as anger, fear, joy, and sadness, and they react accordingly. That is, they have some kind of impressions of their owners' states of mind, and these impressions trigger non-random reactions. Now, dogs do not have beliefs, if we consider that having a belief implies having the concepts of truth and falsehood, and making an assertion about what is objectively the case (at least this is what is meant when examining at present whether the Skeptic has beliefs). Hence, the example just given shows that having beliefs about matters of objective fact is not a necessary condition for reacting non-randomly.

The other objection to the Pyrrhonist's philanthropic therapy is that it clearly shows that he believes in the existence of the very people he wishes to persuade by means of *ad hominem* arguments (see Bailey 2002, 232-233). To pose a problem for the Skeptic, this objection must presuppose that the non-evident matters about which he claims to suspend judgment include the existence of other people. It is a vexed question whether or not Sextus' Skepticism calls into doubt the existence of the 'external world', and this is not the place to examine the matter (for discussion, see Burnyeat 1982, sec. III; Everson 1991; Fine 2003). However, even if we grant that the Pyrrhonist does cast doubt on the existence of other people, the objection in question is not unanswerable. For the Skeptic can argue that

in his philanthropic therapy he does not go beyond the realm of his own appearances (see Annas 1993, 244; Machuca 2005, 220). That is, it appears to him that there are other human beings with whom he lives in a community with particular laws and customs, most of whom are afflicted by conceit and rashness, and so on. The Pyrrhonist is aware that these appearances may be pure fiction, with no objective validity whatsoever. Still, he thinks, feels, and acts in accordance with them because they are forced upon him by the fact that he grew up believing that there are other people with whom he interacts. It is plain that the full-fledged Pyrrhonist continues to be influenced by this old belief, so one may say that he is *inclined to believe* that there are other human beings, but evidently this is not the same as *actually believing* it. For even if the Pyrrhonist has that inclination, he nonetheless withholds his assent because he has not been able to find definitive arguments in favor of such a belief, there being other equally plausible arguments which give rise to the contrary inclination. Thus, in the end the balance cannot be tipped in favor of either side.²¹

The previous account of the Pyrrhonist's philanthropic psychotherapy provides the possible reasons why he wants to help others, without having to find a connection between his ἀταραξία in matters of opinion and his φιλανθρωπία, and without ascribing to him any belief about matters of objective fact.

IV

A Pyrrhonist's adoption of a philanthropic outlook is accidental, since it is solely the consequence of his living in a given society and of his belonging to a certain medical and philosophical milieu. If a Pyrrhonist were to grow up in an individualistic society or be raised in a way that taught him to regard philanthropy as a naïve and impractical attitude, he would probably adopt an individualistic outlook. This shows that, contrary to what we were inclined to believe at the beginning of the previous section, a person could perfectly well be a Pyrrhonist without having any concern for the welfare of others. Of course, this also shows that Pyrrhonism should not be considered an intrinsically individualistic stance either.²² In short, Pyrrhonism is as such completely indifferent to both individualism and philanthropism, since the Pyrrhonist's non-Dogmatic adoption of one or the other of these positions rests upon fortuitous circumstances.

My interpretation encounters an obstacle at *PH* i 22, where Sextus observes that the reason why the standard of action of Skepticism is τὸ φαivόμενον is that it lies in 'an affective state and an involuntary affection' (cf. *PH* i 19). This applies to the appearances the Skeptic has by virtue of the four parts of the observance of everyday life, so he is passive with respect to the appearances he has by virtue of the laws and customs of his community and the skills he has gained. It seems to follow from this that the Pyrrhonist's adoption of a philanthropic atti-

²¹ The key distinction between believing and having an inclination to believe is one that Bailey 2002, 221-229 does not draw (see Machuca 2005, 219-220).

²² For the view that Skepticism is an individualistic philosophy, see Floridi 2002, 32.

tude, which I consider to rest upon factors such as convention, tradition, and a certain kind of medical instruction, is in the end inevitable.²³ Thus, the Pyrrhonist would not be able to avoid being perturbed by the suffering of others. Still, he would bear this kind of unavoidable perturbation more easily than the non-Skeptics, precisely because he does not believe that the suffering of others is something objectively bad.

Despite what is said at *PH* i 22, I still believe that the Pyrrhonist's philanthropic concern is not wholly inescapable. The reason is that the Skeptic sees a crucial difference between his involuntary affections on the one hand, and the laws and customs of his community and the skills he has gained on the other. The influence of bodily feelings is inevitable in that at least up to now the Skeptic has not been able to eliminate completely the particular feelings of hunger and thirst, and hence to stop having the desire for food and drink. On the contrary, he is aware that as long as he follows a given set of laws and customs and has a given skill, he will necessarily and involuntarily have certain appearances, but that his following those particular laws and customs and his having a certain skill are neither inevitable nor unalterable. First, the members of a group, such as a family or a community, do not always obey the same norms,²⁴ and they hardly ever have the same expertise. Second, there are many situations and states that can alter the way a person thinks, feels, or acts, such as war, imprisonment, mental illness, and senility. For example, it is not unusual for a person who in peacetime respects certain moral rules, not because of fear of punishment but because it is the way he spontaneously tends to act, to break the very same rules when his country is at war; and he may continue to act in this new manner even after hostilities have ceased. It is a common fact that people may get accustomed to and stop caring about things that used to cause them deep disturbance and concern.²⁵ Also, it is not at all unusual for a doctor, for instance, to lose his or her skills after a stroke, or with the onset of senility. In contrast, the people who find themselves in these different situations and states do not stop feeling hunger and thirst. Therefore, in the case of the handing down of laws and customs and the teaching of skills, the remark made at *PH* i 22 must not be understood in the sense that the Skeptic's acting in accordance with certain norms, traditions, and skills is necessary or unalterable.

If my view is correct, then it is perfectly possible for a humanitarian Pyrrhonist to abandon his philanthropic attitude. One might object that this kind of change is possible only if one believes that there are objective grounds for doing so, which is contrary to the Pyrrhonian outlook. But this is not at all necessary. In addition

²³ For the view that the Pyrrhonist's philanthropy is natural in the sense of necessary and inescapable, see Annas 1993, 211, 246; McPherran 1987, 325; 1989, 157, 165.

²⁴ Judging by the considerations found in the Tenth Mode and the ethical section of *PH* iii, Sextus is well aware of this. For instance, he reports that the Stoics accepted prostitution and incest, which other Greeks regarded as something shameful and illicit (see *PH* iii 201, 205).

²⁵ One may suppose that Sextus was aware, for example, that before becoming full-blown Stoics, the future Stoics probably considered prostitution and incest as morally wrong (see n24).

to the previous cases mentioned, in which the changes undergone do not presuppose any attempt at justification, we can think of another example. Suppose that a philanthropic Pyrrhonist is betrayed by some of his closest and dearest friends or relatives, ending up in prison with a sentence of several years. The betrayal as well as the harsh or traumatic experiences to which he will probably be subjected in prison will render him more individualistic, more unsympathetic, and colder. It is plain that he may undergo such a transformation without it being necessary for him to find a rational justification for it; that is, he may just involuntarily experience those changes in his character.

I hope to have shown that the Pyrrhonist's philanthropic therapy is not essential to his philosophy, since the Sceptics are not inevitably philanthropic, and those who happen to be so could stop acting and feeling in a philanthropic way and become more individualistic and uncaring, without this constituting an obstacle to their being full-blown Sceptics.

V

Even if sometimes the tone and language employed by Sextus point to the contrary, there are no beliefs underlying the Sceptic's search for *ἀταραξία* and his philanthropic therapy. First, he believes neither that *ἀταραξία* is something we ought to pursue because it is good by nature, nor that the state of *ταραχή* must be avoided because it is something inherently bad. Second, he does not affirm that *ἀταραξία* and *ταραχή* may be objectively good or bad relative to a person in specific circumstances. Third, he does not believe that there is a necessary connection between *ἐποχή* and *ἀταραξία*, nor between the holding of beliefs and *ταραχή*. Fourth, he neither considers the suffering of others to be something bad in itself, nor takes his philanthropic concern to be the right attitude to adopt. Fifth, he neither believes that inducing *ἐποχή* and *ἀταραξία* in his patients is the objectively correct treatment to apply against conceit and rashness, nor affirms that there exists a necessary logical connection between the arguments he employs and suspension of judgment. Finally, his philanthropic concern does not necessarily commit him to the belief in the existence of other people. It has been possible to show, or so it seems to me, that in each case the Sceptic is simply arguing dialectically or reporting how things appear to him.

I have also contended that neither the Sceptic's search for *ἀταραξία* nor his philanthropic therapy are inherent in his philosophy. Both the fact that the search for *ἀταραξία* explains why the future Sceptic began to philosophize and the fact that *φιλανθρωπία* explains why the full-fledged Sceptic wishes to persuade the Dogmatist do not necessarily imply that they must be regarded as essential to Pyrrhonism. The reason is that they are not the only factors that could perform these functions. Indeed, I think Sextus would accept that there may be other motives for a future Sceptic's interest in philosophical investigation and for a full-blown Sceptic's desire to persuade his adversaries. The former may decide to engage in philosophical inquiry because, for instance, he happened to read a philosophical work or attend a philosophy lecture and found the experience cap-

tivating. The latter may wish to persuade his opponents because the ability to persuade others has so far turned out to be extremely useful for practical purposes, or simply because he finds the very fact of being able to do so pleasant. Therefore, the Skeptic's search for ἀταραξία and his philanthropic concern are to be explained by the influence of certain factors that are fortuitous: his psychological makeup, his upbringing and education, his social and cultural background, and his philosophical and professional milieu. As these circumstantial factors do not exert an inescapable influence upon the Skeptic, he can abandon both his search for ἀταραξία and his concern for other people's well-being. As with these two aspects, I have also argued that the Skeptic does not seem to regard the attainment of ἀταραξία as an essential part of his Pyrrhonism.

The reason the Skeptic does not stop being a Skeptic, even if he abandons his search for ἀταραξία or his φιλανθρωπία, or does not become unperturbed after suspending judgment, is that these circumstances do not entail the loss of his suspensive attitude and his living by appearances, in which the distinctive character of his philosophy lies. More precisely, the first distinguishing trait of the Pyrrhonian outlook is the Pyrrhonist's cautious, agnostic, and open-minded attitude, as manifested in the adoption of a provisional ἐποχή regarding the various first-order views he has hitherto examined, and of a provisional second-level ἐποχή regarding the equipollence of those views and the undecidability of the disagreements to which they are parties. The second defining trait consists in the fact that the Pyrrhonist guides his actions by the appearances, because they are forced upon him and are the only practical criteria for coping with daily life which are left to him after he has adopted complete suspension of judgment. Hence, a person may not be disturbed by the existence of unresolved disagreements, or may not want to settle them in the hope of attaining ἀταραξία, or may not achieve this state after adopting suspension of judgment, or may have no interest whatsoever in other people's welfare, without any of these circumstances representing a hindrance to his being a full-fledged Pyrrhonist.

Before concluding, I wish to look at two objections to my position. The first is that the emphasis I put on the distinction between defining and non-defining characteristics of Pyrrhonism is itself foreign to the Pyrrhonian spirit, since the Skeptic would refrain from theorizing about the real nature of his ἀγωγή. I think this objection overlooks the fact that *PH* i is devoted to a general account of the Skeptical attitude: Sextus carefully defines and describes Skepticism, and emphasizes the differences between it and neighboring philosophies. Of course, this account should be interpreted as no more than a report of how things appear to Sextus at the moment he is describing them (see *PH* i 4), but this does not make it less true that he gives a careful explanation of the character of his Skepticism and makes clear what his stance is not. In any case, even if one accepts that from the Skeptic's point of view the distinction in question is completely futile, I do not think this should prevent those with an interest in understanding the Pyrrhonian outlook from trying to determine what defines it. In my view, the significance of such a distinction lies primarily in the fact that it shows that neither

the search for and attainment of ἀταραξία nor the adoption of a philanthropic outlook can be taken as touchstones for determining whether some present-day thinker may be considered a Pyrrhonist.

The second objection is that my opening remark about the appeal of Pyrrhonism is wrong or surprising, given that it is not possible to consider this philosophy as attractive and worth adopting. For instance, not only does the Skeptic not promise that the suspensive attitude will make possible the attainment of ἀταραξία, but he does not even regard this as an aim intrinsic to his philosophy. To this objection, I would first reply that the appeal of Skepticism lies in the sort of radical changes that this philosophy may entail in one's life. If adopted, the cautious Pyrrhonian attitude prevents one from making rash judgments about any topic which one has not examined or to which one has not found final answers. This in turn precludes hasty action. Also, even if at some point the Skeptic were to break some of the most important moral rules of the society to which he belongs, he would perhaps experience some discomfort, but he would not believe that he has done something objectively wrong. This would free him from the anguish suffered by those who do believe that such an action is morally wrong. In sum, the Pyrrhonian philosophy produces, if adopted, profound changes in a person's thoughts, feelings, and actions—changes that at first glance seem to be beneficial. Nevertheless, I recognize that whether or not Pyrrhonism is an appealing philosophy cannot in the end be determined *a priori*. For that decision depends on whether one values such attitudes as caution, open-mindedness, and intellectual modesty; or, if one does, on whether these attitudes are preferred to the sense of assurance that one may experience when espousing philosophic systems or religious beliefs. This is why my opening comment was merely that Pyrrhonism *may* still be found attractive and worth adopting.

I hope that the account of the Pyrrhonist's stance that I have offered in this paper will help to dispel the confusion about what is intrinsic to his philosophy, and that it has shown that a Pyrrhonist can search for ἀταραξία and adopt a philanthropic attitude, without this threatening or compromising the coherence of his Skepticism.²⁶

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²⁶ I would like to thank two anonymous referees for helpful comments and suggestions. I also wish to thank Hansueli Flückiger for useful discussion of certain topics addressed in this article. Any remaining errors are my own.

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