Five Modes of Scepticism

An Analysis of the Agrippan Modes in Sextus Empiricus' Outlines of Pyrrhonism

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This thesis has as its focus five argumentative modes that lie at the heart of Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. They are the modes of disagreement, hypothesis, infinite regression, reciprocity and relativity. They are analysed, individually, in the first five chapters of the thesis (one mode per chapter) and, collectively, in the sixth. The first four chapters deal, respectively, with the modes of disagreement, hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity. They distinguish between two versions of these modes: "dogmatic versions", on the basis of which a dogmatic philosopher, who holds some theoretical beliefs, might reach a sceptical conclusion; and "sceptical versions", on the basis of which a sceptical philosopher, who lacks all theoretical beliefs, might do so. It is argued that scholars such as Jonathan Barnes have offered reconstructions of these modes which are dogmatic in the sense just described, and alternative sceptical versions of the modes are presented. A stand-alone fifth chapter offers an analysis of a stand-alone mode - the mode of relativity. It argues that there are in fact three different modes of relativity at play in the *Outlines*, that only one of them is non-trivial, and that the non-trivial version is incompatible with the mode of disagreement. The sixth and final chapter offers an analysis of how the modes (excluding relativity) are meant to work in combination with one another. Four different combinations are presented and it is argued that all of them are underscored by a variety of theoretical assumptions, which a sceptic, who lacks all theoretical beliefs, cannot make. The ultimate conclusion of the thesis is that, though the sceptic can deploy the various modes individually (by means of exercising his particular sceptical ability), he is not able to systematise them into a net by means of which he might trap his dogmatic opponent. Unless specified otherwise, translations are based on Annas, J., and Barnes, J., *Sextus Empiricus*: *Outlines of Scepticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

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Introduction

This thesis has as its focus a particular type of philosophical scepticism and a particular aspect of that particular type of scepticism. The type of scepticism in question is Pyrrhonian scepticism[1] and the particular aspect of that type of scepticism is its Agrippan aspect. Pyrrho and Agrippa are shadowy characters - Agrippa the shadowier - and in the following pages not one citation of either Pyrrho or Agrippa is to be found. This is for the simple reason that none of their writings (if, indeed, Pyrrho wrote anything at all[2]) survive.[3] Instead, the main textual source for this thesis, which is also our main textual source for ancient Pyrrhonism in general, is *The Outlines of Pyrrhonism*[4] by the 3rd century AD doctor and philosopher Sextus Empiricus. It is the version of Pyrrhonian scepticism presented to us in the pages of Sextus' *Outlines* with which I shall be concerned.[5]

Unless I say otherwise, by "sceptic" I should be taken to mean Pyrrhonian sceptic by "Pyrrhonian sceptic" I should be taken to mean Pyrrhonian sceptic as presented by Sextus in the *Outlines*, and by "Agrippan aspect of Pyrrhonian scepticism" I should be taken to mean those five argument forms (or "modes") which Sextus outlines for us at *PH* 1.164-179 and which Diogenes Laertius (IX 88) attributes to Agrippa.[6] They are the

[1] Other varieties of scepticism – for example the Academic and the Cartesian – do not feature.

[2] According to Sextus, Pyrrho wrote a poem for Alexander the Great (*M* 1.282). Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives of the Philosophers* claims, at one point, that Pyrrho wrote nothing at all (I 16) and, at another, that he left nothing in writing (IX 102). Whatever the truth of the matter, it is reasonable to infer that none of Pyrrho's writings were philosophical.

[3] Agrippa is mentioned once in Diogenes Laertius IX 88. There are no other mentions of him in the ancient texts and none of his works survive. The situation regarding Pyrrho is marginally better. His name crops up in Diogenes Laertius, Sextus and Plutarch; and in Euesebius' *Preparation for the Gospel* (*Praep. evang.* XIV xviii 1-4) a summary is offered of some aspects of his thought by his student Timon. I discuss this passage in greater detail in Chapter 1, p. 21 n. 18. For further information on Pyrrho see Sedley (1983), pp.14-16 and Bett (2000).

[4] "*PH*" is the standard abbreviation.

[5] I shall also, occasionally, make reference to Sextus' other works, namely *Against the Mathematicians* 1-6 and *Against the Mathematicians* 7-11 (the standard abbreviation is *M*). However, my main focus will be on the *Outlines*.

[6] Sextus attributes the modes to "the more recent sceptics" (οἱ νεώτεροι) at *PH* 1.164. These sceptics are

modes of disagreement, hypothesis, infinite regression, reciprocity and relativity. These are by no means the only argument forms Sextus discusses in the *Outlines* - *PH* 1.35-163, for instance, is taken up with an exposition of ten Aenesideman modes and *PH* 1.180-186 adverts to eight modes which target causal explanations. However, I shall not comment upon either of these other sets of modes,[7] unless in so doing, light is shed on one or more of the Agrippan modes.[8]

Why this Agrippan focus? There are three reasons. First, these modes lie at the heart of the sceptic's argumentative practice. Sextus adduces them time and again in the *Outlines* - indeed they can be seen to underpin both the ten Aenesideman modes and the eight modes against casual explanation, though to fully elaborate on this claim would require writing a different thesis to the one I have written. Secondly, these argument forms have intrinsic and abiding philosophical interest. I hope a sense of their intrinsic philosophical interest emerges from the subsequent pages. As for evidence of their abiding interest, two sociological observations will suffice: in recent years there has been a surge of interest in the epistemology of disagreement,[9] while the problem posed by the combined modes of infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis has been a perennial source of reflection for epistemologists. In the words of Laurence Bonjour it is "perhaps the most crucial in the entire theory of knowledge"[10]. Thirdly, and for my purposes most significantly, those commentators who *have* discussed the Agrippan modes, have failed to distinguish, or to distinguish sufficiently carefully, between two importantly different

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presumably more recent than the "older sceptics" (οἱ ἀρχαιότεροι) of whom Sextus speaks at *PH* 1.36 and to whom he ascribes the ten modes. Elsewhere, at *M* 7.345, Sextus attributes the ten modes to Aenesidemus, so we might date the more recent sceptics of *PH* 1.165 to somewhere between Aenesidemus and Sextus, that is between 100 BC and 200 AD. For further detail on Aenesidemus' dates see Glucker (1976), pp.116-118 and on Sextus' see House (1980).

[7] For reflections on the Aenesideman modes see Annas and Barnes (1985), Striker (1996a) and Morison (2011) and on the eight modes against causal explanation see Barnes (1983b).

[8] For a particularly notable example of this see Chapter 5, where understanding the eighth Aenesideman mode is crucial for understanding the Agrippan mode of relativity.

[9] See, by way of example, the anthologies by Feldman and Warfield (2010) and Christensen and Lackey (2013)

[10] Bonjour (1985), p.18

perspectives on these modes. It is the articulation of these two different perspectives which is the central theme of this thesis.

The Agrippan modes are introduced to us by Sextus at *PH* 1.164 as modes of ἐποχή - a sceptical term of art which Sextus glosses for us at *PH* 1.10 as a standstill of the intellect (στάσις διανοίας), owing to which we neither reject nor posit anything (δι᾽ ἣν οὔτε αἴρομέν τι οὔτε τίθεμεν.) The term is often translated by the phrase "suspension of judgement" and this is the translation adopted in this thesis. In subsequent chapters I adopt the following characterisation of the phenomenon: some epistemic subject, S, suspends judgement with regard to some proposition, P, just in case, having considered the matter, S neither believes P nor believes not-P. The thesis, then, asks of the five Agrippan modes, both individually and collectively, how they bring about suspension of judgement, so understood. In particular, to reiterate its central theme, it identifies two different perspectives on this question: one might ask how some dogmatic philosopher comes to suspend judgement on the basis of one or more of these modes, or one might ask how a sceptic comes to suspend judgement on the basis of one or more of these modes.

These are different questions because the sceptic and the dogmatist are very different sorts of epistemic agent. One basic difference is that the sceptic, unlike the dogmatist, is restricted with regard to the sorts of belief he can hold. As Sextus informs us in *PH* 1.13 (a passage to which I return), the sceptic does not hold any beliefs, the holding of which involves assenting to some unclear object of investigation of the sciences (τήν τινι πράγματι τῶν κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας ζητουμένων ἀδήλων συγκατάθεσιν). In Chapter 1, I examine in greater detail how different scholars have attempted to further characterise this class of beliefs.[11] For the moment, let us label these beliefs *theoretical* beliefs, where a theoretical belief has theoretical content (be it philosophical or scientific). This

[11] See Chapter 1, pp.30-2.

difference between a sceptic and a dogmatist therefore tells us at least one thing about the respective ways in which a sceptic and a dogmatist come to suspend judgement on the basis of the Agrippan modes: the dogmatist *can* reach suspended judgement by relying on various theoretical beliefs, but a sceptic *cannot*.

Of those commentators who have probed the working of the Agrippan modes, the most significant treatment to date is that of Jonathan Barnes.[12] Though there have been (albeit briefer) treatments of the modes by Jim Hankinson and Paul Woodruff,[13] it is Barnes' work which will provide the main focus for this thesis. It - the thesis - has two main aims. The first is to show that the reconstruction offered by commentators like Barnes of the modes, both individually and collectively, is a dogmatic one. By this I mean that it is a reconstruction which captures perfectly well how a dogmatic philosopher[14] might come to suspend judgement on the basis of the modes, but which cannot capture how a sceptic might come to do so. The reason for this is that on the proposed reconstruction, the sceptic would have to hold a variety of theoretical beliefs to which he is not entitled.

The second aim is to effect a change of perspective by approaching the question of how the modes are meant to bring about suspension of judgement *not* from the point of view of the dogmatist, but from the point of view of the sceptic. In this respect, the thesis can be seen as opening up an alternative to a line of thinking advanced by Michael Frede. On Frede's view, the various first person locutions that pepper the *Outlines* - locutions such as "we come to suspend judgement" – are to be understood as claims made by a sceptic who adopts, temporarily and purely for dialectical purposes, a set

[12] See Barnes (1990a) and Barnes (1990b).
[13] See Hankinson (1995) and Woodruff (2010).
[14] Note that the dogmatist could either be the historical figure with whom the sceptic tussled or the contemporary historian of philosophy who anatomises, analyses, reconstructs and passes judgement on the effectiveness of the sceptic's arguments.

of dogmatic assumptions and patterns of reasoning.[15] The present thesis can be seen as an attempt at seeing how far one can take these locutions at face value – that is, taking them as claims which a sceptic makes on his own behalf and not for purely dialectical reasons. Lest this point be misunderstood, let me stress that in this thesis I take no view as to whether Sextus *himself* was a sceptic who lacked all theoretical beliefs.[16] In the following pages I often speak of Sextus "formulating an argument" or "drawing a conclusion" or "objecting to a line of reasoning", activities which, one might reasonably think, would require the holding of at least some minimally theoretical beliefs. The point is simply to see how one might characterise the sceptic's behaviour if, *pace* Frede, one interprets those first person utterances in the context of the Agrippan modes as utterances made by a sceptic who makes them sincerely and not for purely dialectical reasons.

In reconstructing the Agrippan modes from a sceptical and not a dogmatic perspective two questions in particular will be distinguished from one another and addressed: the question as to how the sceptic puts the modes to use in his tussles with his dogmatic opponents, and the question as to how a sceptic might come to suspend judgement on the basis of those modes. The answer offered to the first question will be that the sceptic's deployment of the modes is a particular instance of what Sextus calls his sceptical ability (*PH* 1.8) and what I call his equipollent ability – namely to oppose to every argument he encounters an argument of equal force but with a conclusion incompatible with the conclusion of the original argument. The answer offered to the second question will be that the sceptic comes to suspend judgement on the basis of the individual modes in precisely the same way in which he comes to suspend judgement when he is confronted by two equipollent arguments.

Having sketched these two overarching aims of the thesis, I shall, in the

[15] See Frede (1987c), pp.204-5.

[16] Lorenzo Corti has emphasised to me in conversation the importance of distinguishing Sextus from the sceptic referred to in his pages.

remainder of this introduction, outline its overall structure and the main conclusions that are reached in each of its chapters. Unlike Gaul, the thesis is divided into six parts. The first five deal with the modes individually. The final sixth considers them in combination with one another. The order in which I treat the modes does not reflect Sextus' ordering. Though we both begin with disagreement, we then diverge.[17] My reason for altering the order in which Sextus presents them is purely for ease of exposition, as the following sketch of each chapter should make clear.

I begin, in Chapter 1, with the mode of disagreement. Following Barnes, I first distinguish between three different types of disagreement which are to be found in the *Outlines*, though I challenge Barnes' claim that the sceptic is to be understood as a participant of some disagreement just by virtue of suspending judgement over the disputed issue. The remainder of the chapter analyses Barnes' account of how disagreement, or more precisely, undecided disagreement, gives rise to the suspension of judgement. It is argued that the version of the mode Barnes presents is the way in which a dogmatist, but not a sceptic who lacks all theoretical beliefs, might come to suspend judgement.

The second half of the chapter lays the groundwork for an alternative picture of how the mode of disagreement is to be understood from the perspective of the sceptic. The sceptic's method of equipollence is outlined as well as its connection with the suspension of judgement. It is argued that the sceptic suspends judgement when confronted with an undecided disagreement in just the same way that he suspends judgement when confronted with a pair of equipollent arguments for the simple reason that to say that there is an undecided disagreement over P is just to say that there are equipollent arguments for P and for not-P. In such a case the sceptic suspends judgement out of a psychological disposition to do so, not because he frames to himself an argument which has as its conclusion that it

[17] My running order: disagreement, hypothesis, infinite regression, reciprocity and relativity. Sextus': disagreement, infinite regression, relativity, hypothesis and reciprocity.

is rational for him to suspend judgement – though it is emphasised that the sceptic might very well come to *acquire* this psychological disposition on the basis of framing to himself (repeatedly and in a variety of contexts) an argument very much like the argument Barnes suggests. However two points are made in connection with this. First, it is only in what might be called the sceptic's proto-sceptical phase, when he *does* hold various theoretical beliefs, that the sceptic is able to suspend judgement in the way Barnes outlines. Second, as a mature sceptic who lacks all theoretical beliefs, he cannot come to suspend judgement in such a manner. The chapter closes by moving away from the question as to how the sceptic comes to suspend judgement on the basis of the mode of disagreement and reflects on the fact that undecided disagreement is utilised by the sceptic in two ways: the sceptic is both a chronicler of undecided disagreements that rage between various dogmatists and himself a creator of undecided disagreement by virtue of exercising his equipollent ability.

Chapter 2 centres on the mode of hypothesis. The opening sections clarify what is involved in the act of hypothesising, and a distinction is drawn between sceptical hypotheses and dogmatic hypotheses – where the former are those hypotheses which the sceptic's dogmatic opponent puts forward to avoid falling victim to either the mode of infinite regression or the mode of reciprocity, and the latter are those hypotheses which the sceptic puts forward and which he casts in opposition to the dogmatist's. Three different versions of the mode are then extracted from the *Outlines* and it is argued that the third of these is the most significant (and indeed underpins the other versions). It is noted that the mode of hypothesis, when utilised by a sceptic, is a limiting case of the sceptic's method of equipollence: to the dogmatist's hypothesis the sceptic opposes his own incompatible hypothesis and these hypotheses are equipollent because they are supported by precisely the same kind of argument, namely no argument at all. Finally, two versions of this third mode of hypothesis are distinguished: a "dogmatic version" which is a version by means of

which a dogmatist might reach suspension of judgement and a "sceptical version" by means of which a sceptic might reach suspension of judgement. The dogmatic mode of hypothesis involves the dogmatist, when confronted by two incompatible hypotheses, framing to himself a particular argument, the conclusion of which is that it is rational for him to suspend judgement. The sceptical mode of hypothesis involves the sceptic, when confronted by two incompatible hypotheses, suspending judgement as a matter of psychological habit. It is argued that, on the dogmatic version of the mode, the sceptic must hold certain theoretical beliefs, whereas on the sceptical version, he need not.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the mode of infinite regression. Barnes' reconstruction of the mode is analysed and a modified version of it is offered so that it yields a suspensive conclusion. It is then argued that this modified version is a dogmatic version of the mode, for, on Barnes' view, some epistemic subject suspends judgement on the basis of the mode of infinite regression by framing to himself an argument with a number of theoretical premises, for example the premise that infinitely regressive arguments are bad kinds of argument. It is noted that when the sceptic exercises the mode of infinite regression that is merely a particular instance of his method of equipollence: opposing to one infinitely regressive argument another infinitely regressive with a conclusion incompatible with the conclusion of the original argument. A sceptical version of the mode is then constructed, whereby the sceptic suspends judgement when confronted by two equipollent infinitely regressive arguments as a matter of psychological habit, in just the same way in which he suspended judgement when confronted by two equipollent hypotheses in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4 has a similar structure to Chapter 3, though here the mode under scrutiny is the mode of reciprocity. Following Barnes, three different kinds of reciprocity are identified in the *Outlines*, and it is argued that only one of these kinds of reciprocity –

formal reciprocity – is relevant to an understanding of the mode. Barnes' reconstruction of the mode is then analysed and for analogous reasons to those mentioned in Chapter 3, it is argued that the version of the mode offered by Barnes is a version by which a dogmatist might come to suspend judgement, but not a sceptic. Chapter 4 closes as Chapter 3 closed. It is noted that the sceptic's use of the mode of reciprocity is a particular instance of his equipollent ability, and a sceptical version of the mode is presented. According to this version of the mode, the sceptic suspends judgement when confronted by a pair of equipollent reciprocal arguments with incompatible conclusions out of psychological habit, just as he did when confronted by a pair of equipollent hypotheses in Chapter 2 and a by a pair of equipollent infinitely regressive arguments in Chapter 3.

Chapters 1-4, then, form a coherent whole. Each is structured around a dual presentation of a particular Agrippan mode: a dogmatic version, which involves attributing to the sceptic various theoretical beliefs and sceptical version, which does not. Central to the articulation of these sceptical versions of the modes is the sceptic's method of equipollence. In Chapter 1, undecided disagreement is shown to be equivalent to the phenomenon of equipollent argumentation but where the type of equipollent argumentation in question is left unspecified. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 can be thought of as providing examples of particular kinds of equipollent argumentation – hypothetical argumentation in the case of Chapter 2, infinitely regressive argumentation in Chapter 3 and reciprocal argumentation in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5, by contrast, is an anomalous chapter, partly because the mode with which it is concerned - relativity - is an anomalous mode. One respect in which it is anomalous is the fact that it occurs twice in the *Outlines*, once as an Aenesideman mode, and once as an Agrippan mode. The chapter opens by remarking on this fact, and argues that the Agrippan mode of relativity must be understood in terms of the Aenesideman

mode. The rest of the chapter can be viewed as presenting any Sextan interpreter with two dilemmas. The first dilemma is to decide with which type of relativity Sextus is concerned – for three different kinds of relativity are to be found in Sextus' discussion of the mode. It is argued that only one of these kinds of relativity is non-trivial, but if this is the kind of relativity one opts for, then one faces a second interpretative dilemma when it comes to integrating the non-trivial kind of relativity into a system which includes the other four Agrippan modes. For it is argued that the non-trivial kind of relativity is incompatible with the mode of disagreement. Given the importance of the phenomenon of disagreement, and given the fact that a relativistic thesis is very much the sort of thesis over which a sceptic would suspend judgement, Chapter 5 closes by suggesting that, if the choice a Sextan interpreter faces is a choice between rejecting the mode of disagreement or rejecting the mode of relativity, he should opt for the latter course of action.

The sixth and final chapter of the thesis analyses how the Agrippan modes (excluding relativity for the reasons given in Chapter 5) are meant to work in combination with one another. In the *Outlines* Sextus presents us with two such combinations,[18] which, following Barnes' terminology, I refer to as "nets". The first half of Chapter 6 offers reconstructions of each of these nets in turn. In particular I present a new version of Sextus' first net which interprets it in terms of three possible dialectic scenarios that obtain between a sceptic and three kinds of dogmatic opponent, and suggest, *pace* Barnes, that, though complex, it does not lack philosophical cohesion. Regarding the second net, which is often seen as superior to the first, it is noted that it is not free from fault – in particular regarding its omission of the mode of hypothesis.

The final part of the chapter compares both nets with a third net not to be found in the pages of Sextus but devised by Barnes. It is observed that Barnes' net is easier to

[18] At *PH* 1.170-177 and at *PH* 1.178-179.

comprehend and free from many of the defects which afflict both Sextus' first and second nets. However, after noting that Barnes' net omits the mode of disagreement, a fourth, modified version of Barnes net' with disagreement incorporated, is presented. The chapter closes by reflecting on the fact that all the various nets thus far considered rely on a number of theoretical assumptions which a sceptic himself cannot make. The chapter (and the thesis) therefore ends on an ironical note: though the sceptic is perfectly able to deploy any of the modes individually (indeed, one of the morals of Chapters 1-4 was that in deploying the modes the sceptic is merely exercising his equipollent ability), when it comes to organising them into a sceptical system, this is a task which, as it turns out, only a dogmatist can perform.

From the preceding remarks a reader might be forgiven for inferring that I only cite the work of Barnes when I wish to disagree with it or when I wish to contrast a path taken by Barnes with an alternative path down which I subsequently tread. Nothing could be further from the truth. Though it was attending (when I was an undergraduate) Benjamin Morison's lectures on Sextus which first encouraged me to think about the Agrippan modes and though various parts of this thesis owe much to the writings of Myles Burnyeat, Michael Frede and Benjamin Morison, Jonathan Barnes' influence will be apparent on virtually every page.

The Mode of Disagreement

How does the mode of disagreement give rise to the suspension of judgement? That is the question with which this opening chapter is concerned. The first half of the chapter is devoted to unpacking what is meant by disagreement (διαφωνία) and, in particular, what is meant by undecided disagreement (ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία). The second half is concerned with articulating the connection between undecided disagreement and the suspension of judgement. As outlined in the introduction, two versions of the mode will be presented: one version which captures how a dogmatist might come to suspend judgement on the basis of the mode and another version by means of which a sceptic might come to do so.

Some Restrictions on διαφωνία

The Greek for "disagreement" is διαφωνία. Barnes, with a helping hand from Janacek, has counted about 120 instances of the word and its cognates in Sextus' works[19]. And when terms which overlap in meaning with διαφωνία are taken into account - like στάσις, διάστασις, ἀμφισβήτησις, ἀνωμαλία, μάχη and πολεμος - as well as terms which point to the absence of διαφωνία – like συμφωνια, ὁμοφωνια, and ὁμόλογια - the number of references, both direct and indirect, to disagreement in the Sextan corpus swells to over 200.

A notion then that Sextus thought important. But how best to characterise it? Barnes helpfully offers a few preliminary restrictions on how the term should be

[19] Cf. Barnes (1990a), p.8 n.8; Janacek (1962), p.70-71

understood.[20] Firstly, διαφωνία is a relation that holds between opinions rather than between propositions.[21] The proposition that Captain Ahab is lost at sea is *not* in a relation of διαφωνία with the proposition that Captain Ahab is not lost at sea. Rather, my *opinion* that Captain Ahab is lost at sea, is in a relation of διαφωνία with your *opinion* that Captain Ahab is not lost at sea. And my opinion stands in a relation of διαφωνία with yours even if neither of us is aware of the other's maritime views.

A second restriction is that a mere *difference* of opinion is not sufficient for διαφωνία. I might believe that Pyrrho was a sceptical philosopher, while you believe that Pyrrho travelled to India with Alexander the Great. Our opinions about Pyrrho are different (after all they are not the same) but they do not conflict. Pyrrho could both have been a sceptical philosopher *and* have travelled to India with Alexander the Great. διαφωνία therefore involves not merely a *difference* in opinion but a *conflict* of opinion.

But how to spell out what it means for a pair of opinions to conflict? One natural thought to have is that a pair of opinions conflict when they cannot both be true together. Put another way, a pair of opinions conflict when they, as a pair, have the feature of non-compossibility. It does not take much reflection, however, to see that this is inadequate. Having the feature of non-compossibility, even if it is necessary, is not sufficient for a pair of opinions to conflict.[22] It does not follow from the fact that P and Q cannot both be true together, that P conflicts with Q. The claim that motion exists and the claim that motion does not exist cannot both be true together. The claim that motion exists and the claim that Hesperus is non-identical with Hesperus also cannot both be true

[20] Barnes (1990a), pp.11-13

[21] Of course, to say that I have the opinion that P is just to say that there is some proposition, P, which I opine. The point is not that opinions take as their objects entities other than propositions. The point is simply that διαφωνία is a relation that holds between *opined* propositions rather than propositions *simpliciter*.

[22] See Barnes (1990a), p.11, n.12 who emphasises this point.

together.[23] But it is not clear that the claim that motion exists conflicts with the claim that Hesperus is non-identical with Hesperus in the same way in which the claim that motion exists conflicts with the claim that motion does not exist. No doubt the claim that motion exists and the claim that Hesperus is non-identical with Hesperus cannot both be true together but this is simply in virtue of the fact that one of these claims (namely the claim that Hesperus is non-identical with Hesperus) cannot be true. But there is no point of contact between them, no issue over which they are divided. By contrast the claim that motion exists and the claim that motion does not exist also *are* in conflict with one another: what one claim asserts the other denies.

To spell out in greater detail what it is for two claims to conflict over and above being non-compossible is an issue I do not enter into here.[24] In any case, our conception of διαφωνία has been somewhat sharpened. It is relation that holds between opinions, which does not involve mere difference of opinion, and which involves, at least, a conflict of opinion, where conflict is to be understood as mere non-compossibility (except in cases where at least one of the conflicting propositions is a logical contradiction or necessarily false).

Kinds of Disagreement

But even with these restrictions in place there are still different ways of understanding what it is for two opinions to stand in a relation of διαφωνία to one another. Here are three.[25] A "positive disagreement" occurs whenever two parties[26] (call them

[23] Indeed, the claim that motion does not exist and the claim that Hesperus is non-identical with Hesperus also cannot both be true.

[24] For further discussion see Stopper (1983), pp.285-6. There the suggestion is made (in the context of a discussion of the Stoic notion of conflict) that two claims P and Q conflict iff neither P is possible given Q and neither Q is possible given P.

[25] I take these distinctions from Barnes. The terms "positive disagreement", "disagreement in opinion" and

Quintus and Septimus) offer incompatible answers to the same question. A "disagreement in opinion" occurs either whenever Quintus and Septimus offer incompatible answers to the same question (ie positively disagree) or whenever Quintus offers an answer which Septimus rejects (or Septimus offers an answer which Quintus rejects). Finally a "disagreement in attitude" occurs whenever Quintus and Septimus hold conflicting attitudes towards the same question, where to "take an attitude" towards a question is, having considered the matter, either to accept some proposition as the answer to the question or to reject some proposition as an answer to the question or to suspend judgement over the question.[27] Furthermore, these attitudes can conflict in a variety of ways. Accepting some proposition, P_1, conflicts with accepting some other proposition, P_2, where P_1 and P_2 are incompatible with one another; accepting P_1 conflicts with rejecting P_1; and suspending judgement as to whether P_1 conflicts with accepting P_1 and with rejecting P_1.

For Barnes the interrelations of these three kinds of disagreement are clear.[28] Anything which counts as a positive disagreement counts as a disagreement in opinion, and anything which counts as a disagreement in opinion counts as a disagreement in attitude. But the converse relations do not hold. Anything which counts as a disagreement in attitude may, but need not, count as a disagreement in opinion and anything which counts as a disagreement in opinion may, but need not, count as a positive disagreement. Now given how Barnes has defined disagreements in opinion, it follows (trivially) that anything which counts as a positive disagreement counts as a disagreement in opinion. For a disagreement in opinion has been defined disjunctively as either a positive disagreement or

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"disagreement in attitude" are his. See Barnes (1990a), pp.13-15

[26] I restrict myself to bilateral disagreements for the sake of simplicity.

[27] In Barnes' own words: "Let us say that someone 'takes an attitude' to a question ?Q if, having considered the matter, he either *accepts* some proposition as the answer to ?Q or *rejects* some proposition as an answer to ?Q or *suspends judgement* over ?Q". See Barnes (1990a), p.15. See introduction, pp.2-3 for further detail on how suspension of judgement is to be understood.

[28] See Barnes (1990a), p.15.

a disagreement which involves one of the disagreeing parties offering an answer to a question which the other party rejects (or vice versa).[29] However, it is less clear whether it is true that every disagreement in opinion counts as a disagreement in attitude.

Suppose we have our two dissenting parties, Quintus and Septimus, who disagree over the answer to some question, Q. For Quintus and Septimus to have a disagreement in opinion is either for Quintus to offer P_1 as the answer to Q and for Septimus to offer P_2 as the answer to Q, where P_1 and P_2 are incompatible with one another, or for Quintus to offer P_1 as the answer to Q and for Septimus to reject P_1 as the answer to Q. Does it follow from the fact that Quintus and Septimus have a disagreement in opinion that they also have a disagreement in attitude?

The issue turns on whether the following principle is true:

> (*) For some epistemic subject, S, and for some question, Q, S offers A as an answer to Q, iff S accepts A as the answer to Q.

If (*) is true, then any disagreement in opinion will count as a disagreement in attitude. For, if (*) is true and Quintus offers P_1 as the answer to Q and Septimus offers P_2 as the answer to Q, then Quintus accepts P_1 as the answer to Q and Septimus accepts P_2 as the answer to Q. We therefore have a disagreement in attitude. Similarly, if (*) is true and Quintus offers P_1 as the answer to Q and Septimus rejects (ie does not accept) P_1 as the answer to Q, then Quintus accepts P_1 as the answer to Q and Septimus rejects (ie does not accept) P_1 as the answer to Q. Once again we have a disagreement in attitude.

But *is* the principle expressed in (*) true? It seems possible to conceive of circumstances in which (*) is false. For instance, suppose Quintus is open-minded as to

[29] This is merely an instance of the rule of disjunction introduction, which is a staple of standard formal systems of natural deduction. See, for example, Halbach (2010), p.123 who codifies the rule thus: "the result of appending a sentence $\varphi \vee \psi$ to a proof of φ is a proof of $\varphi \vee \psi$."

whether P_1 is the answer to Q. He offers P_1 as an answer to Q, but he is not committed to P_1 being the answer to Q, that is to say he does not accept that P_1 is the answer to Q. He is perfectly open to considering evidence and arguments to the contrary. Similarly suppose Septimus is open-minded as to whether P_2 is the answer to Q. He offers P_2 as an answer to Q, but he is not committed to P_2 being the answer to Q, that is to say he does not accept that P_2 is the answer to Q. He, too, is perfectly open to considering evidence and arguments to the contrary. In such a case it seems that Quintus and Septimus have a disagreement in opinion (they offer incompatible answers to Q) but do not have a disagreement in attitude (they are both open minded as to whether P_1 or P_2 is the correct answer to Q).[30]

To this putative counterexample to (*) it might be objected that, in the situation just described, Quintus is not *really* offering P_1 as an answer to Q, and Septimus is not *really* offering P_2 as the answer to Q. Rather, Quintus is entertaining the possibility that P_1 is the answer to Q and likewise Septimus is entertaining the possibility that P_2 is the answer to Q. And, the objection would continue, to entertain the possibility that P_1 is the answer to Q is not to offer P_1 as an answer to Q. However, this counterargument does not so much argue for the truth of (*) as presuppose it. It may be that a condition of offering P_1 as an answer to Q *is* accepting P_1 as the answer to Q, but, if so, this is merely a restatement of (*) and not an independent argument for it.

Perhaps, then, we should be content with the following summary of the interrelations of our three kinds of disagreement. Anything which counts as a positive disagreement counts as a disagreement in opinion (but not vice versa), and in many (but not all) cases something which counts as a disagreement in opinion will also count as a disagreement in attitude. At any rate, however these three kinds of disagreement relate to

[30] Bueno makes a similar point in Machua (2013), p.29.

one another, Barnes' distinction between them is both salutary and important. The question which must now be confronted is whether or not the distinction is borne out in Sextus' text.

Instances of positive disagreement are certainly to be found in the *Outlines*. *PH* 3.30 offers one such example. There Sextus sets out a dispute between various philosophers regarding the fundamental material principle of the universe. He writes:

> Φερεκύδης μὲν γὰρ ὁ Σύριος γῆν εἶπε τὴν πάντων εἶναι ἀρχήν, Θαλῆς δὲ ὁ Μιλήσιος ὕδωρ, Ἀναξίμανδρος δὲ ὁ ἀκουστὴς τούτου τὸ ἄπειρον, Ἀναξιμένης δὲ καὶ Διογένης ὁ Ἀπολλωνιάτης ἀέρα, Ἵππασος δὲ ὁ Μεταποντῖνος πῦρ...
> Pherecydes of Syros said that the principle of everything was earth, Thales of Miletus said water, Anaximander (his pupil) the infinite, Anaximenes and Diogenes of Apollonia air, Hippasus of Metapontum fire… (*PH* 3.30)

The list goes on, but the point should be clear. Pherecydes endorses a certain material principle of everything, Thales another, Anaximander another and so forth. And each principle is incompatible with the others. So we have a positive disagreement.

As for disagreements of opinion and disagreements of attitude, Barnes draws our attention to *PH* 2.18 where Sextus is discussing the criterion of truth:

> Τῶν διαλαβόντων τοίνυν περὶ κριτηρίου οἱ μὲν εἶναι τοῦτο ἀπεφήναντο, ὡς οἱ Στωικοὶ καὶ ἄλλοι τινές, οἱ δὲ μὴ εἶναι, ὡς ἄλλοι τε καὶ ὁ Κορίνθιος Ξενιάδης καὶ Ξενοφάνης ὁ Κολοφώνιος, λέγων δόκος δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται· ἡμεῖς δ' ἐπέσχομεν, πότερον ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν.
> Of those who have discussed standards, some have asserted that there is one (e.g. the Stoics and certain others), some that there is not (among them Xeniades of Corinth and Xenophanes of Colophon who says: "but belief is found over all"); and we suspend judgement as to whether there is one or not (*PH* 2.18)

Here Barnes suggests that we have a trilateral disagreement between the Stoics, Xenophanes[31] and the sceptics. The disagreement between the Stoics and Xenophanes counts as a disagreement in opinion, whereas the disagreement between the Stoics and the sceptics and between Xenophanes and the sceptics counts as a disagreement in attitude.

Now, given the way in which Barnes defines "disagreement in opinion", it is

[31] For convenience I leave out Xeniades.

clear that the Stoics and Xenophanes are involved in a disagreement in opinion. However, it is less clear that *PH* 2.18 is case of a *trilateral* disagreement between the Stoics, Xenophanes *and* the sceptics. For it is not clear that the sceptics are part of the disagreement that obtains between the Stoics and the Xenophaneans. To see why this is the case it is necessary to be more precise about what it means to be "part of a disagreement".

Is the Sceptic Part of the Disagreement?

The first point to note is that, at the syntactic level, *PH* 2.18 does not commit the sceptic to be part of any disagreement with the Stoic and the Xenophanean. Sextus uses the formula "οἱ μὲν ἀπεφήναντο P οἱ δε Q ἡμεῖς δε R" to express the views of, respectively, the Stoics (that P), the Xenophaneans (that Q) and the sceptics (that R). It is a formula that is echoed elsewhere in the *Outlines*.[32] But, in and of itself, this formula is no evidence for the fact that the endorsers of P, of Q, and of R are involved in a *trilateral* disagreement. To determine whether this is the case we need to know what kinds of claims are being expressed by the propositional variables P, Q, and R.

For example, if P, Q and R are consistent with one another, then far from there being a trilateral disagreement between the endorsers of P, of Q and of R, there will be no disagreement at all between them. Alternatively, even if there is a bilateral disagreement between the endorsers of P and the endorsers of Q, it may be that the endorsers of R are not part of this disagreement, for R might be consistent with both P and Q. We can in fact rule out the first of these possibilities. For, at *PH* 1.19, Sextus explicitly refers to the Stoic-

[32] See, for example, *PH* 2.31, 180; 3.23, 65, 119. There are only two variations in the formula in these texts: the assertoric verb that governs, P, Q and R changes from passage to passage; and the first person ἡμεῖς drops out to be replaced by the definite article at *PH* 2.31, 180; 3.23, 119, and by an explicit reference to the sceptics in *PH* 3.65. What is common to all instances of the formula is that the subject of οἱ μὲν and of the first οἱ δε are always dogmatists, while the subject of the second οἱ δε are always the sceptics.

Xenophanean-sceptic interchange of *PH* 1.18 as a διαφωνία[33]. This rules out the possibility of there being no disagreement between the endorsers of P of Q and of R. There *is* a disagreement at work here, but it is yet to be determined whether it is bilateral or trilateral. As we have seen an examination of the syntax of "οἱ μὲν ἀπεφήναντο P οἱ δε Q ἡμεῖς δε R" does not settle the matter. We must therefore turn to semantics.

Recall our initial characterisation of διαφωνία: it was taken to be a relation between opinions, which does not involve mere difference of opinion, and involves, at least, a conflict of opinion, where conflict is to be understood as mere non-compossibility (except in cases where at least one of the conflicting propositions is a logical contradiction or necessarily false). One feature of disagreements which this characterisation leaves out, however, is that disagreements have a focus. Disagreements occur when two (or more) parties offer incompatible answers to some question. It is the question that provides the focus for the disagreement.[34] On the assumption that two parties are part of the same disagreement only if they offer incompatible answers *to the same question*, then in the *PH* 2.18 passage there cannot be a trilateral disagreement between Stoics, Xenophaneans and sceptics, and for the following reason.

Is there a standard of truth? That is the question which is in the background of *PH* 2.18. The Stoics answer that there is one, the Xenophaneans that there is no such thing. We have a clear case of two-party disagreement. Now, according to Barnes, the sceptics are *also* part of this disagreement "insofar as they suspend judgement on the matter"[35]. But this cannot be quite right. From the fact that the sceptics suspend judgement over whether there is a standard of truth, it does not follow that they are part of

[33] Indeed all instances of the triple formula mentioned above in n.14 (bar *PH* 3.119) are also explicitly categorised by Sextus as διαφωνίαι.
[34] Barnes is well aware of this. His threefold distinction between positive disagreements, disagreements in opinion and disagreements in attitudes is couched in terms of kinds of incompatible responses given to a particular question. See above, pp.14-15.
[35] Barnes is referring to the *PH* 2.18 passage. See Barnes (1990a), pp.14-15

the very same disagreement which obtains between the Stoics and the Xenophaneans. For the sceptics, unlike the Stoics and the Xenophaneans, are *not* offering an answer to the question "Is there a standard of truth?". To suspend judgement over some question, Q, is *not* to offer an answer to Q but to *refrain* from offering an answer to it – to endorse none of the answers to Q.

It is important to be clear that in suspending judgement over whether there is a standard of truth the sceptic is *not* claiming that it is indeterminate as to whether there is a standard of truth (ie that there neither is nor is not a standard of truth[36]). Were this the sceptic's position, then there would be a clear trilateral disagreement between the Stoic, Xenophanean and sceptic. They would each offer incompatible answers to the question "Is there a standard of truth?". But this is not the sceptic's position. In suspending judgement over whether there is a standard of truth the sceptic is claiming (if he is claiming anything at all) that, given the evidence and the arguments he has so far considered he is neither in a position to judge that there is a standard of truth nor in a position to judge that there is no such thing[37].

So, while the Stoic and Xenophanean offer incompatible answers to the question "Is there a standard of truth?", the sceptic makes a higher-order claim about the

[36] Though, interestingly, there are grounds for attributing to Pyrrho just such an indeterminstic thesis (at least on one reading of Aristocles' summary of Timon' account of Pyrrho's philosophical attitudes). Aristocles' summary is to be found in Eusebius *Praep. evang* XIV xviii 1-4. There Pyrrho is said to reveal (ἀποφαίνειν) that things (πράγματα) are in equal measure (ἐπ᾽ ἴσης) ἀδιάφορα καὶ ἀστάθμητα καὶ ἀνεπίκριτα. The translation of these three terms is controversial. ἀδιάφορα can be rendered either as "indifferent" or as "undifferentiable"; ἀστάθμητα either as "unstable" or "unmeasurable"; and ἀνεπίκριτα "indeterminate" or "indeterminable". (In Sextus the adjective ἀνεπίκριτος often qualifies διαφωνία-I discuss the sense the term has in these contexts immediately below.) If we adopt the first translation of each term, then Pyrrho's point seems to be that the πράγματα themselves are indifferent, unstable and indeterminate; if we adopt the second, then he remains neutral as to the nature of the πράγματα but merely stresses our own epistemic failings: we are so constituted that we cannot differentiate, measure or determine the nature of the πράγματα. The first translation is therefore the translation which supports an interpretation of Pyrrho as an proponent of an indeterministic thesis. For further discussion on this doxographically, syntactically and semantically complicated passage see Stopper (1983), pp.272-5 and Bett (2000), pp.18-29.

[37] Sextus would say that the arguments for there being a standard of truth and the arguments for there not being a standard of truth have the feature of equipollence (ἰσοσθένεια). For more on this crucial term see below, pp. 39-46.

nature of the dispute, namely that the arguments and evidence adduced on either side have not yet settled the issue. The question to which the sceptic is offering an answer is different to the question to which the Stoic and Xenophanean are offering answers. If our assumption that two parties are part of the same disagreement only if they offer incompatible answers to the same question is correct, then the sceptic is not part of the disagreement that obtains between the Stoic and the Xenophanean.

However, it is important to note that it is perfectly *possible* for a Barnes-like trilateral disagreement between Stoic, Xenophanean and sceptic to obtain. But for this to be the case the question to which conflicting answers would be given would not be "Is there a standard of truth?" but something like "What attitude ought one to take to the claim that there is a standard of truth?". To this question the Stoic would answer that one ought to affirm that there is a standard of truth, and the Xenophanean would answer that one ought to deny that there is a standard of truth. Now in this case, the sceptic *would* become part of this disagreement by virtue of suspending judgement on the question as to whether there is a standard of truth, provided that the claim that the sceptic expresses by suspending judgement (if indeed he expresses any claim at all) is the claim that that one ought[38] neither to affirm nor reject the claim that there is a standard of truth.

διαφωνία *and* ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία

What it is for two or more parties to stand in a relation of disagreement to one another has now been somewhat clarified. The rest of this chapter will be concerned to

[38] How are we to interpret this "ought"? It is problematic if it is interpreted in such a way that it commits the sceptic to holding some thesis about what it is rationally required of him to do. For such theoretical beliefs are just the sorts of beliefs which the sceptic, by his own lights, is barred from having. I pursue this question in greater detail later on in this chapter, so I leave it to one side here. For the moment, let us interpret the "ought" dialectically: one ought, *qua* dogmatist, neither affirm nor reject the claim that there is a standard of truth.

articulate how the mode of disagreement precipitates the suspension of judgement. The mode is introduced to us at *PH* 1.165 where Sextus writes,

> καὶ ὁ μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς διαφωνίας ἐστὶ καθ' ὃν περὶ τοῦ προτεθέντος πράγματος ἀνεπίκριτον στάσιν παρά τε τῷ βίῳ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς φιλοσόφοις εὑρίσκομεν γεγενημένην, δι' ἣν οὐ δυνάμενοι αἱρεῖσθαί τι ἢ ἀποδοκιμάζειν καταλήγομεν εἰς ἐποχήν.
> 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 either to choose or to rule out anything, and we end up with suspension of judgement. (*PH* 1.165)

It will be noted immediately that here we have a reference not only to διαφωνία but to ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία.[39] It is ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία and not διαφωνία *simpliciter* which is connected to the suspension of judgement. Elucidating what ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία amounts to is therefore a necessary precursor to elucidating how the notion is connected to the suspension of judgement.

How then are we to interpret the adjective ἀνεπίκριτος? As Barnes notes,[40] the term contains a twofold ambiguity: the first concerns the suffix -τος; the second concerns the root ἐπίκριν-. There are three ways to interpret the suffix: in a non-modal sense, in a weakly modal sense, and in a strongly modal sense, which correspond, respectively, to the translations "undecided", "cannot in the current circumstances be decided", and "cannot in principle be decided"[41]. And there are two ways to interpret the root επίκριν-, which turns on the different ways of understanding what it means for a διαφωνία to be decided. This second ambiguity requires some further elaboration.

There is a weak sense in which a διαφωνία is decided when the parties involved in the διαφωνία no longer disagree with one another. We can imagine a possible world[42] in which Profs. Kenny and Cooper come to agree that the books common to

[39] In the *PH* 1.165 passage ἀνεπίκριτος in fact qualifies στάσις, but, in this passage, I take διαφωνία and στάσις to be synonymous.
[40] See Barnes (1990a), pp.17-19 and pp.30-32
[41] The ambiguity is noted by Aristotle in *Top* 145b24-7.
[42] How close this possible world is to the actual world is not a question I pursue.

Aristotle's *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean Ethics* have their original and proper home in the *Eudemian Ethics*.[43] I call this sense of decision a "weak" sense because all it takes for such a decision to obtain is for those party to the διαφωνία to cease from disagreeing. But this says nothing about whether it is in fact *reasonable* for the participants in the διαφωνία to come to an agreement. To capture this notion, let us distinguish a strong sense in which a διαφωνία is decided just in case there are decisive reasons for deciding the διαφωνία one way or the other. For example, in a possible world in which there are decisive reasons for deciding the Kenny-Cooper debate in favour of Kenny (or Cooper; it matters not), then the διαφωνία is decided in the strong sense.

That a question is decided in the weak sense does not entail that it is decided in the strong sense – there is a possible world in which Kenny and Cooper come to agree that the common books have their home in the *Eudemian Ethics* (say) but where no decisive reasons for deciding the διαφωνία one way or the other have been produced (either by Kenny, by Cooper or by anyone else for that matter). And that a question is decided in the strong sense does not entail that it is decided in the weak sense – there is a possible world in which decisive reasons have been adduced which settle the question over which Kenny and Cooper disagree but where neither Kenny nor Cooper recognise these reasons as decisive and so continue to stand in a relation of διαφωνία to one another.

Was Sextus alive to these ambiguities surrounding the term ἀνεπίκριτος? Did he favour one particular construal of the suffix and of the root? And if he did, was he right to so construe them? I do believe Sextus was alive to these ambiguities. With regards the suffix ambiguity I contend that Sextus was not concerned with the strongly modal sense, but shifts between either the non-modal or weakly modal sense. As for the root ambiguity I suggest that Sextus was not primarily concerned with decisions in the weak sense. And in

[43] For the state of play in the actual world see Cooper (1981), pp.366-385 and Kenny (1992), pp.113-142,

both cases I think Sextus chose the right sense. Let me now make good on these claims.

As far as the suffix ambiguity goes, there are certainly instances in the *Outlines* where Sextus leaves open the possibility of a strongly modal sense by leaving the expression ἀνεπίκριτος unqualified[44]. However, at other times Sextus qualifies the term with phrases such as "up to now" or "still"[45]. Now in these contexts it makes little to no sense to understand ἀνεπίκριτος in the strongly modal sense. For how could the modal status of a disagreement change from that which in principle cannot be decided to that which might (in the future) be decided? These occurrences of ἀνεπίκριτος in the *Outlines* therefore point towards understanding the term either in the non-modal or in the weakly modal sense.

So runs a textual argument against the strongly modal sense. There is also a philosophical one. Were Sextus to support the strongly modal reading of ἀνεπίκριτος, his position would be deeply anti-Pyrrhonian. To claim of a dispute that it is in principle undecidable, amounts to the claim that there are no reasons, either actual or potential, that could decide it. Strongly modal undecidability goes hand in hand with dogmatism. This alone, irrespective of textual considerations, would have been sufficient reason not to saddle Sextus with the strongly modal reading.

One might of course still think that there is a residual question as to which of the two weaker readings (the non-modal and the weakly modal) Sextus adopted. In an important sense, however, the question is unimportant, since, as will be seen, whichever sense is afforded the term, it does not substantially affect the logic of the Sextan argument. As a result, from now on, unless I explicitly choose to distinguish between them, I shall use the expression "undecided" to cover both the non-modal and the weakly modal sense.

As for the root ambiguity, there is a good reason to deny that decisions, in the

[44] Cf. *PH* 1.26, 29, 59, 178, 2.85, 116, 3.54
[45] Cf. *PH* 3.3, 70

weak sense, were the dominant notion in Sextus' mind. For, if we construe the root of ἀνεπίκριτος in the weak sense, then this renders Sextus's claim that ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία leads to the suspension of judgement highly implausible.[46] To see why this is so, let us return to Kenny and Cooper. Suppose there is an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία between them: Kenny maintains that the common books belong to the *Eudemian Ethics* and Cooper denies this. As an interested onlooker is it appropriate for me to suspend judgement on the question?

Plainly not. For one, I first must know that Kenny and Cooper's epistemic credentials match one another. As contemporary theorists in the epistemology of disagreement like to say, I must know them to be "epistemic peers", where two agents count as epistemic peers just in case they are equally familiar the evidence and arguments that bear on the question and are also equals with respect to various epistemic virtues such an intelligence, diligence, lack of bias and so on.[47] But granting that Kenny and Cooper are epistemic peers in this sense (and no doubt they are), it still does not follow that it is appropriate for me, privy to their dispute, to suspend judgement. For though the διαφωνία between Kenny and Cooper has not been decided in our weak sense – Kenny and Cooper are still at loggerheads with one another – the διαφωνία might well have been decided in our strong sense – in the sense that (unbeknownst to either Kenny or Cooper) decisive reasons have been adduced to resolve the dispute one way rather than the other. If I am aware of all this, then it is plainly inappropriate for me to suspend judgement on the

[46] At *PH* 1.165 (quoted above, p.22-3), Sextus claims that as a result of the mode of disagreement "we end up with the suspension of judgement" (καταλήγομεν εἰς ἐποχήν).

[47] This characterisation of epistemic peerhood is taken from Kelly (2006), p. 175. Kelly is right to note that, outside mathematical contexts, the standards which two things must meet to count as equal will be context-sensitive. If we hold a very demanding standard of epistemic peerhood, then *no* two individuals will count as epistemic peers, for no two individuals will be equally intelligent, thoughtful, and familiar with the relevant evidence to precisely the same degree. Analogously, if we have a very demanding standard for equality of height, then no two individuals will count as being of the same height for no two people are *precisely* the same height. If, however, we hold a less demanding standard of epistemic peerhoood, then individuals will be counted as epistemic peers. For the purposes of the present discussion I assume that the standards for epistemic peerhood are sufficiently liberal to allow individuals to qualify as epistemic peers.

question over which Kenny and Cooper are divided. And yet Sextus, on a number of occasions, connects ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία with the suspension of judgement.[48] That suggests he did not construe the root in the weak sense.[49]

To sum up, there are four ways to interpret the term ἀνεπίκριτος when it qualifies διαφωνία: with a weak suffix and a weak root, with a weak suffix and a strong root, with a strong suffix and a weak root, and finally with a strong suffix and a strong root. The last two possibilities are ruled out because the sense imparted to the term if it is construed with a strong suffix is an anti-Pyrrhonian one: it would be dogmatic for the sceptic to claim that a particular διαφωνία is in principle undecidable, whatever sense is given to "decision". The first possibility is ruled out because to construe ἀνεπίκριτος with a weak root makes it difficult to see how ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία is to be connected with the suspension of judgement. This leaves us with the second possibility, construing it with a weak suffix and a strong root.

It should be emphasised that none of what I have said is an argument *in favour* of construing ἀνεπίκριτος in this way. Rather, I have offered arguments *against* construing it in any other way. Proceeding on the assumption that Sextus construes ἀνεπίκριτος in the way I have suggested – with a weak suffix and a strong root - the rest of the chapter can be seen as providing retrospective confirmation of this construal. For, if construing the term in this way enables one to provide a plausible articulation of the connection between ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία and the suspension of judgement, then, I submit, that is evidence for the original construal.

[48] As well as the *PH* 1.165 passage quoted above, see *PH* 1.26, 29, 59, 88, 170, 175; 2.19, 259.

[49] Is it then appropriate for me to suspend judgement over whether Kenny or Cooper is right if the root of ἀνεπίκριτος is construed in the strong sense? I answer this question (in the affirmative) in the subsequent section.

ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία *and the Suspension of Judgement*

In the course of the *Outlines* the expression ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία occurs in a variety of contexts. Sometimes Sextus writes as though there is connection between there being ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over P, and P being unclear (ἄδηλον),[50] at others as though there is one between there being an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over P and P being unknowable[51] (ἀκατάληπτος),[52] and at others as though there is one between there being an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over P and P being unassertible (οὐδὲν ἔξομεν λέγειν).[53] The fact that ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία exhibits such varied connections raises thorny exegetical and philosophical issues.[54] However, I set these to one side for the question I wish to focus on is this: how is ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία, so understood, meant to connect to the suspension of judgement (ἐποχη)?

According to Barnes what does the work is what he calls the Principle of Disagreement, which I shall express as follows. For some epistemic subject, S, and for some proposition, P:

> (PD) If S is aware that there is an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over P, then S should suspend judgement over P.[55]

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[50] *PH* 2.116, 182
[51] Or "unknown". The same ambiguity which afflicts ἀνεπίκριτος afflicts ἀκατάληπτος.
[52] *PH* 2.145, 168, 3.5, 23, 30, 54, 56, 139, 254
[53] *PH* 1.170, 3.108, 140
[54] Perhaps the thorniest arises from the references to ἀκατάληψια, for to say of some proposition that it is ἀκατάληπτος is to adopt a quintessentially un-Pyrrhonian stance towards that proposition. Such a stance is the stance of the negative dogmatist, whom Sextus identifies with the Academic Sceptic at *PH* 1.1-4, and from whom he is careful to distinguish the Pyrrhonist. There seem to be two possible ways to account for these puzzling references to ἀκατάληψια in the *Outlines*. The first is to look beyond the *Outlines* and tell some story about how these references are not Pyrrhonian in character but are rather traces of an earlier and Aenesideman form of scepticism (For more detail on the connection between Aenesideman and Sextan scepticism see Bett (2000), pp.189-213). The second, more straightforwardly, is to adopt a non-modal reading of ἀκατάληπτος, such that to say that P is ἀκατάληπτος is to say that P is merely unknown and not unknowable.
[55] Here is Barnes' version of the Principle *verbatim*: "If someone is aware that there is an undecided dispute about ?Q, then he ought not to accept or reject any proposed answer to ?Q.". See Barnes (1990a), p.21.

Two notes on (PD). First, ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία is to be construed as it has been construed in the previous section: for there to be an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over P, in this sense, is for there to be, in the current circumstances, no decisive reasons or arguments either for or against P. Second, the "should" is to be understood as having epistemic and not moral force: to say that I should suspend judgement over P, in this sense, is to say that it is rational for me to suspend judgement over P.

So is the principle expressed by (PD) true? Barnes thinks so, and he surely right in thinking so.[56] For if there is an undecided disagreement over P, in the sense that there are currently no decisive reasons or arguments either for or against P, and furthermore if I am aware of all this, then surely suspending judgement over P is not only the rational thing for me to do but the *only* rational thing for me to do. For if I believe that it is rational to decide the dispute one way rather than the other, then, on pain of inconsistency, I must believe that the dispute is decided. And if I believe that the dispute is undecided, in the sense that there are currently no decisive reasons or arguments either for or against P, then it is irrational for me to plump either for P or for not-P.

(PD) then is a principle that claims that it is rationally required of an epistemic subject to suspend judgement over P if he is aware that there is an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over P. We can easily imagine an epistemic subject, S, reaching a suspensive state with regards to some proposition, P, by framing to himself the following kind of argument.

(DIS) (i) There is an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over P

(ii) If there is an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over P, then S should suspend

[56] See Barnes (1990a), p.22-3.

judgement over P[57]

therefore,

(ii) S should suspend judgement over P.

The argument is clearly valid and represents one way in which an epistemic subject can move from being aware of undecided disagreement to suspending judgement. The question is this: can a sceptic reach suspension of judgement by framing to himself something like (DIS)? In the remainder of this chapter I shall argue for a negative answer to that question. The sceptic cannot arrive at a state of suspended judgement by applying the sort of reasoning set out in (DIS). That is the privilege of his dogmatic opponent. Finally, I shall suggest an alternative way to understand how the sceptic reaches suspension of judgement on the basis of the mode of disagreement.

Two Accounts of the Sorts of Beliefs a Sceptic Can Hold

To see why the sceptic cannot, by his own lights, reason in the way laid out by (DIS), it is necessary to spell out in greater detail two different ways in which scholars have attempted to specify the kinds of beliefs the sceptic is able to hold and the kinds of belief he is not able to hold.[58] On what I shall call the Barnes-Burnyeat view, what it is about a belief that determines whether or not a sceptic is able to hold it, is the *content* of that belief. More precisely, it is whether or not the belief has as part of its content any unclear items (πράγματα ἀδήλα), which, at *PH* 1.13 Sextus glosses as those objects of investigation of the sciences (τῶν κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας ζητουμένων), where τὰς

[57] (ii) is identical to (PD) apart from the fact that reference to S's *being aware* of there being an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over P drops out in (ii). This is because in framing the argument of (DIS) to himself S is, by virtue of that very fact, aware that there is an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over P.

[58] My subsequent characterisation of these two ways is indebted to Morison (2011), pp.265-268

ἐπιστήμας has a broad sense that includes not only what we would now call the natural sciences, but philosophical speculation too.[59] So, on such a view, the sceptic is unable to hold any of the following beliefs. Some anachronistic examples[60]: that water is H_2O, that the Everett interpretation of quantum mechanics is correct, that dialetheism is true. Some less anachronistic examples: that a standard of truth exists,[61] that there are imperceptible pores,[62] that the ultimate principle of everything is water.[63] Barnes usefully labels these kinds of beliefs "philosophico-scientific tenets".[64] By contrast, on what I shall call the Frede-Morison view, what it is about a belief that determines whether or not the sceptic is, by his own lights, able to hold it, is not the *content* of the belief but the *grounds* on which the belief is held. To be more precise if a sceptic comes to believe P as a result of a process of reasoning, then, on the Frede-Morison view, the sceptic is not entitled to believe P.[65]

It is worth emphasising that although the Barnes-Burnyeat criterion and the

[59] In calling this view the "Barnes-Burnyeat view" I do not mean to imply that this is all and only what Barnes or Burnyeat say about the question of the scope of Sextus' scepticism, only that a view of this kind can be mined from their respective writings. According to Barnes (1982) reprinted in Burnyeat and Frede (1997), p.81 n.86, a sentence expresses a belief which a sceptic is not entitled to hold just in case "(i) it expresses a proposition and (ii) it contains at least one term which denotes something ἀδήλον". See also Burnyeat and Frede (1997), pp.74-78. According to Burnyeat (1984) reprinted in Burnyeat and Frede (1997), p.99, "Pyrrhonian scepticism is scepticism about the realm of theory, which at this period would include both what we would consider philosophical or metaphysical theory and much that we can recognise as science**."** Page references (current and subsequent) are to the reprinted versions.

[60] That is, anachronistic for Sextus.

[61] *PH* 1.18

[62] *PH* 2.98

[63] *PH* 3.30

[64] Burnyeat and Frede (1997), p.74.

[65] Again, in calling this view the "Frede-Morison view" I do not mean to imply that this is all and only what Frede or Morison say on this question, only that it is reasonable to attribute to them this kind of view on the basis of passages like the following. According to Frede (1987a), p.187 reprinted in Burnyeat and Frede (1997), pp.9-10: "it is characteristic of the dogmatists that they believe it is possible to go behind the surface phenomena to the essence of things, to the nature of things, to true reality. We believe that the objects around us are coloured; in reality, however, they only reflect light of certain wave-lengths that makes them appear coloured. The dogmatists further believe that it is reason – if only we would follow it – that can lead us beyond the world of appearances to the world of real being." Again, present and subsequent page references are to the reprinted version. Morison (2011), p.266 writes, "I want to characeterize a philosophico-scientific belief – a *dogma* in the sense according to which sceptics have no *dogmata* – as one which has been arrived at *in a certain way*: roughly speaking, *x*'s belief that *p* is a philosophico-scientific belief iff *x* has come to believe that *p* as a result of marshalling arguments, or considerations, in favour of the proposition that *p*." Morison also notes that it is Frede's interpretation that he "take[s] [him]self to be following or perhaps refining".

Frede-Morison criterion will in many cases single out the same set of beliefs as beliefs which the sceptic cannot hold, this need not always be the case. To adapt an example from Morison[66], consider the proposition that God exists. Now on the Barnes-Burnyeat view, this is just the sort of philosophico-scientific tenet which a sceptic, by his own lights, is not entitled to believe. On the Frede-Morison view, by contrast, there are circumstances in which a sceptic *would* be entitled to believe this very proposition (for example, if the belief comes to be held on the basis of habituation or acculturation) even if there are also circumstances in which he would not be entitled to believe it (for example, if he came to believe it on the basis of the ontological or the cosmological argument).

These two methods for distinguishing those beliefs which a sceptic can have and those beliefs which a sceptic has to lack, provide a useful framework in which to assess the question as to whether the sceptic is able to reach suspension of judgement by framing to himself the kind of argument expressed by (DIS). In my subsequent discussion (and for the rest of the thesis) I shall, for the sake of brevity, refer to those beliefs which either on a Barnes-Burnyeat view or on a Frede-Morison view are ruled out for a sceptic as "theoretical beliefs".

A Dogmatic Mode of Disagreement

On the basis of the preceding section it should be obvious why the sceptic cannot reach suspension of judgement by reasoning through the argument in (DIS) if we adopt either the Barnes-Burnyeat view or the Frede-Morison view. Firstly, if we adopt the Barnes-Burnyeat view, the sceptic is not entitled to believe the second premise of the argument. For (ii) is a philosophical, more specifically, an epistemological claim: it is a

[66] See Morison (2011), pp.266-7.

claim about what is rational for an epistemic agent to believe. In Barnes' terminology it is "philosophic tenet"[67] and so not the sort of claim which a sceptic is entitled to believe. But what if we were to adopt the Frede-Morison view? Is (ii) still ruled out as a candidate for belief for the sceptic? One might be tempted to say "no". For, it certainly seems logically possible that the sceptic believe (ii) on the basis of no antecedent ratiocinative process. It might simply strike the sceptic that (ii) is the case just as it strikes him that it is day (when it is day). So, on the Frede-Morison view, just as the sceptic can believe that it is day if he arrives at that belief without reasoning his way to it, so the sceptic can believe that (ii) is the case if he arrives at that belief without reasoning his way to it.

Two points might be made in response to this. First, given the content of (ii), it is plausible to think that an epistemic subject who believes (ii) believes it because he also believes certain things about the nature of rationality and its requirements.[68] But if an epistemic subject *does* believe (ii) because he holds other beliefs about the nature of rationality and its requirements, from which he derives his belief that (ii), then on the Frede-Morison view (ii) will be ruled out as a candidate for belief for the sceptic. Second, even if we allow that (ii) is a belief which, on a Frede-Morison view, is not ruled out for the sceptic, the conclusion of the argument, (iii), most certainly is. For, *ex hypothesi*, (iii) is arrived at by a process of reasoning, namely the reasoning set out in (DIS). So, whether one adopts the Barnes-Burnyeat or the Frede-Morison view, the sceptic will not be able to reason to a suspensive conclusion along the lines of (DIS).

[67] And therefore, trivially, it is also a philosophico-scientific tenet.

[68] For more on the sort of requirements of rationality that are involved in an epistemic subject's suspending judgement over some claim, P, when that epistemic subject recognises that there is an undecided disagreement over P see Perin (2010), pp.40-44. Perin claims, uncontroversially, that a dogmatist suspends judgement over some claim, P, if he comes to believe that there is an undecided disagreement over P (ie if he comes to believe that there is no reason to believe either P or not-P), because he holds certain beliefs about the requirements of rationality and is determined to satisfy those requirements. One such requirement is the following: rationality requires one to suspend judgement about whether P if one believes there is no reason to believe either P or its negation. More controversially, Perin argues that the sceptic too aims to satisfy this sort of rational requirement. I argue below that while this can be true of a proto-sceptic it cannot be true of a mature sceptic who lacks all theoretical beliefs. For further detail on the distinction between proto-sceptic and mature-sceptic see below, pp.49-50.

Of course, the sceptic's dogmatic opponent, unencumbered by the restrictions a sceptic has on the kinds of beliefs he can hold, is perfectly at liberty to reach a suspensive conclusion on the basis of a (DIS)-like argument. We might therefore call the kind of argument set out in (DIS) the dogmatic version of the mode of disagreement. And a question naturally arises: is there a sceptical version of the mode, a version of the mode which might induce suspension of judgement in a sceptic? To shed light on this question it will be well to first outline the general method by which the sceptic reaches the suspension of judgement – for it will be a recurring theme of this thesis that the method of equipollence provides a key to understanding how the Agrippan modes bring about suspension of judgement for a sceptic.

The Method of Equipollence

The method is introduced to us at *PH* 1.8, where Sextus writes,

> Ἔστι δὲ ἡ σκεπτικὴ δύναμις ἀντιθετικὴ φαινομένων τε καὶ νοουμένων καθ' οἱονδήποτε τρόπον, ἀφ' ἧς ἐρχόμεθα διὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἀντικειμένοις πράγμασι καὶ λόγοις ἰσοσθένειαν τὸ μὲν πρῶτον εἰς ἐποχήν, τὸ δὲ μετὰ τοῦτο εἰς ἀταραξίαν.
> Scepticism is an ability to set out oppositions among things which appear and are thought of in any way at all, an ability which, because of the equipollence in the opposed items and accounts, we come first to suspension of judgement and afterwards to tranquillity. (*PH* 1.8)

Scepticism is here described *not* as a thesis based on a set of arguments, or a particular state of mind, or a collection of beliefs but as an *ability*, a δύναμις. I shall label this ability of the sceptic's his equipollent ability for it is an ability which consists in setting out oppositions among things which appear and are thought of in any way at all (ἀντιθετική φαινομένων τε καὶ νοουμένων καθ' οἱονδήποτε τρόπον), which, by virtue of the equipollence (ἰσοσθένειαν) of the opposed items and accounts (ἀντικειμένοις πράγμασι καὶ

λόγοις), promotes the suspension of judgement (ἐποχήν). All this requires unpacking. Two issues, in particular, need to be clarified. First, what sorts of thing are being opposed to one another? And second, what is meant by equipollence?

In answering the first question it is important to distinguish between opposed *items* (πράγματα) and opposed *accounts* (λόγοι). This is because, as my subsequent analysis suggests, although opposed items are constituent parts of opposed accounts, it is only opposed accounts[69] which are properly said to be equipollent. Opposed items are, *PH* 1.8 suggests, either φαινόμενα or νοούμενα, and in *PH* 1.9 Sextus distinguishes the following three kinds of pairings: φαινόμενα - φαινόμενα, νοούμενα - νοούμενα, and φαινόμενα - νοούμενα.[70] But what kind of items are these paired items? An answer is to be found by turning to *PH* 1.31-33 where Sextus provides us with examples of each of these pairings[71]. He writes,

> ἀντιτίθεμεν δὲ ἢ φαινόμενα φαινομένοις ἢ νοούμενα νοουμένοις ἢ ἐναλλάξ, οἷον φαινόμενα μὲν φαινομένοις, ὅταν λέγωμεν ‘ὁ αὐτὸς πύργος πόρρωθεν μὲν φαίνεται στρογγύλος, ἐγγύθεν δὲ τετράγωνος’, νοούμενα δὲ νοουμένοις, ὅταν πρὸς τὸν κατασκευάζοντα ὅτι ἔστι πρόνοια ἐκ τῆς τάξεως τῶν οὐρανίων, ἀντιτιθῶμεν τὸ τοὺς μὲν ἀγαθοὺς δυσπραγεῖν πολλάκις τοὺς δὲ κακοὺς εὐπραγεῖν, καὶ διὰ τούτου συνάγωμεν τὸ μὴ εἶναι πρόνοιαν· νοούμενα δὲ φαινομένοις, ὡς ὁ Ἀναξαγόρας τῷ <κατασκευάζοντι>[72] λευκὴν εἶναι τὴν χιόνα ἀντετίθει, ὅτι ἡ χιὼν ὕδωρ ἐστὶ πεπηγός, τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ ἐστὶ μέλαν, καὶ ἡ χιὼν ἄρα μέλαινά ἐστιν.
>
> We oppose what appears to what appears, or what is thought of to what is thought of, or crosswise. For example, [Opposition 1] we oppose what appears to what appears when we say, “The same tower appears round from a distance and square from nearby”. [Opposition 2] We oppose what is thought of to what is thought of when, against those who seek to establish that there is Providence from the orderliness of the heavenly bodies, we oppose the view that often the good fare badly while the bad fare well and conclude from this that there is no Providence. [Opposition 3] We oppose what is thought of to what appears, as Anaxagoras did when to the view that snow is white, he opposed the thought that snow is frozen water and water is black and snow is therefore black. (*PH* 1.31-33)

[69] With one notable exception to be discussed in Chapter 2, pp.84-5.
[70] These are the only three possible pairings because the pairs are not ordered pairs.
[71] I have labelled each of these oppositions in square brackets in the English translation.
[72] Annas and Barnes, along with Mau, reject Mutschmann’s insertion of κατασκευάζοντι. Either way no violence is done to the sense of the passage.

On the basis of such a passage we might think that the sorts of items that are opposed to one another are propositional items.[73] Restricting ourselves, for the moment, to Opposition 2 this analysis seems to fit well. We seem to have a straightforward example of two propositions being opposed to one another: the proposition that Providence exists (ὅτι ἔστι πρόνοια) and the proposition that Providence does not exist (τὸ μὴ εἶναι πρόνοιαν). This much may be clear. But it is less clear what it is about these propositions that make them νοουμένα rather than φαινομένα.

One suggestion[74] would be to think that what makes a proposition a νοούμενον rather than a φαινόμενον, is the sort of grounds on which the proposition in question is held. For example, if the proposition is held on non-perceptual grounds, then it counts as a νοούμενον, if on perceptual grounds a φαινόμενον. But of course this kind of answer simply encourages the further question - what are we to understand by the expression "perceptual grounds"? Let us, then, stipulate that something counts as a perceptual ground for a claim of the form "*x* is *F*", if it makes reference to *x*'s being perceived of as *F*, and counts as a non-perceptual ground if it does not make reference to *x*'s being perceived of as *F*. So, returning to Opposition 2, the claim that Providence exists is not supported by a claim of the form "Providence is perceived to exist"[75] and the claim that Providence does not exist is not supported by a claim of the form "Providence is perceived not to exist". Instead, the former claim is supported by the claim that the heavenly bodies are orderly (ἐκ τῆς τάξεως τῶν οὐρανίων); and the latter by the claim that the good fare badly and the bad fare well (τὸ τοὺς μὲν ἀγαθοὺς δυσπραγεῖν πολλάκις τοὺς δὲ κακοὺς εὐπραγεῖν). Hence we are dealing with νοουμένα and not φαινομένα.

We can carry over our analysis of Opposition 2, to the less straightforward

[73] My treatment of this passage is much indebted to Benjamin Morison's account. See Morison (2011), pp.270-9.
[74] See Morison (2011), p.275. The suggestion is his.
[75] If such a claim would even be meaningful, considering that Providence (I am supposing) counts as an imperceptible item.

Oppositions 1 and 3. Opposition 1 (an example of an opposition between two φαινόμενα) is less straightforward because Sextus only mentions the grounds for holding the relevant opposing items and not the items themselves. Tom Tower appears round from a distance and Tom Tower appears square from nearby.[76] That is the kind of opposition with which Sextus is concerned in Opposition 1. But if we treat *these* two claims as the opposed claims rather than the grounds on which those claims are held, we quickly find ourselves at a dead end. For, plainly, the claim that Tom Tower appears round from a distance and the claim that Tom Tower appears square from nearby are *not* opposed to one another – they can both be true at the same time. On the other hand, if we treat the claim that Tom Tower appears round from a distance as the grounds on which a claim of the form "Tom Tower is round" is held, and the claim that Tom Tower appears square from nearby as the grounds on which a claim of the form "Tom Tower is square" is held, then we *do* end up with a genuine opposition. For, the claim that Tom Tower is round and the claim that Tom Tower is square cannot both be true at the same time. Furthermore if we interpret Opposition 1 in this way it fits with our analysis of φαινόμενα as those propositions which are held on perceptual grounds. For, the claim that Tom Tower is round is held on the grounds that Tom Tower appears round from a distance, which is just to say that it is held on the grounds that that Tom Tower is perceived to be round from a distance; and the claim that Tom Tower is square is held on the grounds that that Tom Tower appears square from nearby, which is just to say that it is held on the grounds that Tom Tower is perceived to be square from nearby. We therefore have an opposition between two φαινόμενα, which is just what Sextus tells us we have.

Finally, in the case of Opposition 3 (an example of an opposition between a φαινόμενον and a νοούμενον) Sextus presents us with an opposition between the claim that snow is white and the claim that snow is black. This latter claim is classed as a νοούμενον,

[76] Let us, for the sake of argument, treat this claim as true.

for it is not held on perceptual grounds but on the grounds that snow is frozen water and water is black[77]. The claim that snow is white, on the other hand, is not supported by any explicit grounds, but these grounds can readily be supplied. Sextus tells us that the claim that snow is white is a φαινόμενον, and so, analogous to the φαινόμενον in Opposition 1, the claim that snow is white would be grounded by a claim of the form "snow is perceived to be white".

There are a number of further questions that could be pursued with regards to the interpretation of the *PH* 1.31-33 passage, but this is not the place to pursue them.[78] The point I wish to emphasise is that in all three cases of opposition what plays the role of the opposed items are propositions. In some cases the propositions are supported by claims which make reference to the perceiving of things in a certain way; in other cases the propositions are supported by claims which make no such reference. In the former case the supported claim counts as a φαινόμενον, in the latter case a νοούμενον.

So much for the opposed items. What of the opposed accounts (λόγοι)? An "account", in this sense, is an argument.[79] The *PH* 1.31-33 passage provides us with the

[77] I leave to one side the issue of the plausibility of this kind of argument, which Sextus attributes to Anaxagoras. My only concern here is to emphasise that the grounds Sextus gives for holding the claim that snow is back are non-perceptual ones. But it is not clear that this is in fact true. Consider the following objection: "Surely the grounds Sextus gives for holding the claim that snow is black *are* perceptual grounds? For Sextus offers as grounds the claim that (a) Snow is frozen water and (b) Water is black. But claims like (a) and (b) are quintessentially perceptual claims. How else, but by perception, is it possible to judge their truth?" The objection is natural but mistaken, and for two reasons. Firstly, all it takes for the claim that snow is black to count as a νοούμενον, is that the grounds on which it is held do not take the form of "snow is perceived to be black". Neither (a) nor (b) are of this form. So the claim that snow is black counts as a νοούμενον. Secondly, even if it is true that (a) and (b) are themselves to be supported by adverting to perceptual grounds of the form (a') Snow is perceived to be frozen water and (b') Water is perceived to be black, all this shows is that (a) and (b) are φαινόμενα. But the claim that snow is black would *still* count as a νοούμενον. It is perfectly possible for a νοούμενον of the form "*x* is *F*" to be held on grounds which count as φαινόμενα, provided that these φαινόμενα do not ground the νοούμενον in question by referring to *x's* being perceived of as *F*. Neither (a) nor (b) do this. So the claim that snow is black counts as a νοούμενον.

[78] For instance, given this analysis of a φαινόμενον and a νοούμενον, does it follow that any proposition could count as νοούμενον, provided that the grounds on which it is held are non-perceptual? The analysis above would suggest that this is so. By contrast not any proposition could count as a φαινόμενον, for not every proposition can be held on perceptual grounds.

[79] It is a platitude that the Greek term λόγος has a variety of meanings. I have chosen to render it by the English "argument" because that is compatible with thinking of a λόγος both in a strict sense (e.g. a λόγος of P is a logical proof of P) and in a less strict sense (e.g. a λόγος of P is a reason for believing P to be true). I say more about these various senses in my discussion of the mode of hypothesis. See Chapter 2, pp.62-5,

following six examples.

Account 1:

(1) Tom Tower is perceived to be square from nearby,

so (2) Tom Tower is square;

Account 2:

(3) Tom Tower is perceived to be round from a distance,

so (4) Tom Tower is round;

Account 3:

(5) The heavenly bodies are orderly,

so (6) Providence exists;

Account 4:

(7) The good fare badly and the bad fare well,

so (8) Providence does not exist;

Account 5:

(9) Snow is perceived to be white,

so (10) Snow is white;

Account 6:

(11) Snow is frozen water,

(12) Water is black,

so (13) Snow is black.

Now none of these accounts, in their present form, are logically valid arguments.[80] But this is unimportant. All it takes for something to be an "account", in the sense in which it

70-1.

[80] See Chapter 2, pp.64-5 where this point is made in connection with Account 3.

is used at *PH* 1.8, is that it be composed of two or more claims, one of which is supported or grounded by the other or others. So, in the case of Account 1, (2) is the grounded claim, for which (1) offers the grounds; and in the case of Account 2, (4) is the grounded claim, for which (3) offers the grounds. Account 1 and Account 2 are therefore opposed to one another in virtue of the fact that claims (2) and (4) cannot both be true together at the same time. (2) and (4) are, then, the opposed items, the ἀντικειμένα πράγματα to which Sextus refers at *PH* 1.8.

We can now, finally, come to equipollence (ἰσοσθένεια). Sextus glosses it for us at *PH* 1.10:

> 'ἰσοσθένειαν' δὲ λέγομεν τὴν κατὰ πίστιν καὶ ἀπιστίαν ἰσότητα, ὡς μηδένα μηδενὸς προκεῖσθαι τῶν μαχομένων λόγων ὡς πιστότερον.
> By "equipollence" we mean equality with regard to being convincing or unconvincing: none of the conflicting accounts takes precedence over any other as being the more convincing. (*PH* 1.10)

At the heart of ἰσοσθένεια, then, is the idea of equal convincingness (κατὰ πίστιν καὶ ἀπιστίαν ἰσότητα).[81] To say of two claims P and Q that they are equally convincing is to say that the reasons for believing P are as good or as convincing as the reasons for believing Q. P therefore might be said to be equipollent to Q, but strictly speaking, P is only equipollent to Q in a derivative way. For it is in virtue of the *reasons* given for P and the *reasons* given for Q, that P and Q could be said to equipollent to one another. To return to *PH* 1.31-33, it is Account 1 *as a whole* and Account 2 *as a whole* (and not merely those claims which Accounts 1 and Account 2 support), that are properly described as standing in an equipollent relation to one another. (2) and (4) might be said to be

[81] Sextus repeatedly characterises equipollence in this way. See *PH* 1.196, 198-9, 202-3, 222, 227, 232. As Perin (2011), p.35 n.6 notes, the one exception in the *Outlines* occurs at *PH* 1.190 where equipollence is characterised in terms of what is plausible (πιθανόν), though there are some textual complexities with this passage. The text reads ἰσοσθένειαν μὲν λεγόντων ἡμῶν τὴν <ἰσότητα τὴν> κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον ἡμῖν πιθανόν. Pappenheim supplies ἰσότητα τὴν and replaces ἰσότητα with ἰσοσθένειαν. In any case, whether one characterises equipollence in terms of the equal convincingness (πίστις) of P and not-P or in terms of the equal plausibility (πιθανότης) of P and not-P what is central to *both* characterisations is the idea that there are equally good reasons on the side of P and on the side of not-P.

equipollent to one another, but only in a derivative way, for (2) is equipollent to (4) only in virtue of the fact that Account 1 is equipollent to Account 2. Analogous claims can of course be made for Accounts 3 and 4 and Accounts 5 and 6 and the respective claims these accounts support.

The Method of Equipollence and the Suspension of Judgement

The preceding pages have discussed the content of the method of equipollence. Before examining how this method can help in reconstructing a sceptical version of the mode of disagreement (ie a version of the mode which can bring a sceptic, as opposed to his dogmatic opponent, to suspend judgement), something needs to be said about the nature of the connection between a sceptic being confronted with equipollent arguments for P and for not-P and suspending judgement over whether P.

At *PH* 1.25 Sextus describes how sceptics, in the course of their philosophical investigations, come upon equipollent dispute, are unable to decide it, and consequently suspend judgement (ἐνέπεσεν εἰς τὴν ἰσοσθενῆ διαφωνίαν, ἣν ἐπικρῖναι μὴ δυνάμενος ἐπέσχεν). Plainly, the key to unpacking the connection between equipollent dispute and suspension of judgement, is the sense that is given to the modal expression μὴ δυνάμενος. In what sense is it not possible for the sceptic to do anything but suspend judgement over P when confronted with an equipollent dispute over P? Or, recasting in terms of necessity, in what sense is it necessary for the sceptic to suspend judgement over P when confronted with an equipollent dispute over P?

One way to think of the connection is in similar terms to the connection articulated above between a dogmatist being confronted with an undecided disagreement over P and suspending judgement over P. On this way of thinking, the necessity which

attaches to the sceptic's suspending judgement is what we might call "rational". In this sense, it is necessary for the sceptic to suspend judgement, when confronted with an equipollent dispute, if he is to do what rationality requires of him. An alternative way of characterising the necessity in question is to think of it in causal terms.[82] On this view, the sceptic suspends judgement as a matter of causal necessity. One psychological state (that of being aware that there is an equipollent dispute over P) causes another (that of suspending judgement). On this view, the sceptic does not suspend judgement because it is the reasonable thing to do and because he wants to do the reasonable thing; he suspends judgement because, psychologically, he cannot do otherwise. [83]

At first blush, it would seem that it is simply mistaken to construe the necessity that attaches to the sceptic's suspension of judgement, when confronted by a pair of equipollent arguments, in rational terms. For this saddles the sceptic with a number of theoretical beliefs about the nature of rationality and its requirements which he is not entitled to hold. On the other hand, construing the necessity in causal terms does not lead to the sceptic holding any such prohibited beliefs for it is merely out of psychological habit that the sceptic suspends judgement.[84] For example, when confronted by the following

[82] Perin (2011), pp.36-8 draws a similar distinction though he speaks of "hypothetical necessity" instead of "rational necessity".

[83] A survey of the secondary literature shows that thinking of the necessity that governs the sceptic's suspension of judgement in causal rather than rational terms, is the orthodox position. See, for example, Burnyeat (1980), Williams (1988), Barnes (1990c) who all, in one way or another, endorse something like the causal reading. Barnes (1990c), p.2649 claims that "...the Pyrrhonist's arguments are causally efficacious: they do not provide reasons which we ought to accept rather they are thought of as working on us like drugs, causing or inducing ἐποχή." Burnyeat (1980), p.40 offers an Epictetan illustration of the point (Epictetus *Diss* 1 28.3): just as it is psychologically impossible for me to believe that the number of stars is even (or odd), so it is psychologically impossible for the sceptic to do anything but suspend judgement when confronted with an undecided disagreement. Williams (1988), p.572 writes, "The whole point of the method of opposition is that *isostheneia* is not 'established' but felt." For a dissenting voice see Perin (2011), pp.33-58 who argues that the kind of necessity that governs the sceptic's suspension of judgement is, at least in the first instance, rational. I elaborate on what this claim might amount to below, pp.48-50.

[84] It is important to emphasise that it is *not* the sceptic who theorises about the kind of necessity that attaches to his suspension of judgement. That is the job of the historian of philosophy – in this case no Pyrrhonian sceptic. For if the sceptic is disallowed from articulating the necessity that attaches to his suspension of judgement in terms of the nature of rationality and its requirements on the grounds that these are theoretical beliefs which he is not able to hold, so will he be disallowed from articulating the same necessity in terms of a thesis about the constant conjunction of various kinds of psychological state. For, presumably the belief that there is a constant conjunction between various psychological states is just as theoretical a belief as the

pair of (let us suppose) equipollent arguments,

P_1; therefore, Q.

R_1; therefore, not-Q,

on the causal account, the sceptic merely suspends judgement because the psychological state of being aware that there is an equipollent dispute over Q causes another psychological state, namely that of suspending judgement over Q.

This distinction between a rational and a causal account of how the sceptic comes to suspend judgement will return at various stages in my subsequent analysis of the Agrippan modes, so it is worth emphasising two points at this stage. First, though it may be the case that, in suspending judgement when confronted by a pair of equipollent arguments, the sceptic does what, by a dogmatist's lights, it is rationally required of him to do, it does not follow from this that the sceptic holds any beliefs about the nature of rationality and its requirements or about whether, in doing as he does, he is doing what rationality requires him to do. We might say that the sceptic has a disposition - a psychological disposition - to suspend judgement when confronted with a pair of equipollent arguments, a disposition upon which he can act without framing to himself any kind of argument which has as its conclusion that it is rational for him to suspend judgement.

Second, it is important to emphasise that it may well be the case that an account of how the sceptic came, in the first place, to *acquire* a psychological disposition of this kind, cannot be given without some reference to rational necessity. One account, for example, would be the following. The sceptic's disposition to suspend judgement

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belief that rationality has certain requirements that ought to be satisfied.

when confronted by a pair of equipollent arguments stems from the fact that on numerous occasions in the past, and in a variety of contexts, the sceptic suspended judgement when confronted by a pair of equipollent arguments. Out of these repeated instances of suspending judgement in the face of equipollence, grew the sceptic's disposition to do so. But this merely raises a further question: why was it that, on these numerous occasions in the past, the sceptic suspended judgement when confronted by a pair of equipollent arguments? If one answers that the sceptic suspended judgement on those occasions out of a psychological habit, then one relies on the very phenomenon which one set out to explain.

To respond to this sort of worry one might distinguish between two stages in the sceptic's intellectual career: a proto-sceptical phase, and a mature sceptical phase. In his proto-sceptical phase, of the kind Sextus describes at *PH* 1.26,[85] the sceptic suspends judgement when confronted by a pair of equipollent arguments, because he believes it is the rational thing to do and wants to do the rational thing. The proto-sceptic therefore can hold at least some theoretical beliefs about the nature of rationality and its requirements. The full-blown mature sceptic, by contrast, lacks all theoretical beliefs. He therefore does not come to suspend judgement as his proto-sceptical self did, but rather comes to do so because he has developed a psychological habit to suspend judgement when confronted by a pair of equipollent arguments, without in any way reflecting on whether, in suspending judgement, he is doing the rational thing. On such an account, then, the psychological disposition of the mature sceptic to suspend judgement in the face of equipollence, is caused by the fact that, at one stage in his intellectual career, the sceptic repeatedly, and in a variety of contexts, suspended judgement because he *did* believe it to be the rational

[85] There Sextus is describing the early philosophical investigations of the sceptic. He says that the sceptics began to do philosophy in order to decide among appearances and to apprehend which are true and which false (ἀρξάμενος γὰρ φιλοσοφεῖν ὑπὲρ τοῦ τὰς φαντασίας ἐπικρῖναι καὶ καταλαβεῖν, τίνες μέν εἰσιν ἀληθεῖς τίνες δὲ ψευδεῖς).

thing to do and wanted to do the rational thing. On such a view, the psychological disposition of the mature sceptic to suspend judgement is therefore ultimately explained by the fact that, in his proto-sceptical phase, his suspension of judgement was a product of rational, and not merely causal, necessity.

It would be possible to theorise further about the connections between these two phases in the sceptic's career, but to do so would go beyond the scope of the present thesis.[86] At any rate, two points ought to be stressed with regard to these preceding remarks. First, it is not the task of the mature sceptic[87] to theorise about the nature of this connection. The sceptic need not have given a moment's thought as to what might ground his disposition to suspend judgement when confronted by two equipollent arguments, in order to suspend judgement by virtue of having that disposition. Secondly, even if the ultimate explanation of the sceptic's psychological disposition to suspend judgement makes reference to something like rational necessity, if the mature sceptic lacks theoretical beliefs, then he cannot come to suspend judgement when confronted by a pair of equipollent arguments by framing to himself some argument, if, in framing such an argument to himself, the sceptic is required to hold various theoretical beliefs. The significance of this point will emerge if we return to the question raised above about how a sceptic, and not a dogmatist might come to suspend judgement on the basis of the mode of disagreement.

A Sceptical Mode of Disagreement

The preceding remarks concerning the sceptic's method of equipollence can be thought to provide the basis for a sceptical version of the mode of disagreement, that is to

[86] See for example Perin (2011), pp.33-58.
[87] To avoid confusion, from now on (unless I explicitly say otherwise) by "sceptic" I mean mature sceptic.

say a version of the mode on the basis of which a sceptic, who lacks all theoretical beliefs, might come to suspend judgement. I quote, again, the passage in which Sextus introduces us to the mode:

> καὶ ὁ μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς διαφωνίας ἐστὶ καθ' ὃν περὶ τοῦ προτεθέντος πράγματος ἀνεπίκριτον στάσιν παρά τε τῷ βίῳ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς φιλοσόφοις εὑρίσκομεν γεγενημένην, δι' ἣν οὐ δυνάμενοι αἱρεῖσθαί τι ἢ ἀποδοκιμάζειν καταλήγομεν εἰς ἐποχήν.
> 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 either to choose or to rule out anything, and we end up with suspension of judgement. (*PH* 1.165)

Note what was not noted before: Sextus' use of first personal plurals - εὑρίσκομεν, δυνάμενοι, καταλήγομεν.[88] The perspective is that of the sceptic.[89] We are told that, when confronted with an undecided disagreement over P the sceptic is unable (οὐ δυνάμενοι) either to assent to P or to not-P, as a result of which suspension of judgement comes about (καταλήγομεν εἰς ἐποχήν).

Now, on Barnes' proposal, the mode of disagreement involves an epistemic subject framing to himself the sort of argument set out in (DIS), the conclusion of which is that it is rational for the epistemic subject in question to suspend judgement. However, as has been argued, this cannot be how a sceptic, a mature sceptic, comes to suspend judgement, for to come to suspend judgement in this way requires the sceptic to have a number of theoretical beliefs about the nature of rationality and its requirements, which he is not entitled to hold. At best, this way of suspending judgement is open to the sceptic's dogmatic interlocutor or to the proto-sceptic early on in his philosophical investigations.

[88] The first person plurals continue throughout Sextus discussion of the Five Modes (ie through *PH* 1.165-177), and indeed through much (if not most) of the *Outlines*.

[89] There is, in fact, a curious shifting of perspective during the course of Sextus' discussion of the Agrippan modes at *PH* 1.164-179. The first person references of *PH* 1.165 continue throughout Sextus' treatment of each individual mode at *PH* 1.165-169 (bar the mode of hypothesis at *PH* 1.168 where the perspective switches to that of the sceptic's dogmatic interlocutor). However, after Sextus has outlined how the modes are meant to work in combination with one another at *PH* 1.170-177 Sextus claims that the modes are meant to induce the suspension of judgement in the sceptic's dogmatic interlocutor: the modes are put forward to curb the dogmatists' epistemic rashness (ἐλέγχειν τὴν τῶν δογματικῶν προπέτειαν). The implication is that the modes are meant to illustrate how a dogmatist, rather than a sceptic, comes to suspend judgement. I discuss this issue further in Chapter 6.

It should now be plain how one can reconfigure the mode of disagreement such that a fully fledged sceptic can suspend judgement on the basis of it. Rather than framing to himself an argument like (DIS), the sceptic frames no argument to himself but in the face of an undecided disagreement (ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία) over P, finds himself psychologically compelled to suspend judgement, just as he finds himself psychologically compelled to suspend judgement in the face of a pair of equipollent arguments, as discussed in the preceding section.

Indeed, on the interpretation of ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία given above, there being an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over some claim, P, is *equivalent* to there being an equipollent dispute over that question. For if a dispute over P is undecided in the sense that there are (in present circumstances) no arguments or considerations that decide the matter either way, then the arguments for P are equipollent to the arguments for not-P. On this way of thinking the mode of disagreement highlights the fact that the sceptic comes to suspend judgement on the basis of being confronted with equipollent argumentation, but it does not specify what logical form that argumentation takes. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, the modes of hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity provide particular examples of the kind of argumentation Sextus might have had in mind.

The Sceptic as Practitioner of the Mode of Disagreement

The preceding pages have focused on how the mode of disagreement might bring about the suspension of judgement in various epistemic subjects - in a dogmatist, in a proto-sceptic, in a mature sceptic and so on. However, in focusing on such questions one can easily miss an important fact about the role of the sceptic as a *practitioner* of the mode

of disagreement. I close this chapter with some reflections on this aspect of the sceptic's argumentative strategy.

By way of introduction consider what is common to both the dogmatic and sceptical versions of the mode sketched above: the phenomenon of undecided disagreement (ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία). At first glance, the reliance of both versions of the mode on such undecided disagreement might be thought to diminish the mode's power. For instance, someone might point out that, given the way in which ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία has been characterised, the mode of disagreement will only rarely be applicable, for the instances where there actually is undecided disagreement over some issue – in the sense that there are no reasons or arguments which decide the issue one way rather than another - will be few and far between.

To this argument it might be responded that the claim that instances of undecided disagreement are few and far between, requires refinement. For, presumably, the incidence of undecided disagreement depends on the domain in question. Is Oxford closer to London than to Cambridge? Am I over my luggage allowance or not? Was Federer's backhand in or out? If there are disputes over such questions, they will not be undecided disputes – for decisive reasons can easily be adduced to resolve these questions one way or the other. Compare: is an internalist theory of justification correct? Is the criterion of personal identity psychological? Are there abstract objects? If there are disputes over questions like *these* (and there are), then many of them *will* be undecided in the sense that the reasons and arguments marshalled on either side will not decide the issue one way or another. In the domain of measurement, then, there will be few (if any) undecided disputes, but in the domain of epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, indeed philosophy in general, there will be a much higher quota of undecided disagreements.[90]

[90] Plato was alive to the distinction between those kinds of disagreement which are resolvable by means of measurement and those which are not. Cf. *Euthyprho* 7b6-d8.

And here the mode of disagreement *will* have force.[91]

This suggests a distinction between two respects in which a sceptic is a practitioner of the mode of disagreement. The first respect is as someone who draws his dogmatic opponent's attention to the fact that, for some claim which the dogmatist endorses, there is an undecided disagreement between various dogmatists over that very claim. A consequence of this respect in which the sceptic is a practioner of the mode of disagreement, is that he must be well informed of the philosophical tussles in which dogmatists engage – in logic, in physics and in ethics. Indeed, if we bear in mind books 1-6 of Sextus' *Adversos Mathematicos*, where Sextus covers the disciplines of grammar, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and music, the sceptic has to be well versed in all sorts of fields of human learning in general, not just philosophy.

On this way of thinking the sceptic, *qua* practitioner of the mode of disagreement, becomes a reporter or chronicler of the various and varied undecided disputes that occur between dogmatists.[92] But if one thinks this, then one might think that it follows from this that if the sceptic is confronted by some dogmatist who maintains some claim, P, and if the sceptic is *unaware* of any relevant undecided dispute over P, then, *qua* practitioner of the mode of disagreement, the sceptic will be helpless.

Not so. For the sceptic is not only a chronicler of undecided disagreements, he is also a *creator* of them – at least if he exercises his method of equipollence properly. This is the second respect in which the sceptic might be said to be a practitioner of the mode of disagreement. If, for example, some dogmatist offers an argument for some claim

[91] See in particular *PH* 1.178 where what is disputed is the criterion of truth. This particular undecided dispute plays a crucial role in Sextus' attempt to weave together a number of the Agrippan modes into a net in which to ensnare his dogmatic opponent. For my discussion of this passage (and this net) see Chapter 6, pp.197-211.

[92] The idea of the sceptic as a chronicler is emphasised in the opening pages of the *Outlines*: "we report things descriptively" (ἱστορικῶς ἀπαγγέλλομεν) as opposed to "affirming that things certainly are just as we say they are" (διαβεβαιούμεθα ὡς οὕτως ἔχοντος πάντως καθάπερ λέγομεν) writes Sextus at *PH* 1.4. See Mates (1996), p.68 who emphasises the importance of reading the *Outlines* as a whole in light of this claim.

he maintains, the sceptic will oppose to that argument an equipollent argument with a conclusion incompatible with the conclusion of the dogmatist's original argument. The sceptic has thereby created an undecided disagreement between himself and the dogmatist.[93]

It is important to bear in mind that both these respects in which the sceptic might be said to deploy the mode of disagreement – as chronicler and as creator – need not impute any illicit theoretical beliefs to the sceptic. Consider first the sceptic as chronicler. The sceptic can be well informed (and can inform his dogmatic interlocutor) about any number of topics under the sun without holding any beliefs (illicit or otherwise) on those topics. Just as I might be very well informed about the claims made by astrology but not hold any beliefs on the matter, so the sceptic might be very well informed of the most recent debates amongst logicians without himself holding any beliefs on such topics. The sceptic's omnivorous appetite for the arguments and theories of his dogmatic opponents should not be mistaken for the sceptic believing the content of those arguments and theories. Rather it is merely illustrative of his need, in Michael Williams' pleasing phrase, "to cultivate his learned ignorance".[94]

Second, with regard to the sceptic as a creator of undecided disagreement (rather than a mere reporter of such disagreements), he is merely exercising his equipollent ability - opposing to each and every argument he encounters an argument of equal force with a conclusion incompatible with the conclusion of the original argument. That this is an *ability* which the sceptic exercises is significant. For though the successful exercising

[93] It is important that this claim should not be misinterpreted. Above, on pp.24-7 I argued, *pace* Barnes, that passages like *PH* 2.18 did not support the idea that the sceptic became part of a disagreement between two dogmatists by virtue of suspending judgement over the matter of dispute. Here the point is that the sceptic becomes part of a disagreement with a dogmatist by virtue of dialectically taking up a position incompatible with the dogmatists' and attempting to offer equally convincing arguments for that position.
[94] Williams (1988), p.557

of this ability[95] will require practice and training, from the fact that the sceptic possesses and exercises this ability it does not follow that he must hold any theoretical beliefs about the nature of this ability, the conditions under which it is possible to exercise it, its effectiveness and so on. By analogy, from the fact that Roger Federer possesses the ability to consistely serve aces it does not follow that he must hold any theoretical beliefs about the nature of his ability to consistently serve aces, the conditions under which it is possible for him to serve aces, and so on. Indeed, if (as some contemporary epistemologists suggest) there is a genuine distinction in kind between knowledge-that and knowledge-how[96] and if the sceptic's exercising of his equipollent ability is to be thought of as a kind of knowledge-how, then from the fact that the sceptic knows how to oppose to every argument he encounters an equipollent argument with a incompatible conclusion, it does not follow (at least it does not follow without further argument) that there is *any* set of propositions (theoretical or otherwise) to which the sceptic gives assent.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has been concerned with articulating two versions of the mode of disagreement. One version (which I have labelled the "dogmatic" version) is the version given by Barnes. It offers a plausible reconstruction of how the sceptic's dogmatic interlocutor (or a proto-sceptic) comes to suspend judgement on the basis of undecided

[95] Where the condition of success is that the sceptic's dogmatic interlocutor comes to suspend judgement.

[96] The assumption that knowledge-how claims and knowledge-that claims are distinct and independent of one another is controversial, but to fully explore this issue would go well beyond the scope of the present thesis. Ryle (1949), pp.26-60, endorses such a view, as does Lewis (1999), pp.285-290. For dissenting voices see Stanley and Williamson (2001) who argue that knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that, and suggest that claims of the form S knows how to ϕ" are to be understood as claims of the form "S knows of some way, *w*, that *w* is a way to ϕ". Such debates, however, are independent of my main contention: namely that in exercising his equipollent ability it does not follow, without further argument, that the sceptic holds any *theoretical* beliefs of kind ruled out by a Barnes-Burnyeat or a Frede-Morison view.

disagreement, namely by framing to himself an argument like (DIS). The other version (which I have labelled the "sceptical" version is open not merely to the dogmatist and proto-sceptic but also to the mature sceptic, who holds no theoretical beliefs. According to this second version, when confronted by an undecided disagreement the sceptic is compelled to suspend judgement in just the same way as he is compelled to suspend judgement when confronted with a pair of equipollent arguments. This is hardly surprising for, given how undecided disagreement has been understood, to say there is an undecided disagreement over P is just to say that the arguments on either side of the disagreement are equipollent to one another. In the next chapter I turn my attention from the mode of disagreement to the mode of hypothesis and ask how it is meant to promote suspension of judgement.

The Mode of Hypothesis

Just as the previous chapter offered a dual perspective on the mode of disagreement, this chapter offers a dual perspective on the mode of hypothesis. It distinguishes between a dogmatic version of the mode, by means of which a dogmatist might come to suspend judgement, and a sceptical version, by means of which a sceptic, who lacks all theoretical beliefs, might come to do so. Once again, central to the articulation of the sceptical version of the mode is the sceptic's method of equipollence – in fact, it will be shown that the mode of hypothesis is a limiting case of that method. First, however, some remarks need to made about what, precisely, hypothesising consists in, and which version of the mode (for there are three modes of hypothesis in the *Outlines*) is the basic one at play.

When the Mode of Hypothesis Occurs

Sextus first presents the mode to us at *PH* 1.168:

> ὁ δὲ ἐξ ὑποθέσεως ἔστιν ὅταν εἰς ἄπειρον ἐκβαλλόμενοι οἱ δογματικοὶ ἀπό τινος ἄρξωνται ὃ οὐ κατασκευάζουσιν ἀλλ᾽ ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως κατὰ συγχώρησιν λαμβάνειν ἀξιοῦσιν.
> The mode from an hypothesis occurs when the dogmatists being thrown back *ad infinitum* begin from something which they do not establish but claim to maintain simply and without proof by virtue of agreement. (*PH* 1.168)

It is a puzzling opening gambit, and for a number of reasons. Firstly, Sextus only informs us *when* (ὅταν) the mode of hypothesis occurs and not *what* it actually consists in. Elucidation of the latter has to wait until *PH* 1.173-174, a passage to which I shall return in due course. Secondly, it is not clear how Sextus' claim about

when the mode of hypothesis occurs is to be understood, nor, depending on how it is understood, is it clear that it is true.

Sextus tells us that the mode of hypothesis occurs when the sceptic's dogmatic opponents are "thrown back *ad infinitum*" (ἄπειρον ἐκβαλλόμενοι). This is a reference to another of the five Agrippan modes - the mode of infinite regression - to which Sextus has just introduced us at *PH* 1.166. I devote Chapter 3 to the unpacking of this and other passages where Sextus discusses infinite regression, so I do not enter into any detailed discussion of that mode here. For present purposes, I am only concerned with providing sufficient information about it to make intelligible the connection Sextus draws between it and the mode of hypothesis at *PH* 1.168.

The sceptic's opponent becomes entangled in the mode of infinite regression when he finds himself in the intractable position of having to provide an infinite number of reasons to justify some belief he holds. A simple regress of this type would be the following. Suppose our dogmatist maintains some proposition, P. His sceptical opponent then asks him to provide a reason for his believing P to be the case - in the language of *PH* 1.166 the sceptic asks the dogmatist to "bring forward a source of conviction" (φέρειν εἰς πίστιν) for P. Suppose the dogmatist offers a reason, R_1, in support of P. The process then continues, with the sceptic asking the dogmatist to provide a further reason R_2 for thinking R_1 true, and then a further reason R_3 for thinking R_2 true, and so on *ad infinitum*. The dogmatist therefore finds himself embarked on a process of bringing forward an infinite number of reasons for believing P to be the case[1].

We are now in a position to better understand Sextus' claim at *PH* 1.168. The mode of hypothesis comes into play when the sceptic's dogmatic opponent

[1] There are of course a number of complications to this picture which I set to one side here, but explore in greater detail in Chapter 3.

attempts to extricate himself from the unending process of supplying reasons for P's being the case by, very simply, *stopping* supplying reasons for P's being the case. If the dogmatist supports P by R_1, R_1 by R_2 and so on, then the mode of hypothesis comes into play when, at some point, the dogmatist stops supplying further reasons and puts forward some reason, R_n, for which he offers no further reason R_{n+1}, but which he assumes "simply and without proof by virtue of agreement" (ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως κατὰ συγχώρησιν λαμβάνειν).[2]

That, I take it, is an expansion of the thought that lies behind the *PH* 1.168 passage. But further expansion is required. For how strictly are we meant to interpret the content of Sextus' claim? Is it the case that the mode of hypothesis *only* comes into play when the sceptic's opponent abandons giving an infinite sequence of reasons for believing P? That cannot be right, for five sections on, during Sextus' description of how the five Agrippan modes are meant to work together, he writes,

> εἰ δὲ ταῦτα φεύγων ὁ προσδιαλεγόμενος ἡμῖν κατὰ συγχώρησιν καὶ ἀναποδείκτως ἀξιώσειε λαμβάνειν τι πρὸς ἀπόδειξιν τῶν ἑξῆς, ὁ ὑποθετικὸς εἰσαχθήσεται τρόπος, ἄπορος ὑπάρχων.
> If to avoid these things our interlocutor claims to assume something by way of concession and without proof in order to prove what comes next, then the hypothetical mode is brought in, and there is no way out. (*PH* 1.173)

The referent of ταῦτα is to be found in the lines immediately preceding these,[3] where Sextus considers two possibilities for his interlocutor: either he is trapped by the mode of infinite regression or he is trapped by the mode of reciprocity. So it cannot be the case that the only alternative to the mode of hypothesis is the mode of infinite regression. Another is the mode of reciprocity, the articulation of which I leave till

[2] I unpack this expression below, pp.65-72.

[3] The lines are: εἰ μὲν ὑπὸ νοητοῦ, εἰς ἄπειρον ἐκπεσεῖται ὁμοίως· εἰ δ' ὑπὸ αἰσθητοῦ, ἐπεὶ πρὸς μὲν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ παρελήφθη νοητόν, πρὸς δὲ τὴν τοῦ νοητοῦ πίστιν αἰσθητόν, ὁ διάλληλος εἰσάγεται τρόπος. (*PH* 1.172) I discuss this passage and its wider context in greater detail in Chapter 6, pp.191ff.

Chapter 4. In *PH* 1.168, then, Sextus has pointed us to one possible instance of *when* the mode of hypothesis comes into play. *What* that mode consists in, however, still remains obscure. It is to this question that I (albeit indirectly) turn, by first considering what hypothesising does *not* consist in.

What Hypothesising Is Not

As mentioned above, the second part of *PH* 1.168 draws a contrast between "establishing" (κατασκευάζειν) and "claiming to assume simply and without proof in virtue of an agreement" (ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως κατὰ συγχώρησιν λαμβάνειν ἀξιοῦσιν). Sextus identifies the act of hypothesising with the latter and not the former. But before attempting to unpack the difficult phrase ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως κατὰ συγχώρησιν λαμβάνειν, it will be well to clarify what κατασκευάζειν is, and thereby what hypothesising is not.

A useful starting point is *PH* 1.202, part of a stretch of the *Outlines* that runs from *PH* 1.187-205, which sees Sextus offering glosses for various sceptical phrases like "οὐδὲν μᾶλλον", "ἐπέχω", "οὐδὲν ὁρίζω" and so on. Now Sextus does not provide a gloss for "κατασκευάζειν" – after all it is not a sceptical phrase – but he does implicitly provide one during his discussion of the sceptical phrase "opposed to every account there is an equal account" (παντὶ λόγῳ λόγος ἴσος ἀντίκειται). He writes,

> Ὅταν δὲ λέγωμεν 'παντὶ λόγῳ λόγος ἴσος ἀντίκειται' ... λόγον δέ φαμεν οὐχ ἁπλῶς ἀλλὰ τὸν κατασκευάζοντά τι δογματικῶς, τουτέστι περὶ ἀδήλου, καὶ οὐ πάντως τὸν ἐκ λημμάτων καὶ ἐπιφορᾶς ἀλλὰ τὸν ὁπωσοῦν κατασκευάζοντα.
> When we say "Opposed to every account there is an equal account"... we speak not of accounts in an unqualified sense but of those which purport

> to establish something in dogmatic fashion (ie about something unclear) – which purports to establish it in any way, and not necessarily by way of assumptions and consequence. (*PH* 1.202)

We can glean a number of facts about the content of κατασκευάζειν from this passage. Firstly the Greek expression "…κατασκευάζει...", like the English expression "...establishes...", is a two-place relation. But what kind of thing does the establishing? And what kind of thing is established? The *PH* 1.202 passage is uninformative when it comes to the second of these questions. It only tells us that "something" (τι) is established. Fortunately, we have examples from the rest of the *Outlines* which fill out the picture.

Often what is established is some proposition or other: that providence exists (*PH* 1.33), that sayables exist (*PH* 2.108), that it is light (*PH* 2.136), that a certain argument form is unsound (*PH* 2.154), that there are proofs (*PH* 2.182), that there are not proofs (*PH* 2.185), and so on.[4] There are also non-propositional uses of cognates of κατασκευάζειν - Sextus speaks, for example, of the differing "constitutions" of the sense organs (τὰς διαφόρους τῶν αἰσθητηρίων κατασκευάς)[5] or the "construction" of the cosmos (τὸν κόσμον κατασκευάζεσθαι)[6] – but I leave these to one side as they are not the senses the term bears in the passage under consideration.

Let us be content that the sort of thing (τι) which Sextus speaks of being established in the *PH* 1.202 passage is a proposition. What, then, does the establishing? Sextus tells us that it is a λόγος, though he is alive to the fact that this is a term than can be understood in a variety of ways. In the passage under question he distinguishes between two of them. The distinction is drawn on the basis of what

[4] The so on: that some things come into being, that some things move, that snow is white, that we do not have horns (*PH* 2.244), that place is unreal (*PH* 3.123), that numbers are distinct from numbered objects (*PH* 3.156).
[5] *PH* 1.36
[6] *PH* 3.154

kind of establishing (κατασκευάζειν) is involved. On the one hand there is a λόγος which establishes a proposition "in any way at all" (τὸν ὁπωσοῦν κατασκευάζοντα) and, on the other, a λόγος which establishes a proposition "by way of assumptions and consequence" (ἐκ λημμάτων καὶ ἐπιφορᾶς).

The second of these ways construes λόγος as an argument that begins from certain premises (λήμματα) and reaches a conclusion or consequence (ἐπιφορά or συμπέρασμα[7]) by a process of valid reasoning. This is precisely how Sextus understands the term when he discusses the notion of proof (ἀπόδειξις) at *PH* 2.134-143. There he says that a λόγος is a compound of assumptions and consequence (σύστημα ἐκ λημμάτων καὶ ἐπιφορᾶς) where,

> τούτου δὲ λήμματα μὲν εἶναι λέγεται τὰ πρὸς κατασκευὴν τοῦ συμπεράσματος συμφώνως λαμβανόμενα ἀξιώματα, ἐπιφορὰ δὲ [συμπέρασμα][8] τὸ ἐκ τῶν λημμάτων κατασκευαζόμενον ἀξίωμα.
> the statements assumed without dispute for the establishment of the conclusion are said to be the assumptions, and the statement purportedly established by way of the assumptions is said to be the consequence. (*PH* 2.136)

For example, in the argument,

(1) If it is day, then it is light

(2) It is day

therefore,

(3) It is light[9],

(1) and (2) are the λήμματα and (3) is the συμπέρασμα or ἐπιφορά. Understood in this sense, establishing something by a λόγος amounts to establishing some claim by

[7] The former term was favoured by the Stoics, the latter the Peripatetics. See Diogenes Laertius VII 45, 76.
[8] Omitted in the Latin translation.
[9] 'εἰ ἡμέρα ἔστι, φῶς ἔστιν· ἀλλὰ μὴν ἡμέρα ἔστιν· φῶς ἄρα ἔστιν' τὸ μὲν 'φῶς ἄρα ἔστιν' συμπέρασμά ἐστι, τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ λήμματα. (*PH* 2.136)

means of a formally valid argument from undisputed (συμφώνως)[10] premises.[11]

However, what of the first of the ways of understanding λόγος, which establishes a proposition "in any way at all"? If Sextus intends to distinguish two different kinds of λόγοι in *PH* 1.202, then establishing a proposition by this kind of λόγος is *not* establishing the proposition in question by means of a formally valid argument, but by some other means. By what other means? Sextus rarely goes into detail about this, but one example of the sort of establishing he had in mind can be found if we return to *PH* 1.33, where Sextus speaks about those dogmatists,

> ... τὸν κατασκευάζοντα ὅτι ἔστι πρόνοια ἐκ τῆς τάξεως τῶν οὐρανίων ...
> ... who seek to establish that there is Providence from the orderliness of the heavenly bodies ... .(*PH* 1.33)

The context of this passage has been outlined in the preceding chapter[12] and, in any case, for present purposes it is of no significance. What *is* important is how the term κατασκευάζοντα is to be understood. Once again what is established is a proposition, in this case, the proposition that there is Providence (ὅτι ἔστι πρόνοια). But this proposition is not established in the way in which the proposition that it is light was established in the *PH* 2.136 passage. Rather it is established from the fact that the heavenly bodies are orderly ἐκ τῆς τάξεως τῶν οὐρανίων. However, the argument,

(1') The heavenly bodies are orderly,

therefore (2') There is Providence,

is clearly not formally valid. Of course, it would be possible to supply whatever

[10] That is, presumably, undisputed by any reasonable interlocutor.
[11] For examples where the term bears this sense see *PH* 2.108, 136, 154, 182, 185, 244; 3.123, 156
[12] See Chapter 1, pp. 40-45.

premise or premises are missing so that (1') did logically imply (2'). For example,

(1') The heavenly bodies are orderly,

[(1'.1) If the heavenly bodies are orderly, then there is Providence],

therefore (2') There is Providence.

But, as things stand, Sextus does not mention (1'.1). (1') therefore does not logically imply (2'). Rather (1') might be thought to give grounds for believing (2') or to provide evidence for (2') being the case; or perhaps the move from (1') to (2') is meant to be an instance of an inference to the best explanation.

At any rate, we should distinguish at least two senses of κατασκευάζειν: establishing some proposition by means of a formally valid argument; and establishing some proposition by some non-formal means, for example providing evidence for believing the proposition in question. These are the two senses given to "establishing" in the *Outlines*. And, irrespective of which sense we give to the term, establishing does not count as hypothesising.

What Hypothesising Is

We are now in a position to tackle the expression ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως κατὰ συγχώρησιν λαμβάνειν ἀξιοῦσιν for this is what *PH* 1.168 tells us hypothesising consists in[13]. There are two groups of complexities here, one centred around the expression κατὰ συγχώρησιν, another around the expression

[13] In *M* 3.3-4 Sextus mentions some non-philosophical senses that the term "hypothesis" can have. In literary contexts it can refer to the plot of a drama (τὴν τοῦ δράματος περιπέτεια), and in rhetorical ones the investigation of particulars (ἡ τῶν ἐπὶ μέρους ζήτησις).

ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως. I deal with both in turn.

At the semantic level, there is the question as to what συγχώρησις, in this context, is meant to mean. If we take the basic meaning of the term to be "agreement", at least two options present themselves. Either there can be agreement between people or there can be agreement between propositions. We might say that two people are in agreement with each other over some proposition, P, if and only if they take the same epistemic attitude towards P. So, for example, if Quintus and Septimus are in agreement with one another over P, then Quintus and Septimus either both deny P, or both endorse P, or both suspend judgement over P, and so on for every possible epistemic attitude towards P. By contrast, two propositions, P and Q, are in agreement with each other if and only if P and Q are consistent with each other – that is to say if and only if P does not entail not-Q and Q does not entail not-P.

If we take "agreement" in the second of these senses, then the proposition that is hypothesised, that is the proposition that is maintained simply and without proof (ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως), will be hypothesised by virtue of it being consistent with some other proposition or propositions. One way of making sense of *PH* 1.168 on this reading is as follows. Recall that, in that passage, the following scenario obtains. The sceptic's dogmatic interlocutor, who maintains some claim, P, has offered a reason R_1 to support P, a reason R_2 to support R_1, and so on until he reaches some reason R_n in support of which he offers no further reason R_{n+1}, but which he merely hypothesises. Now R_n must be consistent with every R_i in the sequence of reasons which the dogmatist has given to support P, and indeed with P itself. To see this imagine the following sequence:

P because R_1; R_1 because R_2; so P.

In this sequence R_2 is what is hypothesised. But if R_2 is to be a reason for R_1, then at the very least R_2 will have to be consistent with R_1, that is, not entail the negation of R_1. And, if R_1 is to be a reason for P, then at the very least R_1 will have to be consistent with P, that is, not entail the negation of P. But if R_2 is consistent with R_1 and R_1 is consistent with P, then, on the assumption that the relation expressed by the predicate "…is consistent with…" is transitive, R_2, at the very least, will have to be consistent with P, that is, not entail the negation of P.

That is one way to make sense of how the hypothesised reason might be said to "agree with" propositions for which it is either directly or indirectly, a reason. However, what it is difficult to make sense of, given this understanding of "agreement", is the force of the κατὰ in *PH* 1.168, which I, along with Barnes and Annas, have rendered "by virtue of". For, even if a minimal condition that any hypothesised reason must meet, is that it be consistent with those propositions for which it is directly, or indirectly, a reason, it does not follow that a hypothesised reason is a hypothesised reason *by virtue of* the fact that it is consistent with those propositions for which it is directly, or indirectly, a reason. All hypothesised reasons might have the feature of being consistent with those propositions for which they are directly, or indirectly, reasons, but it is not in virtue of this feature that they count as being hypothesised. They count as being hypothesised in virtue of the fact that they are put forward ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως.[14]

That is an argument that speaks against understanding συγχώρησις as agreement between propositions. If, however, we understand συγχώρησις as agreement between people, then the sense of *PH* 1.168 is different. Recall the

[14] I elucidate how this claim should be understood below, pp.69-72.

situation described above. Our dogmatic interlocutor, who maintains some claim, P, offers a reason R_1 to support P, a reason R_2 to support R_1, and so on until he reaches some reason R_n in support of which he offers no further reason R_{n+1}, but which he merely hypothesises. Now the proposition that is hypothesised simply and without proof (in this case R_n) will be hypothesised by virtue of an agreement. The parties to this agreement are, presumably, the sceptic and the dogmatist, but what is it over which they agree? Not the proposition that the dogmatist has hypothesised R_n. No doubt this is true and neither the sceptic nor the dogmatist would dispute the fact, but the run of the *PH* 1.168 passage would be strange indeed if this is what the sceptic and dogmatist came to agree upon. For then the dogmatist would come to hypothesise R_n in virtue of the fact that both sceptic and dogmatist agreed that the dogmatist hypothesised R_n. But surely this is to get things the wrong way round. If anything, the sceptic and dogmatist would agree that the dogmatist hypothesised R_n in virtue of the fact that the dogmatist hypothesised R_n.

Perhaps the claim the dogmatist and sceptic agree on, then, is something like the following: given the situation in which the dogmatist finds himself, a situation in which he cannot go on offering an infinite sequence of reasons,[15] the dogmatist ought to stop offering reasons at some point and, for some reason R_n, hypothesise R_n. So it is in virtue of the fact that both sceptic and dogmatist agree that the dogmatist ought to hypothesise R_n that the dogmatist hypothesizes R_n.

However, this construal of the passage runs into two immediate difficulties. Firstly, if the sense given to "ought" is epistemic (that is to say if the sense in which the dogmatist ought to hypothesise R_n is that it is rationally required of the dogmatist to hypothesise R_n), then the sceptic will make no such claim for this is

[15] Why the dogmatist cannot do this is an issue I explore in Chapter 3 on the mode of infinite regression.

just the kind of theoretical[16] claim which the sceptic, by his own lights, cannot make. Secondly, even if we set this objection to one side, the sceptic does *not* think that the dogmatist ought to hypothesise R_n, for, as Sextus goes on to say, the act of hypothesising is open to some telling objections.[17]

It is perhaps better, then, to think of the sceptic not so much as agreeing that the dogmatist should hypothesise R_n, but as conceding that he may hypothesise R_n. On this interpretation κατὰ συγχώρησιν is rendered as "by virtue of a concession"[18]. The sceptic concedes, for dialectic reasons, that the dogmatist may hypothesise R_n. But as we shall see, this concession opens up the dogmatist to attack from the mode of hypothesis.

Having highlighted these semantic difficulties arising from the phrase κατὰ συγχώρησιν, we can now turn to that part of the *PH* 1.168 passage which offers, at last, a positive characterisation of what hypothesising is, namely the expression ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως. This characterises the manner in which a hypothesis is advanced or put forward, and it is in virtue of being put forward in this, rather than in any other way, that the proposition in question is hypothesised. Let us consider each component of this characterisation in turn.

The term ἁπλῶς has a variety of senses depending on the context in which it is used.[19] In epistemological contexts, where some proposition is hypothesised, it is best translated as "merely". For instance in the *PH* 1.168 passage[20] ἁπλῶς qualifies λαμβάνειν. In this context λαμβάνειν is to be translated as "to

[16] "Theoretical" in the sense in which those beliefs disallowed a sceptic on both a Barnes-Burnyeat view and on a Frede-Morison view are theoretical. See Chapter 1, pp.35-37 for a reminder of the distinction between these two views.
[17] I discuss these objections which Sextus raises at *PH* 1.173-4 in detail below, pp.77-83.
[18] This is the sense the phrase bears in every instance of its use in the *Outlines*. Cf. *PH* 2.29, 42, 46, 51, 76, 94
[19] A selection from the *Outlines*: "not in an elaborate sense" (*PH* 1.9-10), "normally" (*PH* 1.51), "straightforwardly" (*PH* 1.62) "absolutely" ie "non-relatively" (*PH* 1.104, 241), "unqualifiedly" (*PH* 1.202), "merely" (*PH* 1.229, 2.247) "without a cause" (*PH* 3.19, 23)
[20] Quoted at the opening of this chapter.

maintain" and ἁπλῶς imparts the following sense "to maintain and do nothing more" - that is to say "to merely maintain". Sextus uses another expression which carries this same force – ψιλὴ φάσις, which is best rendered as "bare assertion". This phrase only crops up once in the *Outlines* at *PH* 2.121, but it is a significant cropping up. Sextus writes,

> ὁ λέγων οὖν εἶναί τι σημεῖον ἐνδεικτικὸν ἤτοι ἁπλῶς ἐρεῖ καὶ ἀναποδείκτως, ψιλῇ φάσει χρώμενος, ἢ μετὰ ἀποδείξεως. ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν φάσει μόνῃ χρήσεται, ἄπιστος ἔσται, εἰ δὲ ἀποδεῖξαι βουλήσεται, τὸ ζητούμενον συναρπάσει.
> Now anyone who says that there are indicative signs will speak either simply and without proof, making a mere assertion, or else with proof. But if he makes a mere assertion, he will be unconvincing; and if he wants to give a proof he will take for granted the matter under investigation. (*PH* 2.121)

The context of this passage[21] is, for my purposes, unimportant. What is significant is Sextus' use of the phrase ψιλῇ φάσει χρώμενος in close proximity to the phrase we are familiar with from *PH* 2.168, ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως. Indeed the run of the passage makes it seem that putting forward some claim P as a ψιλὴ φάσις is to put forward P ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως. One might pause to wonder whether the converse is also true. In putting forward P ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως does one put forward P as a ψιλὴ φάσις? One reason to think not is if we turn to our second component of hypothesising – putting forward a claim ἀναποδείκτως, that is to say putting forward a claim without giving an ἀποδείξις, or proof, of said claim.

In the *Outlines* Sextus operates within a Stoic framework of proof, the definition of which he lays out at *PH* 2.135:

> Ἔστιν οὖν, ὡς φασίν, ἡ ἀπόδειξις λόγος δι᾽ ὁμολογουμένων λημμάτων κατὰ συναγωγὴν ἐπιφορὰν ἐκκαλύπτων ἄδηλον.
> A proof, they say[22], is an argument which, by way of agreed assumptions

[21] The passage is part of a lengthy discussion about the existence of indicative signs (σημεῖα ἐνδεικτικα) and runs from *PH* 2.104-133.
[22] The "they" are the Stoics. The passage quoted comes from a longer section, *PH* 2.134-143, which is

> and in virtue of yielding a conclusion, reveals an unclear consequence. (*PH* 2.135)

An ἀπόδειξις, then, is a kind of argument (λόγος). In particular an ἀπόδειξις is a kind of argument with an unclear (ἄδηλον) conclusion that is reached on the basis of valid reasoning from agreed assumptions (δι᾽ὁμολογουμένων λημμάτων). This is not the place to enter into a detailed analysis of the Stoic conception of proof.[23] But it is important to note that, given this understanding of ἀπόδειξις, it is perfectly possible to put forward a claim ἀναποδείκτως without putting forward that claim as a ψιλὴ φάσις.[24] For there are many ways in which I may fail to provide an ἀπόδειξις of a particular claim, and yet still not put forward that claim as a ψιλὴ φάσις. Here are two which Sextus himself countenances. I might put forward a claim and then offer a reason for thinking the claim true - in Sextus' language something might be "brought forward as a source of conviction" (τὸ φερόμενον εἰς πίστιν)[25] for the original claim. Or I might advert to a κριτήριον by which I judge the original claim to be true.[26] But neither of these ways of offering support for a given claim[27] amounts to giving an ἀπόδειξις of that claim. So, while every claim put forward as a ψιλὴ φάσις is put forward ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως, it is not the case that every claim put forward ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως is put forward as a ψιλὴ φάσις.

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in turn one of three extended passages in the Sextan corpus that discuss proof. The others are *M* 8.300-15 and 411-23. The last of these passages makes explicit reference to the fact that the material is Stoic.

[23] For this see, for example, Mates (1961), pp.58-85, Kneale and Kneale (1963), pp.158-176 and Brunschwig in Schofield, Barnes and Burnyeat (eds.) (1980), pp.125-160.

[24] The converse is not possible. If I put forward a claim as a ψιλὴ φάσις then I do not offer *any* support for it. But if I do not offer any support for it, then, *a fortiori*, I do not offer any ἀποδείξις of it, which is just to say that I put it forward ἀναποδείκτως.

[25] The phrase is taken from *PH* 1.166 where Sextus introduces the mode of infinite regression.

[26] As is the case in *PH* 2.88 where Sextus contrasts merely stating that some appearances are true and some false "without deciding the matter" (ἀνεπικρίτως) and using a criterion (κριτηρίῳ δὲ χρώμενος) to judge that some appearances are true and some false. The concept of a κριτήριον was a staple of Hellenistic epistemological theorising. I offer some discussion of the term in Chapter 6, pp.202-3.

[27] As noted by Barnes (1990a), p.97 n.9 there are other ways of offering supporting for a claim if we cast our net beyond the *Outlines*. One can support a claim by offering a λόγος (*M* 8.120, 463), a ὑπόμνησις (*M* 8.444), or a μεθόδος (*M* 8.436) of it.

Considerations such as these might prompt us to read the καὶ in the expression ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀναποδείκτως not with epexegetic but with intensifying force.[28] The expression as whole would then have the sense of "simply and, in particular, without proof", rather than "simply, viz. without proof". Reading the phrase in the intensifying way would avoid committing Sextus to the claim that to put forward P ἁπλῶς or as a ψιλὴ φάσις is just to put forward P ἀναποδείκτως, and merely commit him to a claim of the following kind: that a particularly prominent case of dogmatists putting forward a claim ἁπλῶς or as a ψιλὴ φάσις is when they put it forward ἀναποδείκτως.[29]

The main moral to be drawn from these preceding comments is that whenever a claim is put forward as a hypothesis it is put forward without *argument*, where "argument" is to be understood in a sufficiently broad sense such that it covers cases where one gives an ἀπόδειξις of P, or brings forward a reason for thinking P true or offers a κριτηρίον by which P is judged to be true. In short, to hypothesise P is to merely assert P and offer no support for P. With this in mind I now turn my attention to the function of hypothesing.

[28] For more detail on this use of καὶ see Denniston (1950), p.291-2

[29] The *Outlines* bears out this interpretation. For the most frequent contrast drawn between putting forward a claim ἁπλῶς or as a ψιλὴ φάσις and putting forward a claim with some kind of backing is when that backing takes the form of an ἀπόδειξις (*PH* 1. 60, 114-5, 122, 173; 2.107, 121, 153). There is only one instance where the backing takes the form of a κριτήριον (*PH* 2.88), as noted above, p.65 n.26. If we look beyond the *Outlines* the story is the same. We have 19 references to ἀπόδείξις (*M* 7.315, 339; *M* 8.15, 61, 76, 78, 281, 343, 374, 463; *M* 1.157, 188, 279; 2. 109; 3.7, 8, 12, 13, 34), 3 to κριτήριον (*M* 7.337, 440; 8.26), 2 to λόγος (*M* 8.120, 463), and one apiece to ὑπόμνησις (*M* 8.444), and μέθοδος (*M* 8.436), as noted above in n.27.

The Function of Hypothesising

There are different reasons as to why a hypothesis might be put forward without argument, for in different contexts hypothesising serves different functions. Barnes helpfully draws attention to two such contexts[30]. The first is Platonic. Say I am keen to determine the truth of some claim, P. One way to do this would be to hypothesise some other claim, Q, show that P follows from Q, and then turn to examine whether Q is true. The example is modelled on Plato's remarks concerning the hypothetical method in the *Meno*.[31] To hypothesise something in this sense is to put forward something provisionally - Q - for the sake of establishing something else - P. We might call this kind of hypothesising heuristic hypothesising.

The second context to which Barnes draws out attention is an Aristotelian one. In the second chapter of the *Posterior Analytics*,[32] Aristotle distinguishes between ἀξιώματα and θέσεις. The former are principles of extreme generality, for example the principle of non-contradiction, whereas the latter are peculiar to individual sciences.[33] Within the latter category there are ὁρισμοὶ, or definitions, and ὑποθέσεις, or hypotheses. In this Aristotelian sense to hypothesise something is to put forward a particular kind of ἀρχή as the first principle of a science. We might call this kind of hypothesising demonstrative.[34]

Here is the place neither to delve deeper into the recondite issue of what role hypotheses play in the thought of Plato and Aristotle, nor to examine whether

[30] Barnes (1990a), pp.92-6.
[31] *Meno* 86d-87b. In that passage, P stands for the claim that virtue is teachable, and Q for the claim that virtue is knowledge.
[32] *APst* 72a15-24
[33] At *APst* 88b27-29 the former kind of principles are referred to as κοιναὶ ἀρχαὶ and the latter as ἴδιαι ἀρχαί.
[34] I have adopted the terms "heuristic" and "demonstrative" from Barnes. See Barnes (1990a), p.92 and 94.

Barnes' classification of Platonic hypotheses as heuristic and Aristotelian hypotheses as demonstrative is a fair one.[35] To do so would require the careful anatomising of a good deal more Platonic and Aristotelian material than the mere two texts to which I have gestured above. I only draw attention to these two different kinds of hypothesising to provide a background against which Sextan hypothesising might fruitfully be analysed.

Barnes distinguishes heuristic and demonstrative hypothesising along two axes.[36] The first concerns whether the hypothesiser commits himself to the truth of whatever he hypothesises. In the case of the heuristic hypothesiser, Barnes claims, there is no such commitment. To return to our example from the *Meno*, it is of no immediate concern to the hypothesiser that Q be true, only that P can be shown to follow from Q since it is P's truth and not Q's which concerns the hypothesiser. Of course, *once* the hypothesiser has established that P follows from Q, he would be well advised to scrutinise the credentials of Q, and he may well do this by hypothesising R and showing that Q follows from R[37].

The point Barnes emphasises is that in hypothesising Q the Platonic hypothesiser takes no stand on the truth of Q. That question will only arise for him later. By contrast, in the case of the demonstrative hypothesiser, he *does* take a stand on the truth of whatever he hypothesises – indeed he is committed to the truth of whatever he hypothesises.[38] If some demonstrative hypothesis is put forward as a kind of first principle that forms the basis of a science, then, at the very least, it ought to be

[35] For a sense of the complexity of this issue see Robinson (1953) pp.93-179 who gives an account of the uses to which Plato puts hypotheses, and Landor (1981) and Barnes (1994), pp 99-101 who do the same for Aristotle.
[36] Barnes (1990a), pp.94-5.
[37] The natural question then is: how we are to establish the credentials of R? If by another iteration of the hypothetical method an obvious infinite regress beckons. To work through the intricacies of this worry is well beyond the scope of this chapter. The central discussion of this issue in the ancient texts is to be found in Plato *Phaedo* 100a-101e and *Republic* 510b-511e.
[38] Though it is worth noting the special case of the *reductio ad absurdum* proof, where you hypothesise P in the hope that P will actually turn out to be false. Cf. *APr* 41a23-37.

true.[39]

The second axis along which Barnes distinguishes heuristic from demonstrative hypothesising concerns the extent to which the hypothesised claim lacks argumentative support. At one end of the scale we have those heuristic hypotheses which are merely temporarily unsupported. After all, in hypothesising Q and showing that P follows from Q, the heuristic hypothesiser does not rule out the possibility of offering, in the future, support for Q. At the other end of the scale are demonstrative hypotheses. These are not merely temporarily unsupported, but *unsupportable*. So Barnes: "in [demonstratively] hypothesising that P you lay it down, as a first principle, that P... your hypothesis is not a mid-point in the search for truth but a starting point in the demonstration of truth. You do not argue that P, because if P is indeed a first principle, you *cannot* argue that P."[40]

Now Barnes identifies Sextus' hypotheses with the demonstrative rather than the heuristic variety. He writes, "Platonic hypotheses and Aristotelian hypotheses are...different birds. And it is Aristotelian hypotheses, broad Aristotelian hypotheses, with which the Pyrrhonists were concerned"[41]. But it is worth asking *which* hypotheses Barnes is referring to when he speaks of those "hypotheses...with which the Pyrrhonists were concerned". For, we might think that the Pyrrhonists were concerned with two distinct kinds of hypotheses – which I shall term "dogmatic hypotheses" and "sceptical hypotheses".

A dogmatic hypothesis is the sort of hypothesis a dogmatist puts forward

[39] What further properties over and above being true Aristotle thought such ἀρχαί would have to have is a question well beyond the scope of this thesis. At 71b16-33 Aristotle claims that they must also be primitive (πρῶτος), immediate (ἄμεσος), prior (πρότερος), familiar (γνωριμώτερος) and explanatory (αἴτιος). For more on this question see Barnes (1994), pp.94-6. Priority comes to play an important role for Sextus when it comes to the mode of reciprocity. I discuss this further in Chapter 4, pp.132-135.

[40] Barnes (1990a), p.94.

[41] Barnes (1990a), p.95. In his discussion of the hypothetical mode, Barnes uses the terms "Aristotelian" and "Platonic" interchangeably with "demonstrative" and "heuristic" respectively.

as a last resort to avoid falling victim to either the mode of infinite regression or reciprocity. This is the kind of hypothesis Sextus refers to in the opening of the third book of *Against the Mathematicians*, where, offering a critique of the practice of geometers, he writes,

> Ἐπεὶ οἱ γεωμέτραι συνορῶντες τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἐπακολουθούντων αὐτοῖς ἀποριῶν εἰς ἀκίνδυνον εἶναι δοκοῦν καὶ ἀσφαλὲς πρᾶγμα καταφεύγουσι, τὸ ἐξ ὑποθέσεως αἰτεῖσθαι τὰς τῆς γεωμετρίας ἀρχάς, καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι καὶ ἡμᾶς τῆς πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀντιρρήσεως ἀρχὴν τίθεσθαι τὸν περὶ τῆς ὑποθέσεως λόγον
> Since the geometers, perceiving the multitude of difficulties which beset them, take refuge in a method which seems to be free from danger and safe, namely to beg by hypothesis the principles of geometry, it will be well for us, too, to begin our attack against them with the argument about hypothesis. (*M* 3.1)[42]

Although Sextus' target in the passage is the use to which *geometers*, and not dogmatic philosophers in general, put hypotheses, from his remarks elsewhere it is clear that he did not think that it was only geometers who hypothesised in this fashion. Indeed at *PH* 1.173, Sextus describes how *any* dogmatic interlocutor (ὁ προσδιαλεγόμενος) of the sceptic is prompted to "take refuge" in the hypothesising of some claim in order to avoid falling victim to either the mode of infinite regression or reciprocity.

Now such dogmatic hypotheses certainly fulfil both of Barnes' conditions for being a demonstrative hypothesis. In putting forward his hypothesis the dogmatist commits himself to its truth. And in putting it forward as the starting point of a proof, the dogmatist puts it forward as something unsupportable. But there is another of kind of hypothesis, which I have termed the "sceptical hypothesis", and which does not so easily fit into Barnes' demonstrative category. These are the hypotheses the *sceptic* puts forward, and which he casts in opposition to the hypotheses of the dogmatist. In doing so the sceptic is ultimately able to bring the dogmatist to suspend judgement

[42] The translation is taken from Bury (1949), p. 245.

with regard to the truth of his dogmatic hypothesis. I articulate the workings of that process in the next section. For now all I want to stress is that, unlike dogmatic hypotheses, sceptical hypotheses are *not* demonstrative in Barnes' sense of the term. To any hypothesis, P, put forward by a dogmatist, the sceptic opposes some incompatible hypothesis, P*. But in doing so the sceptic does not commit himself to P* being true, nor does he commit himself to P* being unsupportable. Why this is so shall emerge in the following pages.

Three Modes of Hypothesis

At *PH* 1.170-177 Sextus articulates how all five Agrippan modes are meant to work in combination with one another.[43] During the course of this discussion Sextus offers three versions of the mode of hypothesis (*PH* 1.173-174). As shall be seen the third is the most significant of the three and underpins both the first and the second versions of the mode. However, for the sake of completeness I shall outline each version in turn.

The first version of the mode is presented at *PH* 1.173:

> καὶ εἰ μὲν ἀληθές τι ὑποτίθεται ὁ ὑποτιθέμενος, ὕποπτον αὐτὸ ποιεῖ, καθ' ὑπόθεσιν αὐτὸ λαμβάνων ἀλλὰ μὴ μετὰ κατασκευῆς· εἰ δὲ ψεῦδος, σαθρὰ ἔσται ἡ ὑποβάθρα τῶν κατασκευαζομένων.
> And if he hypothesizes something true, he makes it suspect by taking it as a hypothesis rather than establishing it; while if it is false, the foundation of what he is trying to establish will be unsound. (*PH* 1.173)

Here, and in the other two versions of the mode, the grammatical subject of ὑποτίθεται, the person doing the hypothesising, is the dogmatist[44]. But it is not completely clear how we are to interpret the line of reasoning. The overall shape of

[43] See Chapter 6 for my analysis of Sextus' procedure.
[44] This is made clear when Sextus uses the first personal plural ἐσόμεθα in the third version of the mode of hypothesis (discussed below, pp.80-3) to refer to the sceptics.

the argument seems to be this. Any hypothesis is either true or false. Whether true or false, there is something unacceptable about a hypothesis. So there is something unacceptable about any hypothesis.

What it is that is unacceptable about a true hypothesis is different to what it is that is unacceptable about a false hypothesis. In the case of a false hypothesis, Sextus comments that it provides an unsound foundation (σαθρὰ ὑποβάθρα) for whatever it intends to establish. Sextus does not go into any further detail about what this "unsoundness" consists in, but the underlying thought is easy enough to grasp. In the case where the dogmatist terminates his chain of reasons for believing some claim, P, the reason at which he terminates the chain, that is to say the reason which he hypothesises, will, at the very least, have to be true.[45]

In the case of a true hypothesis, however, Sextus' line of thought is less easy to explicate. A true hypothesis, Sextus tells us, is made suspect (ὕποπτον αὐτὸ ποιεῖ) by the fact that it is hypothesised and not established (μὴ μετὰ κατασκευῆς). I take it that when Sextus speaks of a hypothesis being suspect, he means being epistemologically suspect. And this may well be true. But as things stand it is not a particularly satisfactory explanation. For we might well ask, what feature or features of a hypothesis are those in virtue of which the hypothesis is epistemologically suspect? I postpone answering this question, for the answer is provided by the third version of the mode of hypothesis which I go on to analyse after outlining the second version of the mode.

The second version follows quickly on the first version's heels. At *PH* 1.174 Sextus writes,

> καὶ εἰ μὲν ἀνύει τι τὸ ὑποτίθεσθαι πρὸς πίστιν, αὐτὸ τὸ ζητούμενον ὑποτιθέσθω, καὶ μὴ ἕτερόν τι δι' οὗ δὴ κατασκευάσει τὸ πρᾶγμα περὶ οὗ ὁ λόγος· εἰ δὲ ἄτοπόν ἐστι

[45] As discussed above on pp.60-1, the reason will also have to be consistent with P.

> τὸ ὑποτίθεσθαι τὸ ζητούμενον,ἄτοπον ἔσται καὶ τὸ ὑποτίθεσθαι τὸ ἐπαναβεβηκός.
> Again if hypothesising something achieves anything towards making it convincing, why not hypothesise the object of investigation itself rather than something else through which he is supposed to establish the object about which he is arguing? If it is absurd to hypothesise the object under investigation, it will also be absurd to hypothesise what is superordinate to it. (*PH* 1.174)

If the first version of the mode left the grounds for hypotheses being epistemologically suspect unclear, so too does the second version. Here the line of thought runs as follows. Say our dogmatist, in order to support some claim, P, hypothesises Q and shows that P follows from Q. Now, the arguments goes, if hypothesising Q and showing that P follows from Q makes P convincing (πρὸς πίστιν), then hypothesising P makes P convincing. But, the argument continues, it is absurd (ἄτοπόν) to hypothesise P, so it is absurd to hypothesise Q.

There are two difficulties with this kind of argument. Firstly, one might doubt whether the conditional claim[46] is true. And one might doubt it to be true on the grounds that P and Q might be different kinds of claim. For example P and Q might differ in respect of some non-formal property: Q may be clear to all, but P, *qua* object of investigation (τὸ ζητούμενον), be unclear.[47] Or P and Q might differ in respect of some formal property: P might be the sort of proposition that is provable and Q might not be.[48] In either case by pointing to some relevant difference between the hypothesised and the derived proposition, one can call into question the claim that if hypothesising Q and deriving P from Q makes P convincing, then hypothesising P

[46] That is, the claim "if hypothesising Q and showing that P follows from Q makes P convincing, then hypothesising P makes P convincing".
[47] At *M* 8.374, Sextus goes halfway to making this point. He distinguishes between those things from which the dogmatists conclude what is unclear (τὰ ἐξ ὧν συνάγουσι τὸ ἄδηλον) and the unclear thing itself (αὐτὸ τὸ ἄδηλον). The former are hypothesised items, the latter items which are derived from those hypothesised items. However, Sextus then goes on to suggest that, in matter of fact, both the hypothesised and derived items are unclear and subject to διαφωνία (hence the illegitimacy of hypothesising). Be that as it may, it is at least *a priori* possible to distinguish hypothesised from derived items on the grounds that the latter but not the former are unclear.
[48] For more on this see Barnes (1990a), pp.103-4

makes P convincing.

Secondly, even if we accept the conditional claim we might reject, or if not outright reject, demand further explanation for why it is absurd (ἄτοπόν) to hypothesise P. Like the property of being epistemologically suspect in the first version of the mode, the property of being absurd in the second version bears a lot of weight. What it is about hypothesising claims that makes them epistemologically suspect or absurd is clarified by turning to Sextus third version of the mode, which lies at the heart not only of the anti-hypothesising arguments of *PH* 1.173-4, but of the sceptic's argumentative practice in general.[49]

The presentation of the argument is extremely brief. Sextus writes:

> εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὁ ὑποτιθέμενος πιστός ἐστιν, ἡμεῖς ἀεὶ τὸ ἀντικείμενον ὑποτιθέμενοι οὐκ ἐσόμεθα ἀπιστότεροι.
> For if he is convincing when he makes his hypothesis, we will keep hypothesising the opposite and will be no more unconvincing. (*PH* 1.173)

We might extract from this bit of text a version of the mode of hypothesis which goes something like the following. Assume that some epistemic subject, S, hypothesises some proposition P. S then frames to himself the following argument. For some other epistemic subject, S*, and some proposition P*, which is incompatible (ἀντικείμενον)[50] with P:

(HYP) (i) If S is convincing (πιστός) in hypothesising P, then S* will be equally convincing in hypothesising P*

(ii) S cannot assent to both P and to P*

(iii) S cannot assent to one of P or P*

[49] This version of the mode crops up, in one form or another at *PH* 2.107, 153, 3.23, *M* 7.315, 337, 8.15, 26, 28, 76, 78, 120, 281, 360, 436, 463.

[50] Sextus expresses this idea of incompatibility in a variety of ways. P and P* are said to be ἐναντίον, ἀντικείμενον, or divided by μάχη. Cf. *PH*.1.10, 190.

therefore,

(iv) S must assent to neither P nor to P*

The conclusion of this little bit of reasoning is equivalent to the claim that S must suspend judgement over P. For, to suspend judgement over P just is neither to assent to P nor assent to not-P after considering whether or not P. But what kind of modality is at play here? In what sense "must" S suspend judgement over P?

The first thing to note is that the kind of modality which is in play in (iv) is the same as in (ii) and (iii). It is not possible that S do anything other than suspend judgement over P in the same sense in which it is not possible for S to assent to both P and to P* and in which it is not possible for S to assent to one of P or P*. Just as in the previous chapter there is more than one way in which to characterise the modality: it is either necessary for S to suspend judgement in the sense that it is rational for S to suspend judgement (which I have called rational necessity) or it is necessary for S to suspend judgement in the sense that S is psychologically compelled to suspend judgement (which I have called causal necessity).[51]

An examination of the underpinning of the various premises of (HYP) suggests that the kind of necessity at play here is rational necessity. If one were to ask what makes (ii) true, one might reasonably claim that (ii) is true on the assumption that S is aware that P and P* are incompatible with one another, and on the assumption that S is a rational agent.[52] It therefore makes sense to think that the claim made by (ii) is that S cannot assent to both P and P* in the sense that it is not rational for S to assent to both P and P*. But what of premise (iii)? Even if P and P* are

[51] See Chapter 1, pp.46-50.

[52] (ii) is false if either S is unaware that P and P* are incompatible with one another, or if S is aware that P and P* are incompatible with one another, but, being a highly irrational agent, maintains both P and P*.

incompatible with one another why is it not possible for S to assent to one of them?

The reason is to be found by looking at premise (i) coupled with the assumption that S is convincing in hypothesising P. But why grant (i)? Why grant that if S is convincing in his hypothesising of P, then S* will be equally convincing in his hypothesising of P*? Barnes isolates the following two principles which are at work here:

> (A) For any proposition P there is a proposition P* such that P and P* are mutually incompatible.

and

> (B) Hypothesising P provides epistemic warrant for P if and only if hypothesising P* provides epistemic warrant for P*.[53]

And there is a good case for thinking that both (A) and (B) are true.

Regarding (A), if we understand the incompatibility of two propositions to be the impossibility of both propositions holding together at the same time, then, trivially, there is no claim, P, which is compatible with every other possible claim, for, at the very least, P is incompatible with not-P. And (B) is true in virtue of what hypothesising consists in. For if I hypothesise P, then I put forward P without any support, as a bare assertion. But one bare assertion has as much epistemic warrant as any other – that is the force of the οὐκ ἐσόμεθα ἀπιστότεροι at the end of *PH* 1.173. If P and P* are bare assertions, then P is no less and no more convincing than P*, and P* is no less and no more convincing than P.

[53] Barnes combines both of these into the general principle he finds implicit in the mode of hypothesis. His general principle reads: "for any proposition P there is a proposition P* such that (i) P and P* are mutually incompatible, and (ii) hypothesising that P will give warranty to P just in case hypothesising that P* will give warranty to P*". See Barnes (1990a), p.106.

But if (A) and (B) are true, then (i) is true. And if (i) is true, then (iii) is true. If P and P* are bare assertions then S has no reason to privilege P over P*. For privileging P over P* (or P* over P) would be nothing more than a capricious act of plumping on the part of S. Viewed in this light, the kind of necessity at play in (iii) is rational: S is compelled to assent to neither P nor P* because it would be irrational to plump for P over P* (or to plump for P* over P).

A Dogmatic Mode of Hypothesis

As with the mode of disagreement, in the case of the mode of hypothesis it will be useful to distinguish a dogmatic and a sceptical version of the mode. A dogmatic version of the mode is one a sceptic cannot employ because it requires the holding of various theoretical beliefs to which the sceptic is not entitled. A sceptical version of the mode is one which the sceptic can employ without holding any such illicit beliefs.

Now (HYP)[54] seems an irresistible argument. The problem is that, like (DIS) in the previous chapter, it is an argument by means of which a sceptic, who lacks all theoretical beliefs, cannot come to suspend judgement. (HYP) is a dogmatic mode of hypothesis. For, in framing (HYP) to himself the sceptic incurs a number of beliefs which both on a Barnes-Burnyeat view and a Frede-Morison view are ruled out for him. Premise (i), for instance, refers to the unclear matter of "hypothesising" and so, on a Barnes-Burnyeat view, is ruled out for the sceptic as a candidate belief. Equally, on the Frede-Morison view, (i) is ruled out for we are supposing that the endorser of (i) endorses (i) because he accepts principles (A) and (B) and derives (i)

[54] See above, pp.80-1.

from them. But if he does this then it does not simply strike him that (i) is the case, rather he maintains (i) on the basis of further reasons. Thus, by Frede-Morison canons, (i) is not the sort of belief a sceptic can hold.

Of course, the sceptic's dogmatic interlocutor is at liberty to reach a suspensive conclusion by reflecting on the plausibility of the individual premises of (HYP) and by reasoning in the manner set out above to the conclusion that it is rational for him to suspend judgement. It is just that this path to the suspension of judgement is closed off to the sceptic. Nevertheless, as in the previous chapter a case can be made for an alternative sceptical version of the mode of hypothesis, using the sceptic's method of equipollence as a starting point.

A Sceptical Mode of Hypothesis

In Chapter 1, an instance of undecided disagreement over P (undecided in the sense that up until now there are no decisive reasons to resolve the dispute either in favour of P or in favour of not-P) was seen to be equivalent to an instance of equipollence. For, if the reasons for P and the reasons for not-P do not tell either way, then the complex of reasons and P, and the complex of reasons and not-P, stand in a relation of equipollence to one another. However, the particular form taken by these equipollent complexes, was left open by Sextus during his discussion of the mode of disagreement. The mode of hypothesis provides one example of the kind of form they might take[55] –indeed it provides a limiting case of equipollence.[56]

Previously I emphasised the importance of distinguishing between opposed *items* and opposed *accounts*, and argued that only the latter can properly be

[55] The modes of infinite regression and reciprocity, to be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, provide other examples.
[56] Barnes (1990a), p.108 rightly emphasises this point.

said to stand in the relation of *equipollence*. I claimed that it was opposed *arguments* (ἀντικειμένοι λόγοι) and not their conclusions, which are properly described as being equipollent.[57] The mode of hypothesis is a limiting case of equipollence because, in its case, it is incompatible bare assertions (ψιλαί φάσεις) that stand in an equipollent relation to one another. And these bare assertions stand in an equipollent relation to one another because, if a condition of equipollence is that two opposed claims are justified by equally plausible *arguments*, then one bare assertion P and another bare assertion P* *must* be equipollent because they are justified by not merely equally plausible arguments, but the very same argument-namely no argument at all.

The sceptical mode of hypothesis should therefore be understood as a particular instance of the sceptic's method of equipollence. When confronted by some dogmatic interlocutor who hypothesises P, our sceptic exercises his sceptical ability by hypothesising a rival and incompatible claim of his own, namely P*. It is important to note that this is where the sceptic, *qua* practitioner of the mode, ceases to exercise his art.[58] There may be further questions about how the sceptic comes to suspend judgement as a result of exercising his art, but in an important sense the sceptic's work, *qua* practitioner of the mode of hypothesis, is done once he has opposed to the dogmatist's hypothesis that P a rival hypothesis that P*.[59]

But what of this further question? As noted in the previous section, though the sceptic's dogmatic opponent is perfectly at liberty to reason to the conclusion that it is rational for him to suspend judgement along the lines of (HYP), this avenue is not open to the sceptic. To return to the terminology employed in the

[57] See Chapter 1, pp.39-46.
[58] Morison (2011), p.289 emphasises this point in connection with the Ten Aenesideman modes.
[59] Just as the sceptic's work, *qua* creator of undecided disagreement is done once he has exercised his equipollent ability and opposed to a dogmatist's argument that P some rival and equipollent argument that P*, where P and P* are incompatible. See Chapter 1, pp.54-6 for further detail on the role of sceptic *qua* creator of undecided disagreement.

preceding section (and the first chapter), the necessity that attaches to the dogmatist's suspension of judgement is rational: that is to say, the dogmatist suspends judgement because it is the rational thing to do and he wants to do the rational thing. The sceptic, by contrast, does not reason, along the lines of (HYP) to a conclusion of the form "it is rational for me to suspend judgement". Rather, when confronted with two hypotheses, which, by their very nature, are equipollent, he suspends judgement as a matter of causal necessity – he has developed a disposition to do so. Construed in this way, the sceptic can reach his suspensive conclusion without taking any stand on whether the hypotheses he puts forward are true, or unsupportable, and without committing himself to the truth of any quintessentially philosophical claims like (i) or (A) or (B).

Of course, like in the previous chapter, one might ask where the sceptic's disposition to suspend judgement in such circumstances originates from. To this the reply will be the same as the reply given in Chapter 1. We might distinguish two phases in the sceptic's career. Before the sceptic comes to acquire this disposition he is an epistemically sensitive proto-sceptic, who suspends judgement when faced with two equipollent hypotheses because it is the reasonable thing to do. Plausibly, he may well suspend judgement by framing to himself just the sort of argument set out in (HYP). Over time, however, the sceptic develops a disposition to suspend judgement. As a fully fledged sceptic he no longer suspends judgement because he reasons on the basis of something like (HYP) that it is the rational thing to do. He merely suspends judgement out of a psychological habit, without relying on any illicit theoretical beliefs.[60]

[60] For discussion of the question as to whether, ultimately, the explanation of the mature sceptic's disposition to suspend judgement must make reference to rational necessity see Chapter 1, pp.48-50.

Concluding Remarks

The previous chapter and the present one have distinguished between two versions of the modes of disagreement and hypothesis: a version by which a sceptic, lacking all theoretical beliefs, might come to suspend judgement and a version by which a dogmatist (or indeed a proto-sceptic) might come to do so. Central to the articulation of the sceptical versions of these modes was the phenomenon of equipollence. In the case of the mode of disagreement, it was argued that being confronted with an undecided disagreement was equivalent to being confronted with two equipollent arguments. The mode of hypothesis offered one example of the sort of equipollent argumentation Sextus had in mind – in fact a limiting case of the phenomenon. In the next two chapters similar tasks will be undertaken. Two versions of the modes of infinite regression and reciprocity will be distinguished from one another (a dogmatic version and a sceptical version) and the phenomenon of equipollence will be shown to be central to the sceptical versions of these modes.

The Mode of Infinite Regression

Infinity Introduced

Sextus introduces us to the mode of infinite regression at *PH* 1.166[1] where he writes,

> ὁ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς εἰς ἄπειρον ἐκπτώσεως ἐστὶν ἐν ᾧ τὸ φερόμενον εἰς πίστιν τοῦ προτεθέντος πράγματος πίστεως ἑτέρας χρήζειν λέγομεν, κἀκεῖνο ἄλλης,καὶ μέχρις ἀπείρου, ὡς μὴ ἐχόντων ἡμῶν πόθεν ἀρξόμεθα τῆς κατασκευῆς τὴν ἐποχὴν ἀκολουθεῖν.
> 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 on *ad infinitum*, so that we have no point from which to begin to establish anything, and suspension of judgement follows. (*PH* 1.166)

His description is cast in general terms. A scenario is described where something is "brought forward as a source of conviction" (τὸ φερόμενον εἰς πίστιν) for some matter at hand (τοῦ προτεθέντος πράγματος). But that which is brought forward as a source of conviction for the matter at hand, itself needs a further source of conviction (πίστεως ἑτέρας χρήζειν) and so on *ad infinitum*. Suspension of judgement is said to follow from (ἀκολουθεῖν) this scenario.

It is important to emphasise the open-ended nature of Sextus' vocabulary here. When he speaks of the suspension of judgement following on (ἀκολουθεῖν) from the mode of infinite regression, a number of things might be meant. For, in the *Outlines* ἀκολουθει has at least three different senses. Sometimes it has the sense of "logically follows from": to say that A ἀκολουθει B is to say that A logically follows from B, or that B logically implies A. For example, during Sextus' discussion of

[1] For its connection with the mode of hypothesis see Chapter 2, pp.58-61.

proof[2] he gives an example of a Stoic hypothetical syllogism[3]:

(1) If it is day, then it is light;

(2) It is day;

therefore (3) It is light.

(3) is said by Sextus to "follow" (ἀκολουθει) from the conjunction of premisses (1) and (2).[4] We might call this the "logical" sense of ἀκολουθει.

At other times ἀκολουθει would be naturally be translated by an indicative conditional. For instance at *PH* 2.186 Sextus considers the following dogmatic argument in favour of the existence of proofs:

(4) If there are proofs, then there are proofs;

(5) If there are not proofs, then there are proofs;

(6) Either there are proofs or there are not proofs;

therefore (7) There are proofs.

He then goes on to say that, in this argument, the claim that there are proofs (ie the consequent of (4) and (5) ἀκολουθει from the claim that there are proofs (ie the antecedent of (4)) and from the claim that there are not proofs (ie the antecedent of (5)).[5] We might call this the "material" sense of ἀκολουθει.[6]

There is also a sense of ἀκολουθει weaker than either the logical sense or the material sense. At *PH* 1.31, for example, Sextus states that tranquillity ἀκολουθεῖ

[2] *PH* 2.134-143

[3] For more on Stoic hypothetical syllogisms and how they contrast with Aristotelian categorical syllogisms see Barnes (1983a).

[4] ἐπεὶ τῇ διὰ τῶν λημμάτων αὐτοῦ συμπλοκῇ ταύτῃ 'ἡμέρα ἔστι, καὶ εἰ ἡμέρα ἔστι, φῶς ἔστιν' ἀκολουθεῖ τὸ 'φῶς ἔστιν' (*PH* 2.137). For further examples of ἀκολουθεῖ used with this sense see *PH* 2.114, 137, 153, 249.

[5] ἀντίκειται δὲ ταῦτα ἀλλήλοις "ἔστιν ἀπόδειξις—οὐκ ἔστιν ἀπόδειξις", ὧν ἑκατέρῳ ἀκολουθεῖ τὸ εἶναι ἀπόδειξιν· (*PH* 2.186). For further examples of ἀκολουθεῖ used with this sense see *PH* 2.159, 192

[6] Whether or not Sextus had a conception of material implication is an issue I do not enter into here. The reason I choose the label "material" is for convenience. Even if Sextus lacked the conception of material implication as a contemporary logician would understand it, it is perfectly possible, and perfectly natural, to employ the truth functor → to translate (4) and (5) into propositional logic, viz. (4*) P→P, (5*) ¬P→P, where P stands for the sentence which expresses the proposition that there are proofs.

the suspension of judgement[7], which allows for, in a way in which the previous cases did not, a looser causal sense to the term. Understood in this sense the claim that tranquillity ἀκολουθεῖ suspension of judgement can be understood something like the following: for some epistemic subject, suspending judgement causes tranquillity.

The significance of these different possible readings of ἀκολουθει will emerge in the course of this chapter. For this chapter, like the previous two, will distinguish two different versions of the mode of infinite regression – a dogmatic version and a sceptical version. According to the dogmatic version, an epistemic agent frames to himself an argument which has as its conclusion that it is rational for him to suspend judgement, and, wanting to do the rational thing, consequently suspends judgement. According to the sceptical version, an epistemic subject simply suspends judgement as a matter of psychological necessity. The dogmatic version of the mode therefore goes with the logical sense of ἀκολουθει, and the sceptical version with the causal sense.

I begin by offering Barnes' interpretation of how how he takes the mode to function and then argue that the reconstruction of the mode Barnes gives us is a dogmatic version of the mode. I then present the alternative sceptical version of the mode.

Barnes' Interpretation of the Mode

According to Barnes, the relation between infinite regression and the suspension of judgement is to be captured by something like the following conditional claim. For some epistemic subject, S, and for some proposition, P:

[7] Ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν ἀταραξίαν ἀκολουθεῖν ἐφάσκομεν τῇ περὶ πάντων ἐποχῇ (*PH* 1.31)

(*B*) If (i) infinitely regressive arguments are unacceptable arguments, and (ii) the only argument S has for P is an infinitely regressive argument, and (iii) P should not be accepted without argument, then (iv) S should suspend judgement over P.[8]

Barnes makes two points regarding (*B*). First, he takes (*B*) to be true. Indeed he "suppose[s] that it is little more than a tautology"[9]. Secondly, he takes (*B*) to represent "what Sextus ought to say, and perhaps what he means to say, about the connexion between infinite regression and scepticism".[10] It is possible to take issue with both of these claims.

When Barnes describes (*B*) as a tautology, what I take him to imply is that the truth value of (*B*) will always be true irrespective of the truth values ascribed to (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv). Or, put another way, that the following argument is logically valid:

(i) Infinitely regressive arguments are unacceptable arguments

(ii) The only argument S has for P is an infinitely regressive argument

(iii) P should not be accepted without argument

therefore,

(iv) S should suspend judgement over P.

However, one might think that, as it stands, (i)-(iv) is *not* a logically valid

[8] This is slightly modified Barnes. The original reads as follows: "if (i) arguments which generate an epistemological regression are unacceptable arguments, and (ii) the only argument we have for a given claim is such a regressive argument, and (iii) the claim should not be accepted without argument, then we should suspend judgement and remain staunchly sceptical about the claim". See Barnes (1990a), p.44.

[9] Barnes (1990a) *ibid*.

[10] Barnes (1990a) *ibid.*

argument and that a number of modifications have to be made to it in order for it to count as valid. Firstly, one might complain that a suppressed premise ought to be made explicit, namely a premise of the form:

> (*) If the only argument S has for P is an unacceptable argument, then S should suspend judgement over P.

Elsewhere Barnes endorses something very much like (*).[11] However, (*) raises difficulties of its own.

First, a minor point: incorporating (*) into Barnes' original argument renders premise (iii) redundant. (i), (ii) and (*) by themselves logically imply (iv). Of course a logically valid argument with an added redundant premise is, by the standards of contemporary logicians, impeccable[12], but it should be noted that, for a Stoic logician, redundancy (παροληή) of one or more premises in an argument was enough to render the argument invalid or, to use the Stoics' own terminology, nonconcludent (ἀσυνάκτικος).[13] Sextus himself levels precisely this kind of accusation against the five indemonstrables of the Stoic logicians at *PH* 2.156-162[14] so it would be better to attribute to Sextus a line of reasoning which did not suffer from this very same defect.

Secondly, and more significantly, (*) does not seem to be true. Certainly it is true that if the only argument S has for P is an unacceptable argument (and S is

[11] See Barnes (1990a), p.42: "If the *only* consideration offered in support of a given claim leads to an unacceptable epistemological regression, then we must suspend judgement on the claim".
[12] If X and Y are finite sets of formulae and ψ is a formula, then if $X \models \psi$, then $X, Y \models \psi$. The theorem is known as the Extension Theorem and tells us that a valid argument cannot be rendered invalid by the addition of new premises. See, for example, Hodges (2001), p.106 for further details.
[13] For further details of this sceptical attack on Stoic proof see Barnes' classic treatment of the issue in Barnes (1980), pp.164-175.
[14] He goes on to level the same accusation against the perfect syllogisms of the Peripatetics too at *PH* 2.163-5.

aware of this), then it is rational for S to not accept P. But this is not the same as saying that it is rational for S to suspend judgement over P. For not accepting a claim is different from suspending judgement over a claim. Recall that to suspend judgement with regard to some proposition, P, is (having considered the matter) neither to accept P nor accept not-P. So, if I suspend judgement over P, then I do not accept P. But the converse does not hold. If I do not accept P it does not follow that I suspend judgement over P. For, my not accepting P is compatible with my accepting not-P, but if I accept not-P, then I do not suspend judgement over P.

We might then think to modify the argument as follows. Remove the redundant (iii) and replace the false (*) with the true

> (**) If the only argument S has for P is an unacceptable argument, then S should not accept P,

yielding an argument with the premises (i), (ii), and (**). But these three premises do not logically imply our original suspensive conclusion. Rather they imply a conclusion of the form,

> (iv*) S should not accept P.

And, as we have just seen, to not accept P is not to suspend judgement over P. An important question to ask, then, is how we are meant to move from the claim that S should not accept P to a claim of the form that S should suspend judgement over P. For, as Sextus tells us at *PH* 1.166, suspension of judgement is what the mode of infinite regression is ultimately meant to promote. I shall for the minute, postpone

this question, and first examine the argument as it stands:

(i) Infinitely regressive arguments are unacceptable arguments

(ii) The only argument S has for P is an infinitely regressive argument

(**) If the only argument S has for P is an unacceptable argument, then S should not accept P

therefore,

(iv*) S should not accept P.

In the following subsection I offer some elucidation of the various premises of this argument and investigate whether or not they are well grounded in Sextus' text. I then turn to the conclusion of the argument.

Premise (i)

Let us begin with premise (i), a claim which many commentators treat as central to the working of the mode of infinite regression: the claim that infinitely regressive arguments are unacceptable arguments. Hankinson, for instance, describes the mode of infinite regression as placing "prohibitions on certain types of reasoning"[15]. And Barnes speaks of the mode inducing scepticism "not in virtue of its peculiar regressive character but in virtue of the fact that infinitely regressive arguments are (we are supposing) *bad* arguments".[16]

[15] Hankinson (1995), p.186

[16] Barnes (1990a), p. 43. Who are "we" meant to be? Not, presumably, sceptics for sceptics would not endorse philosophical claims like "infinitely regressive arguments are bad arguments." Dogmatists then? Once again this opens up the question. Is there an alternative interpretation of the mode of infinite regression which a sceptic, as well as a dogmatist might endorse? I put forward such an interpretation below, pp.116-9.

These two diagnoses are complementary. According to them the mode of infinite regression identifies a particular way - namely an infinitely regressive one - in which a dogmatist might justify a belief he holds, and then argues that said way is a bad way of going about justifying said belief. Consequently the mode places a prohibition on justifying a belief in such a fashion. Crucial to these sorts of interpretation is the claim that infinitely regressive arguments are bad arguments. Indeed a claim of this kind is what underpins (i): infinitely regressive arguments are unacceptable arguments because infinitely regressive arguments are bad arguments.

But what is meant by "bad argument"? Two candidates readily spring to mind. A bad argument might be an argument whose premises do not logically imply its conclusion. Or a bad argument might be an argument whose premises do logically imply its conclusion but where one or more of those premises is false. In fact, Sextus never claims that infinitely regressive arguments are bad arguments in either of these senses. And it is just as well he does not. For were he to, then, *qua* sceptic, he would be doubly culpable.

Firstly, the claim that a particular form of argumentation - in this case infinitely regressive argumentation - is good or bad is a paradigmatically philosophical claim. It is a claim which belongs to the domain of philosophical logic and as such, on the Barnes-Burnyeat view, is just the sort of claim which a sceptic cannot believe.[17] Secondly, even if we leave this objection to one side, to classify arguments into good and bad implies that the classifier possesses some criterion by

[17] Perhaps one might argue that though not the kind of claim a sceptic might believe on the Barnes-Burnyeat view, it is the kind of claim a sceptic might believe on the Frede-Morison view – at least if one accepts that the claim that infinitely regressive arguments are bad arguments is the sort of claim which can be believed but not the basis of any antecedent ratiocinative process. But this too seems unlikely – for the claim that infinitely regressive arguments are bad arguments seems to be the sort of claim one would hold because one also believed certain things about the conditions an argument had to meet to count as a bad argument and because one also believed that infinitely regressive arguments met those conditions. But if this is correct, then the claim that infinitely regressive arguments are bad arguments will also be ruled out as a belief the sceptic could hold on the Frede-Morison view. See Chapter 1, pp.35-37.

which to distinguish the good from the bad. But this opens up Sextus to precisely the same criticism he often throws the way of the dogmatist. For to judge whether said criterion is a good criterion for distinguishing good arguments from bad arguments, he will himself require another criterion to judge whether the original criterion is a good criterion for distinguishing good arguments from bad arguments. And an infinite regression of criteria beckons.[18]

But if Sextus never speaks of infinitely regressive arguments as being bad arguments he does at several points in the *Outlines* voice objections to them. We might distinguish between two kinds of objection. I label them the No-Starting-Point Objection and the Unsurveyability Objection. In what follows I argue that it is the Unsurveyability Objection which underscores the No-Starting-Point Objection, but for the sake of completeness I begin with some reflections on the No-Starting-Point Objection.

The No-Starting-Point Objection occurs during Sextus' initial presentation of the mode at *PH* 1.166.[19] The kind of infinite sequence Sextus presents us with in this passage is an epistemological one, in the sense that it has epistemological content: its sequents are propositions that can be justified or known. In this particular case, if S claims some proposition, P, then, if P is not to remain unjustified, S will have to provide a reason R_1 for maintaining P. R_1 is brought forward as a "source of conviction" (εἰς πίστιν) for P. The same sort of justification can now be demanded of R_1. If R_1 is not to remain unjustified, S will have to provide another reason, R_2, for maintaining R_1. The same line of reasoning can now be brought to bear on R_2 and so on *ad infinitum*. As a result there is no starting point to the sequence[20].

[18] As Sextus writes at *PH* 2.20, during his discussion of the existence of the criterion of truth, ἐάν τε κριτηρίῳ τὸ κριτήριον κρίνειν ἐθέλωσιν, εἰς ἀπειρίαν αὐτοὺς ἐκβαλλόντων (*PH* 2.20)

[19] Quoted at the opening of this chapter.

[20] I leave to one side, (because Sextus, I think, leaves to one side) the more complicated meta-regress

Elsewhere[21] in the *Outlines* Sextus entertains infinite sequences with non-epistemological content. Rather than being composed of some infinite sequence [P_1, P_2, P_3, … P_n, $P_{n+1,}$ …] where every P_i is a proposition and stands in the epistemic relation of "…is justified by…"[22] to P_{i+1}, they are composed of (for example) some infinite sequence [O_1, O_2, O_3, … O_n, $O_{n+1,}$ …] where every O_i is an object and stands in some non-epistemic relation to O_{i+1}. As an example of a non-epistemological regression consider *PH* 3.76, where Sextus writes,

> εἰ μὲν γὰρ εἰς ἄπειρον τέμνονται τὰ σώματα καὶ οἱ τόποι καὶ οἱ χρόνοι οἷς κινεῖσθαι λέγεται τὰ σώματα, οὐ γενήσεται κίνησις, ἀδυνάτου ὄντος τοῦ πρῶτόν τι ἐν ἀπείροις εὑρεθῆναι, ἀφ᾽ οὗ πρώτου κινήσεται τὸ κινεῖσθαι λεγόμενον
> If bodies and the places and times in which they are said to move are divided *ad infinitum*, then motion will not occur, since it is impossible to find among infinitely many parts a first part from which the thing said to move will start to move. (*PH* 3.76)

The wider argumentative context of this passage (Sextus is offering arguments against the possibility of local motion) is, for my purposes, unimportant. What is significant is that *PH* 3.76 offers us a clear example a non-epistemological infinite sequence, namely a regression of the form [O_1, O_2, O_3, …O_n, $O_{n+1,}$ …] where each O_i is a body and the relation between any O_i and O_{i+1} is the relation "…is moved by…".

Now although *PH* 3.76 may advert to a non-epistemological sequence and *PH* 1.166 an epistemological one, both turn on the fact that there is no starting point to an infinite sequence. Just as there is no first moving part in an infinite sequence of moving parts, so there is no first reason in an infinite sequence of reasons. Hankinson illustrates the Sextan point behind *PH* 3.76 with the following analogy. He asks us to

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which Fumerton (1995), p.36, considers. Whereas the regress Sextus presents is a regress of first-order reasons [R_1, R_2, R_3…R_n], Fumerton's meta-regress is a regress of second-order reasons, which justify why each first-order reason is a good reason for that for which it is a reason. The form of the meta-regress is, therefore, as follows: if S is to be justified in believing P, S must be justified in believing that R_1 makes P probable, that R_1* makes (R_1 makes P probable) probable, that R_1** makes (R_1* makes (R_1 makes P probable) probable) probable, and so on *ad infinitum*.

[21] Eg. *PH* 3.44 (regression involving bodily division), 67 (regression involving local motion), 68 (ibid.), 76 (ibid.), 162 (regression involving number).

[22] There are, of course, many possible epistemic relations other than this one.

> "[c]onsider a train of infinite length, in which each carriage moves because the one in front of it moves. Even supposing that fact is an adequate explanation for the movement of each carriage, one is tempted to say, in the absence of a locomotive, that one still has no explanation for the motion of the whole. And that metaphor might aptly be transferred to the case of justification in general."[23]

Now it is possible to query the effectiveness of Hankinson's analogy here. One might, for example, wonder why Hankinson seems to imply that the chain of explanation for the motion of the whole train terminates when reference is made to the locomotive. Is it not the case that there are a myriad number of causal explanations for why the locomotive performs the function it does? And causal explanations for those causal explanations and so on *ad infinitum*? For example, is it not the case that the locomotive functions because its steam engine functions, and its steam engine functions because its boiler is burning coal, and its boiler is burning coal because coal has certain combustible properties and so on *ad tedium*?

Or perhaps one might question whether the metaphor of the train *can* be aptly transferred to the case of justification, on the grounds that the kind of regress Hankinson has in mind is of a different kind to the kind of regress Sextus entertains at *PH* 1.166. In Hankinson's example (which is meant to illuminate *PH* 3.76) what we have is an explanatory regress. We want to explain why Carriage One moves, and we do this by adverting to the motion of Carriage Two and so on *ad infinitum*. In *PH* 1.166, however, we do not want to explain a phenomenon, we want to justify a belief. Perhaps this structural difference between the two regresses should give us pause before assimilating the second sort of regress to the first.

Such worries, however, need not concern us here.[24] The main point to

[23] Hankinson (1995), p.189

[24] But see, for example Aikin (2005) p.196, 202-203 who raises both sorts of worries and, regarding the second, pursues the line of thought that there *are* structural differences between explanatory and epistemic regresses. For Aikin, the primary difference is a modal one. An explanatory regress requires the actuality of the items adduced in the explanations (to continue with Hankinson's example,

emphasise is that in both *PH* 1.166 and 3.76, Sextus objects to infinite sequences (whether epistemic or explanatory) on the grounds that there is nowhere from where to begin (πόθεν ἀρξόμεθα) to offer reasons (in the case of an epistemic regress) or to offer explanations (in the case of an explanatory one). This is the No-Starting-Point Objection to infinite sequences.

Now depending on how one interprets the πόθεν ἀρξόμεθα in *PH* 1.166 this objection is either very weak or fairly plausible. The objection is weak if in the infinite sequence of reasons [R_1, R_2, R_3, …R_n, R_{n+1}, …] the reason πόθεν ἀρξόμεθα is taken to be the first member of the sequence - for in that case we can quite easily provide the first reason in the infinite sequence of reasons, namely R_1. Barnes offers us a parallel example of the sequence of natural numbers which is infinite, and for which we can provide the first term, namely 1.[25] On the other hand, the same objection becomes more plausible if in the infinite sequence of reasons [R_1, R_2, R_3, …R_n, R_{n+1}, …], the reason πόθεν ἀρξόμεθα is taken to be the *last* member of the sequence. For it certainly seems true that an infinite sequence of reasons [R_1, R_2, R_3…], by virtue of being an infinite sequence, has no last reason.

Now *this* objection to infinite sequences is more plausible than the initial one, but in and of itself it is not fatal. For why think that to establish P I must begin my process of justification from the last member of the infinite sequence [R_1, R_2, R_3, …R_n, R_{n+1}, …]? Surely I could begin at some other point in the sequence, for instance from R_1. The fact that there is no last term in the sequence [R_1, R_2, R_3, …R_n, R_{n+1}, …] does not mean that I have to start my process of justifying P from that last term-in fact

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to offer an explanation of why a train moves one must adduce an actual locomotive rather than a merely potential one). By contrast, on Aikin's view, this is not the case in epistemic regresses, which "do not require actual beliefs or speech acts in all cases" (Aikin (2005), p.196). A consequence of this view is that I can be justified in believing P if I have the ability to produce reasons for P; I do not in addition have to produce those reasons. I reflect on whether this provides an escape route from the mode of infinite regression below on pp.101-6 (and suggest not).

[25] Barnes (1990a), p.45.

it is impossible for me to start my justification from that last term, because, *ex hypothesi*, there *is* no last term. But I could begin the process of justification from R_1, and then offer R_2 as justification for R_1, and then R_3 for R_2, and so on. Or I could begin the process of justification from R_4, derive R_3, R_2, and R_1, and then proceed to justify R_4 by R_5 and so on. Indeed, far from there being no starting point to the infinite sequence there are an infinite number of possible starting points.[26]

Such a response to the No-Starting-Point Objection is, however, open to attack from the second, and more powerful, objection Sextus makes to infinite sequences in the *Outlines*: the Unsurveyability Objection. This tells us that it is irrelevant *where* in the infinite sequence one begins the process of justifying P. The fact of the matter is that because the sequence [R_1, R_2, R_3…$R_{n...}$] is infinite, it will be impossible to *complete* the process of justification. It is not simply a matter of offering R_1 as a justification for P, R_2, as a justification for R_1, R_3 as a justification for R_2 and so on, but "and so on *ad infinitum*". And *this*, Sextus tells us, is impossible[27].

Such an objection has an Aristotelian flavour. As Aristotle writes at *APst* 72b8-11, ἀδύνατον γὰρ τὰ ἄπειρα διελθεῖν, it is impossible to "go through" an infinite series. Sextus echoes this point on several occasions in the *Outlines*[28]. It is said to be impossible to "supply" an infinite series of proofs (ἀπείρους ἀποδείξεις παραστῆσαι/ ἄπειρα ἀποδεῖξαι)[29], to "make" infinitely many judgements (ἄπειρα

[26] Barnes offers a similar objection to the No-Starting Point Objection. See Barnes (1990a), p.46.
[27] It is worth remarking on the fact that the No-Starting-Point Objection and the Unsurveyability Objection can come apart. It is true that if a sequence has no last term, then it is unsurveyable. But the converse does not hold: the unsurveyability of a sequence need not entail that it lacks a last term. For instance, in cases of very lengthy logical or mathematical proofs, the proof might be of a finite length but be too long to be grasped in its entirety by the human mind. However, in the case of infinite sequences the No-Starting-Point Objection and the Unsurveyability Objection coincide. Because infinite sequences, *ex hypothesi*, have no last term, they are unsurveyable.
[28] Barnes claims that it is "disappointing, or even perplexing, that Sextus produces this objection only once, in *M* 8.16...". See Barnes (1990a), p.48. However, it seems to me that Sextus makes an objection of this kind on seven occasions in the *Outlines*. See *PH* 1.122, 2.78, 85, 89, 124, 182, 3.24.
[29] *PH* 1.122, 2.85, 182.

ἐπικρῖναι)[30], to "grasp" an infinite series of signs (ἄπειρα σημεῖα λαμβάνειν)[31], or to "provide" an infinite number of causes (ἀπείρους αἰτίας παρασχεῖν).[32] I have used the term "unsurveyable" to act as a general umbrella term under which uses such as these can fall. So, an infinite sequence of proofs will be unsurveyable insofar as it is not possible for some epistemic subject to offer an infinite number of such proofs, an infinite sequence of judgements will be unsurveyable insofar as it is not possible for some epistemic subject to make an infinite number of judgements, and so on.

Premises (**) *and* (ii)

The preceding paragraph suggests that, rather than speaking in terms of the unacceptability of infinitely regressive arguments, it would be truer to Sextus' text to speak of their unsurveyability (so understood). We might then think to revise the first premise of our argument from

(i) Infinitely regressive arguments are unacceptable arguments

to

(i*) Infinitely regressive arguments are unsurveyable arguments.

But if we are going to replace the reference to unacceptability in premise (i) with a reference to unsurveyability, we are obliged to do the same in the case of premise (**), giving us

(***) If the only argument S has for P is an unsurveyable argument, then S should not accept P.

[30] *PH* 2.78, 2.89.
[31] *PH* 2.124.
[32] *PH* 3.24.

Two issues arise in connection with (***): the extent to which it is a plausible claim and the extent to which it is a claim well grounded in Sextus' text. I deal with both in turn.

Regarding the first issue, it will be well to contrast (***) with (**). Now (**) is trivially true. If A is an unacceptable argument for P, then, trivially, I should not accept P on the basis of A. And if A is the only argument I have for P, then, equally trivially, I should not accept P. The "should" here is to be construed with epistemic force. If A is the only argument I have for P, then I should not accept P in the sense that it is rational for me not to accept P. (***), on the other hand, is not straightforwardly true.

To see why, an important distinction between kinds of surveyability needs to be made. There are different ways of surveying the infinite. As Barnes points out, it is one thing to claim that, of an infinite series of reasons, I am able to produce *every* one of those reasons, quite another to claim that, of an infinite series of reasons, I am able to produce *any* one of those reasons.[33] This distinction amounts to the distinction between the claim,

> (C) It is possible that, for every reason R_n, I produce the next reason in the sequence R_{n+1}, in support of R_n

and the claim

> (C*) For every reason R_n, it is possible that I produce the next reason R_{n+1}, in support of R_n

The difference between (C) and (C*) arises from the positioning and scope of the modal operator ("it is possible that") and the quantifying expression ("for every

[33] Barnes (1990a), p.48-53.

reason R_n"). While the falsity of (C*) entails the falsity of (C), the falsity of (C) does not entail the falsity of (C*). While my inability to produce *any* reason in the sequence [R_1, R_2, R_3…$R_{n...}$], *does* prevent me from producing *every* reason in the sequence, my inability to produce *every* reason in the sequence, does *not* prevent me from producing *any* reason in the sequence.

But neither (trivially) does my mere inability to produce every reason in the sequence in and of itself entail that I can produce any reason in the sequence. To produce *any* reason in the sequence [R_1, R_2, R_3…$R_{n...}$] in addition I require a certain algorithm from which I can construct R_{n+1} from R_n, and, although cumbersome, Barnes shows that in certain cases it *is* possible to construct such an algorithm. Consider the regress suggested by Sextus at *PH* 1.122. If the dogmatist provides a proof for a given claim, he will be asked to provide a proof of the truth of that first proof and so on *ad infinitum*:

> ἀληθῆ δὲ λέγων εἶναι τὴν ἀπόδειξιν αἰτηθήσεται ἀπόδειξιν τοῦ ἀληθῆ αὐτὴν εἶναι, κἀκείνης ἄλλην, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὴν ἀληθῆ εἶναι δεῖ, καὶ μέχρις ἀπείρου.
> And if he says that the proof is true he will be required to give a proof of its being true, and another proof of that (since it too has to be true), and so *ad infinitum*. (*PH* 1.122)

What sort of form will these proofs take? Barnes' example runs as follows.[34] Suppose the dogmatist claims P, and that to justify his claim he offers us a *modus ponens* argument of the form:

(1) If R_1, then P,

and R_1,

therefore, P.

Now when asked to justify why (1) is an acceptable argument he might advance

[34] See Barnes (1990a), p.53. As Barnes notes, his regress is based on the regress the tortoise sketches for the hapless Achilles in Carroll (1895).

another more complex *modus ponens* argument of the form,

(2) If if if $R_{1,}$ then P, and $R_{1,}$ then P, then (1) is acceptable,

and if if $R_{1,}$ then P, and $R_{1,}$ then P,

therefore, (1) is acceptable.[35]

The same procedure might be iterated when it come to justifying why (2) is an acceptable argument, and so on *ad infinitum*. Quite clearly the argument becomes very cumbersome very quickly, but at least it seems that *in principle* the same algorithm could be used to generate any individual argument in this infinite sequence of iterated arguments.

So runs Barnes' suggestion. The distinction he draws between (C) and (C*) is certainly a significant one. However, it is unclear whether it provides sufficient material for the sceptic's opponent to construct an escape route from infinite regression. The reasons are three. First, one might think that a Barnes-like move will only work for a very limited class of infinite sequences. That is, it will only work for infinite sequences of the following kind: where the logical form of the argument offered for the initial claim, P, is precisely the same as the logical form of argument that is offered for the acceptability of the original argument for P and so on *ad infinitum*. But for all infinite sequences not of this type (and there are many) Barnes' algorithmic move is ineffective.

Secondly, infinite sequences of the kind amenable to Barnes' algorithmic

[35] Barnes (1990a), p.53, n.9 helpfully offers a partial translation of (1) and (2) into first-order propositional logic to make them easier to grasp. Here is my version (modelled on Barnes):

(1) becomes (1*) $R_1 \rightarrow P$,
$R_{1,}$
therefore, P,

and (2) becomes (2*) $(((R_1 \rightarrow P) \wedge R_1) \rightarrow P) \rightarrow$ (1*) is acceptable,
$((R_1 \rightarrow P) \wedge R_1) \rightarrow P$,
therefore, (1*) is acceptable.

move are, though logically impeccable, unpersuasive in the following sense. Consider argument (2) above. The first premise of that argument says that if a conditional claim with an antecedent composed of the conjunction of the two premises of arugment (1) and a consequent composed of the conclusion of argument (1) is logically true[36], then argument (1) is an acceptable argument. The second premise says that the conditional claim in question *is* logically true. The conclusion that (1) is an acceptable argument follows by *modus ponens*. All of this is, of course, true if by "acceptable" we mean something like "logically valid". But if this is what is meant by "acceptable", then (2) says something trivially true – in particular its first premise is trivially true.[37] However, if by "acceptable" we mean something like rationally persuasive, then an argument like (2) tells us nothing. For to determine whether (1) is rationally persuasive will not only require showing that (1) is a logically valid argument, but also will require examining the plausibility of its individual premises. And neither of these tasks need be (and it is difficult to see how they could be) carried out by an application of solely *modus ponens* reasoning.

However, even if we grant that certain infinite sequences of arguments, whether rationally persuasive or not, can be constructed along the algorithmic model suggested by Barnes, there is still a third difficulty with such sequences. Let us imagine a dogmatist who offers an infinitely regressive argument which is amenable to the algorithmic move. Though unable to produce every argument in the infinite sequence in favour of P, for any argument in that sequence, this sort of dogmatist will be able to produce the next argument in the infinite sequence. He algorithmically grasps the infinite. Surely he is then entitled to accept P on the basis of an infinitely regressive argument?

[36] That is, true under all interpretations of the non-logical expressions.

[37] It is a standard theorem of first order logic that $\varphi, \ldots, \psi \models \chi \; iff \; \varphi \wedge \ldots \wedge \psi \rightarrow \chi \; is \; logically \; true$. See, for example, Halbach (2010), p.43.

Not so, as Barnes himself suggests.[38] Let it be granted that for such a dogmatist he is entitled to accept P on the basis of some algorithmically graspable infinite sequence, *S*. That is grist to the sceptic's mill. For the sceptic will now exercise his equipollent ability[39] and construct some rival sequence *S** which is structurally identical to *S* but with an incompatible conclusion P* - structurally identical inasmuch as *S** is also an algorithmically graspable infinite sequence.[40] Now given the fact that *S* is structurally identical to *S**, if our dogmatist is warranted in believing P on the basis of *S*, then he will be equally warranted in believing P* on the basis of *S**. But he cannot believe both P and P*, for they are incompatible. He is therefore compelled to believe neither P nor P*, which is just to suspend judgement over P.[41]

The preceding few paragraphs offer some motivation for thinking something like (***) true. However, what of the second of the two questions posed above? Is (***) well grounded in Sextus' text? Certainly it is never explicitly formulated by Sextus, but there is some evidence from the text to suggest that he was committed, at least *implicitly*, to something like (***). This premise claims that if the only argument (call it A) I have for some claim, P, is infinitely regressive (and therefore unsurveyable), then I should not accept P. Another way of putting the point is to say that I should not accept P as a far as argument A goes.

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[38] Barnes (1990a), pp.55-56.

[39] See Chapter 1, pp.39-46.

[40] Note the following. To claim that *S* is structurally identical to *S** is to claim that there is a structural identity between some infinite sequence of reasons or arguments in support of some claim P and some other infinite sequence of reasons or arguments in support of some claim P*. It is *not* to say that P is structurally identical to P*. To take it in this way (the possibility of which Denyer (1991), entertains) would lead to confusion. For if we think that what it means for P and P* to be structurally identical to one another is, for example, for them to both be sentences of first order logic not incorporating negation, then no two structurally identical infinite sequences will issue in incompatible conclusions – for no two first order sentences are incompatible unless at least one incorporates negation. For further reflections along these lines see Denyer (1991), p.316

[41] The reasoning is analogous to the reasoning laid out in (HYP) – see Chapter 2, pp.80-1. The only difference is that whereas (HYP) plays off one hypothesis against another, the present argument plays off one infinitely regressive argument against another. I return to this line of reasoning when I discuss what I term the sceptical version of the mode of infinite regression.

Now, as Barnes notes,[42] "as far as the argument goes" (ὅσον ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ) is a stock phrase in Sextus. The general formula ὅσον ἐπὶ followed by a dative occurs relatively frequently in the *Outlines*[43], and the particular locution ὅσον ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ though less commonplace, occurs seven times.[44] There are complications, both syntactic and semantic, surrounding this expression, which I leave to one side here.[45] However, one important semantic ambiguity cannot be left one side, for in translating the phrase as I have done, I have already taken a stand on the ambiguity in question. The ambiguity surrounds the interpretation given to τῷ λόγῳ.

To adopt a distinction drawn by Brunschwig,[46] on an anaphoric reading of the locution, τῷ λόγῳ refers back to a previous stretch of argument, as it would (unambiguously) do were the demonstrative τουτῷ included before the τῷ. By contrast on a non-anaphoric reading, τῷ λόγῳ does not refer back to a previous stretch of argument, rather it amounts to the phrase "insofar as the λόγος is concerned" where λόγος is interpreted as "the essence of the object of which one is speaking"[47]. I have chosen the former anaphoric reading for, unlike the non-anaphoric reading it makes no heavyweight philosophical claims about the essence of whatever is under discussion, but merely points back to an earlier argument or line of reasoning, and given Sextus' frequent claims not to make assertions about how things are in their

[42] Barnes (1990a), pp.42-3.
[43] 62 times if we take Barnes' word for it. Cf. J. Brunschwig (1994), p.244 n.2.
[44] They are *PH* 1.20, 215, 227, 3.48, 60, 62, 72. Cf. K. Janacek (1972), pp.13-20. Three of these instances (*PH* 1.215, 3.60, 62) have been dismissed by Brunschwig on grammatical grounds. According to Brunschwig (1994), p.244 n.1 "the various complements which accompany the formula [ie ὅσον ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ] in these passages make it impossible to consider them as uses of the [ὅσον ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ] formula, *stricto sensu*".
[45] For more on these see Brunschwig's detailed treatment in Brunschwig (1994).
[46] Cf J. Brunschwig (1994), p.250.
[47] Brunschwig (1994), p.252-3 in addition distinguishes between an "adverbial" and an "objectal" construal of the phrase. The adverbial construal has the phrase ὅσον ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ restricting the modality of the verb which expresses doubt, while the objectal construal has it restricting the proposition which is doubted. Brunschwig therefore offers us four ways of analysing ὅσον ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ locutions. They could be (1) Non-anaphoric and objectal, (2) Non-anaphoric and adverbial, (3) Anaphoric and adverbial or (4) Anaphoric and objectal. I, however, am only concerned with the anaphoric/non-anaphoric distinction.

nature,[48] it seems that it is the anaphoric sense which we should opt for.

So, do these occurrences of the ὅσον ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ in the *Outlines* lend support to the idea that, in the case of the mode of infinite regression, Sextus relied on a premise like (***)? Only to some extent. For Sextus never uses the locution in the context of the mode of infinite regression (or indeed in the context of any of the other Agrippan modes). At best Sextus' use of this expression elsewhere in the *Outlines* provides reason to think that, in the context of the mode of infinite regression, he implicitly relied on something like (***).

As with premise (***) so with premise (ii). Sextus never explicitly commits himself to something like (ii) – at best we can say that (ii) is a premise to which Sextus is implicitly committed, for (ii) is needed if the argument is to reach its conclusion. As to its plausibility, at first blush (ii) appears rather an implausible premise. For the occasions will be few and far between when the *only* argument I have for accepting P is an infinitely regressive argument. But even if this is true, this does not mean that the mode of infinite regression lacks teeth. As will be seen in Chapter 6, even if the mode of infinite regression is weak when used on its own, it is strong indeed when used in combination with the other Agrippan modes. For infinitely regressive arguments turn out to be one of three and only three ways of arguing open to the sceptic's opponent and each of these ways ultimately lead to the suspension of judgement.[49]

So much for the premises of the argument. I now turn to its conclusion.

[48] Sextus makes this point in particular in connection with mode of relativity. See, for example, *PH* 1.135, 140, 167. My discussion of the mode of relativity constitutes Chapter 5.
[49] For more detail on this trilemma, see Chapter 6, pp.210-11.

The Conclusion

The first point to note in connection with the conclusion of the argument, is that there is an asymmetry between Sextus' schematic presentation of the mode of infinite regression at *PH* 1.166 and his application of that mode during the rest of the *Outlines*. Consider, by way of example, *PH* 2.85. There Sextus is inquiring whether anything is true by nature. He writes,

> Διαφωνίας τοίνυν οὔσης περὶ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς παρὰ τοῖς δογματικοῖς, ἐπεί τινες μέν φασιν εἶναί τι ἀληθές, τινὲς δὲ μηδὲν εἶναι ἀληθές, οὐκ ἐνδέχεται τὴν διαφωνίαν ἐπικρῖναι, ἐπειδὴ ὁ λέγων εἶναί τι ἀληθὲς οὔτε ἄνευ ἀποδείξεως τοῦτο λέγων πιστευθήσεται διὰ τὴν διαφωνίαν· ἤν τε καὶ ἀπόδειξιν βούληται φέρειν, ἢν μὲν ψευδῆ ταύτην εἶναι συνομολογήσῃ, ἄπιστος ἔσται, ἀληθῆ δὲ τὴν ἀπόδειξιν εἶναι λέγων εἰς τὸν διάλληλόν τε ἐμπίπτει λόγον καὶ ἀπόδειξιν αἰτηθήσεται <του>[50] ἀληθῆ αὐτὴν ὑπάρχειν, καὶ ἐκείνης ἄλλην, καὶ μέχρις ἀπείρου. ἀδύνατον δὲ ἄπειρα ἀποδεῖξαι· ἀδύνατον ἄρα γνῶναι καὶ ὅτι ἔστι τι ἀληθές.
>
> There is a dispute about truths among the Dogmatists; for some say that some things are true, and some that nothing is true. And it is not possible to decide the dispute; for the person who says that some things are true, will not be found convincing if he says it without proof, because of the dispute; and if he actually want to bring a proof, then if he confesses that the proof is false he will be unconvincing, while if he says that the proof is true he falls into the reciprocal argument and in addition will be asked for a proof of the fact that it is true – and another proof for that, and so on *ad infinitum*. But it is impossible to prove infinitely many things. Therefore it is impossible to know that some things are true (*PH* 2.85)

Now there is a good deal of continuity between this example of the mode of infinite regression in action[51] and Sextus' schematic remarks about it at *PH* 1.166. In *PH* 1.166 Sextus mentions a πράγμα for which a source of conviction is sought. In the case of *PH* 2.85 this πράγμα is a claim. More particularly it is a claim that is made by a particular party to a dispute. The claim is that some things are true (εἶναί τι

[50] Added by Bekker.

[51] Of course *PH* 2.85 makes reference not only to the mode of infinite regression, but also to the modes of disagreement (διαφωνία) and reciprocity (διάλληλός). However, I leave the issue of how these modes are meant to work in combination with one another till Chapter 6. Here my sole concern is to elucidate the role played by the mode of infinite regression.

ἀληθές)[52]. Sextus then generates an infinite regression by saying that the person who puts forward the claim that some things are true will be unconvincing (ἄπιστος) unless he offers a proof (ἀπόδειξις[53]) of said claim. But, the argument continues, he will also be asked (αἰτηθήσεται) for a further proof that the original proof is correct (ἀληθῆ) and a further proof that this second proof is correct and so on *ad infinitum*.[54] This sequence of ἀποδείξεις are the "sources of conviction" Sextus speaks of in *PH* 1.166, and to them there is no end.

So far we have a neat correspondence between Sextus' schematic remarks about the mode of infinite regression at *PH* 1.166 and a particular instance of that mode's application at *PH* 2.85. However, there is also an important difference between *PH* 1.166 and *PH* 2.85. In the former case, the mode of infinite regression is said to lead S to suspend judgement over P. At *PH* 1.164 the mode of infinite regression, along with its four Agrippan siblings, are introduced by Sextus as the five modes of suspension of judgement (τρόπους τῆς ἐποχῆς πέντε τούσδε), and in *PH* 1.166[55], suspension of judgement is said to "follow on" from the mode of infinite regression.[56] At *PH* 2.85, by contrast, the outcome of the mode of infinite regression is not the suspension of judgement but the recognition that it is impossible to know that some things are true (ἀδύνατον ἄρα γνῶναι καὶ ὅτι ἔστι τι ἀληθές).

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[52] This claim is disputed, for as the passage indicates, there are those who claim that nothing is true (μηδὲν εἶναι ἀληθές). Who would have claimed such a thing? For Sextus' answer see *PH* 2.18 and *M* 7.53 (where the view is ascribed to Xeniades) and *M* 8.5 (where it is ascribed to Monimus).

[53] From Sextus' remarks at *PH* 2.134-143 it is clear that he uses ἀπόδειξις in the sense in which the Stoics used it, that is to refer to a particular kind of *argument* (λόγος) where a conclusion (συμπέρασμα or ἐπιφορα) is inferred on the basis of valid reasoning from a set of premises (λήμματα). See Chapter 2, pp.57-60, 66-7

[54] It is not always the case that the mode of infinite regression invokes an infinite series of *proofs*. This is the case at *PH* 1.122; 2. 182; 3.8, 36, 53. But see *PH* 2.20, 36, 78, 89, 90, 92-3; 3.36, 241 for infinite regressions of criteria (κριτήρια), *PH* 2.124, 128 for infinite regressions of signs (σημεῖα), *PH* 1.186; 3.24 for infinite regressions of explanations (αἰτίαι) and *PH* 2.207 for an infinite regression of definitions (ὅροι).

[55] Quoted at the opening of the chapter.

[56] Barnes (1990), p.41 and Hankinson (1995), p.192 both assume the mode leads to the suspension of judgement.

Nor is this a solitary case. At *PH* 2.89 the conclusion of the mode of infinite regression is that it is not possible to apprehend whether truths are apparent only (ἀδύνατον ἄρα καταλαβεῖν, εἰ φαινόμενά ἐστι μόνον τὰ ἀληθη), at *PH* 2.124 that it is not possible for signs to be apprehended if they are unclear (ἀδύνατον ἄρα τὸ σημεῖον καταληφθῆναι ἄδηλον ὄν), at *PH* 2.182 that it is not possible to establish that there are proofs (ἀδύνατον ἄρα παραστῆσαι ὅτι ἔστιν ἀπόδειξις) and at *PH* 3.24 that it is not possible to assert firmly that anything is a cause of anything (ἀδύνατον ἄρα διαβεβαιωτικῶς ἀποφῆναι, ὅτι ἐστὶ τὶ τινὸς αἴτιον). Without getting involved in the wider argumentative context of such passages, we might schematise these kinds of conclusion as follows: It is not possible for S to ϕ P (where S is some epistemic subject, P some proposition, and ϕ represents some relation of epistemic endorsement).

There is, then, a gap to be bridged. How might one move from a conclusion of the form "It is not possible for S to accept P", or, to use the language of (iv*), from a conclusion of the form "S should not accept P" to a conclusion of the form "S should suspend judgement over P"?[57] The key to bridging it is to return to the distinction between S not accepting P and S suspending judgement over P. Previously these two positions were distinguished as follows. Although S suspending judgement over P entails S not accepting P, S not accepting P does not entail S suspending judgement over P. For S not accepting P is compatible with S accepting not-P, and S accepting not-P is incompatible with S suspending judgement over P.

Now if this is correct, then presumably the following scenario is a logically possible one. Some epistemic subject (let him be a dogmatist) puts forward

[57] This question was raised above, p.93.

some claim P and is then pushed by a sceptic[58] into providing an infinitely regressive argument for P. He then is confronted by (or formulates to himself) the following sort of argument:[59]

(INF) (i*) Infinitely regressive arguments are unsurveyable arguments

(ii) The only argument S has for P is an infinitely regressive argument

(***) If the only argument S has for P is an unsurveyable argument, then S should not accept P

therefore,

(iv*) S should not accept P.

On the basis of (INF) he comes to not accept P. In fact, let us suppose, he comes to accept not-P. Consequently he does not suspend judgement over P. As just noted, such a scenario is perfectly logically possible – there is no contradiction in supposing it to be true. But one might think that in accepting not-P (for whatever reason) our dogmatist has simply opened up a new proposition (namely the proposition that not-P) on which the sceptic can train his guns. For, just as the dogmatist was pushed by the sceptic into providing an infinitely regressive argument for P, so he will be pushed into providing an infinitely regressive argument for not-P, be confronted by an analogous version of (INF) where "not-P" is substituted for "P", and thereby come to not accept not-P. And, being unable either to accept P (because of the first application of (INF)) or to accept not-P (because of the second application of (INF),

[58] What accounts for the pushing is the fact that the two other alternatives open to him are blocked by the modes of hypothesis (discussed in Chapter 2) and the mode of reciprocity (to be discussed in Chapter 4). I discuss the logically exhaustive trilemma which the modes of infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis open up for the dogmatist in greater detail in Chapter 6.

[59] Whether it is a sceptic or a dogmatist who confronts S with (INF) is, for the moment, neither here nor there.

our dogmatist will come to suspend judgement over P.[60]

To distinguish between these two applications of (INF) I shall refer to them, respectively, as (INF_P) and ($INF_{not\text{-}P}$). The conclusion of any (INF_P)-style argument, then, is of the form "S should not accept P", and the conclusion of any ($INF_{not\text{-}P}$)-style argument is of the form "S should not accept not-P". Consequently, when some epistemic subject frames to himself both an (INF_P)-style argument and an ($INF_{not\text{-}P}$)-style argument, the conclusion reached is of the form "S should not accept P and S should not accept not-P", which is just to say that S should suspend judgement over P. The gap has been bridged.

A Dogmatic Mode of Infinite Regression

The remarks of the preceding pages were intended to highlight some of the difficulties in finding clear evidence from the text to attribute to Sextus the component premises and conclusion of (INF).[61] Though premise (i*) was shown to be underscored by Sextus' Unsurveyability Objection to infinite sequences, premises (***) and (ii), though necessary for the validity of the argument were shown to enjoy, at best, implicit support from the text. Finally, with regards to the conclusion, a difference was noted between Sextus' presentation of it as part of the schematic version of the mode at *PH* 1.166 and the form it took when the mode was actually put into practice. In the former case the mode was said to lead to a conclusion of the form

[60] An objection: only a dogmatist who is already sceptical of the acceptability of infinitely regressive arguments will reach suspension of judgement in the scenario described. For it depends on applying the reasoning set out in (INF), both in connection with an infinitely regressive argument in favour of P, and in connection with an infinitely regressive argument in favour of not-P, and, as we know, the first premise of (INF) is that infinitely regressive arguments are unacceptable things. But what of a dogmatist who is amenable to infinite regressions in the sense that he offers an infinitely regressive argument which he is able to grasp algorithmically? See above, pp.105-6 for a response to this line of argument.

[61] And thereby of the component premises and conclusions of any pair of (INF_P) and ($INF_{not\text{-}P}$)-style arguments.

"S should suspend judgement over P" and in the latter cases to a conclusion of the form "It is not possible for S to accept P" or "S should not accept P". Nevertheless, it was shown to be possible to mine something like (INF) from Sextus' text. And it was also shown how a suspensive conclusion might be reached on the basis of framing to oneself both an (INF_P)-style argument and an ($INF_{not\text{-}P}$)-style argument.

But is (INF) the sort of argument a sceptic or a dogmatist frames to himself and thereby comes to suspend judgement? Once again it will be useful to distinguish two versions of the mode - a dogmatic version which a sceptic cannot employ because it requires the sceptic to hold theoretical beliefs which he is not entitled to hold, and a sceptical version which a sceptic can employ without the holding of any such illicit beliefs.

As with (DIS) and (HYP),[62] (INF) seems to be a dogmatic version of the mode. On a Barnes-Burnyeat interpretation, none of the premises that compose (INF) are propositions which a sceptic is entitled to believe, since they all count as philosophic (and therefore philosophico-scientific) tenets. (i*) and (ii) make reference to infinitely regressive arguments, quintessentially unclear items and the proper objects of study of the philosophical logician, whereas premise (***) makes a substantive epistemological claim about the appropriate epistemic response when confronted with an unsurveyable argument.

On the Frede-Morison view, on the other hand, the matter might seem less clear cut. For some of the premises of (INF) seem to be propositions which, on a Frede-Morison view, the sceptic is perfectly entitled to believe. Consider premise (ii), which claims, of some particular proposition, P, at some particular time, that the only argument a particular epistemic subject has for P is an infinitely regressive one. Now

[62] See pp.34-5 for (DIS) and pp.80-1 for (HYP)

though (ii) contains a reference to a quintessentially unclear item (namely an infinitely regressive argument) and would therefore, on the Barnes-Burnyeat view count as a proposition which a sceptic could not believe, on the Frede-Morison view, it would be perfectly possible for a sceptic to believe (ii), provided (ii) was not believed as a result of going through some antecedent piece of reasoning. And though an epistemic subject *may* come to believe (ii) in an illicit ratiocinative fashion, this is by no means the *only* way in which an epistemic subject might come to believe (ii). It might, for instance, just strike a sceptic that (ii) is the case, in which case, on the Frede-Morison view, he would be perfectly entitled to believe it.

When we come to a premise like (***), however, even an advocate of the Frede-Morison view would struggle to secure it as a premise which a sceptic might be entitled to believe. For (***) makes a claim about what it is rationally required of some epistemic subject to do. And it is plausible to think that someone who believes (***), believes it because he also believes certain things about the nature of rationality and its requirements. But if this is so, then, on a Frede-Morison view, (***) will be the sort of claim which a sceptic cannot believe. So even if the Frede-Morison view allows room for the sceptic to believe a premise like (ii), premise (***) withstands this sort of strategy. Furthermore, on a Frede-Morison view, a sceptic will not be able to believe the conclusion of (INF) for, *ex hypothesi*, it is arrived at by a process of reasoning, namely the reasoning set out in (INF).

Whether one adopts a Barnes-Burnyeat view or a Frede-Morison view, then, (INF) is a dogmatic version of the mode of infinite regression: it is a way in which a dogmatist might come to suspend judgement on the basis of the mode. When confronted by some proposition, P, which is supported by some infinitely regressive argument, a sceptic, however, will be unable to frame to himself an (INF)-style

argument on the basis of which he comes to recognize that he should not accept P – for doing so requires the holding of various theoretical beliefs to which the sceptic is not entitled.

A Sceptical Mode of Infinite Regression

An alternative way of thinking about how a sceptic might come to suspend judgement on the basis of the mode of infinite regression is to interpret it as a particular instance of the sceptic's method of equipollence.[63] Confronted by some dogmatist who is compelled[64] to offer an infinitely regressive argument, A, for P, a sceptic exercises his equipollent ability and constructs a rival infinitely regressive argument, A*, for not-P, where A* is structurally identical to A* inasmuch as A is an infinitely regressive argument and A* is an infinitely regressive argument.[65]

Now, as with the sceptical version of the mode of hypothesis,[66] it is important to note that, once the sceptic has formulated his rival infinitely regressive argument A*, his work, *qua practitioner* of the mode of infinite regression, is done: he has exercised his sceptical art and discharged his sceptical function. There may be a further question about how the sceptic himself might come to suspend judgement as a result of exercising his art, but it is for others (dogmatic historians of philosophy perhaps) and not the sceptic to theorise about such matters. I conclude this chapter by doing just that.

How the sceptic might come to suspend judgement on the basis of the mode of infinite regression will be analogous to the way in which he came to suspend

[63] See Chapter 1, pp.39-46
[64] Compelled because the other two alternatives open to him – hypothesising the claim and offering a reciprocal argument for the claim – are ruled out by the modes of hypothesis and reciprocity. I postpone any further discussion of how these three modes are meant to work in combination with one another till Chapter 6.
[65] See p.106 n. 40 for further detail on what "structural identity" involves.
[66] See Chapter 2, pp.84-86.

judgement on the basis of the mode of hypothesis outlined in the previous chapter, so my remarks here will be comparatively brief. When confronted by two equipollent infinitely regressive arguments, the sceptic suspends judgement out of causal rather than rational necessity.[67] That is to say, the sceptic suspends judgement because he has a psychological disposition to suspend judgement in such scenarios, and not because he holds any theoretical beliefs about the unsurveyability of infinitely regressive arguments or about what it is rationality required of him to believe.[68]

As to how the sceptic came to *acquire* such a disposition, again it is useful to distinguish between a proto-sceptic and a mature sceptic. As a proto-sceptic, before he has come to acquire the relevant disposition, the sceptic *is* an epistemically sensitive agent. When faced with two equipollent infinitely regressive arguments with incompatible conclusions he suspends judgement because it is the reasonable thing to do. Indeed, he may well suspend judgement by framing to himself an argument much like (HYP) in the previous chapter. Recall that that particular argument involved an epistemic agent, when confronted with two incompatible hypotheses, framing to himself the following sort of argument:[69]

(HYP) (i) If S is convincing in hypothesising P, then S* will be equally convincing in hypothesising P*

(ii) S cannot assent to both P and to P*

(iii) S cannot assent to one of P or P*

therefore,

(iv) S must assent to neither P nor to P*

[67] See Chapter 1, pp. 46-50 where this distinction is first drawn.
[68] These are precisely the sorts of beliefs to which someone is committed if they frame to themselves an arugment like (INF). That infinitely regressive arguments are unsurveyable is the first premise of (INF). And the conclusion of (INF) turns on what it is rational for some epistemic subject to believe.
[69] See Chapter 2, pp.81-3 for further details on the underpinnings of the various premises of (HYP).

In the present case, the argument the proto-sceptic will frame to himself will be identical to (HYP), the only difference being that the references to hypothesising P will be replaced by references to offering an infinitely regressive argument for P, and the references to hypothesising P* will be replaced by references to offering an infinitely regressive argument for P* (where P and P* are incompatible with one another). Thus, the argument our proto-sceptic frames to himself would be something like:

(INF*)(i) If S is convincing in offering an infinitely regressive argument for P, then S* will be equally convincing in offering an infinitely regressive argument for P*

(ii) S cannot assent to both P and to P*

(iii) S cannot assent to one of P or P*

therefore, (iv) S must assent to neither P nor to P*.

Over time, however, the sceptic will come to suspend judgement not because he reasons on the basis of something like (INF*) that it is the rational thing to do. After all, the mature sceptic *cannot* frame such an argument to himself, for in so doing, he would incur a number of beliefs which both on a Barnes-Burnyeat view and a Frede-Morison view are ruled out for him.[70] For example, premise (i) of (INF*) would presumably be ruled out for him on a Barnes-Burnyeat view since it adverts to quintessentially unclear items in the form of infinitely regressive arguments. And, on the Frede-Morison view, presumably the conclusion of the argument would be ruled out for him, for, *ex hypothesi*, it is a conclusion that is held on the basis of reasons – namely the reasons set out in (INF*).[71] The mature sceptic, then, by virtue of having

[70] The situation is analogous to that described in Chapter 2 when a dogmatist frames (HYP) to himself.
[71] If a proto-sceptic comes to suspend judgement on the basis of (INF*), might not a dogmatist also be

deployed (INF*)-style reasoning numerous times in the past, comes to acquire a disposition to suspend judgement when confronted with two equipollent infinitely regressive arguments with incompatible conclusions. He therefore suspends judgement out of psychological habit without relying on any illicit theoretical beliefs.

Concluding Remarks

The mode of infinite regression has levels of complexity not shared by the modes of disagreement and hypothesis. In the case of the modes of disagreement and hypothesis, what distinguished the dogmatic versions of the mode from their sceptical counterparts was the following. The dogmatic versions involved a dogmatist framing to himself a certain kind of argument (be it (DIS) or (HYP)), on the basis of which he drew the conclusion that it was rational for him to suspend judgement. The sceptical versions, by contrast, involved the sceptic suspending judgement out of a psychological disposition when confronted either by undecided disagreement or incompatible hypotheses.[72]

However, central to both (DIS) and (HYP) was the phenomenon of equipollent argumentation. In framing (DIS) to himself, a dogmatist concluded that it was rational for him to suspend judgement because it was rational for someone to suspend judgement when confronted with an undecided disagreement; and in framing (HYP) to himself, a dogmatist concluded that it was rational for him to suspend

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moved to suspend judgement on the basis of (INF*) rather than on the basis of (INF)? The answer to this question will depend on the kind of dogmatist in question. If the dogmatist in question is one who is hostile to infinitely-regressive argumentation, then it is reasonable to suppose that he will reach a suspensive conclusion along the lines of (INF)-style reasoning (or, more precisely, (INF_P) and ($INF_{not\text{-}P}$)-style reasoning). If however, the dogmatist is someone who is amenable to infinitely-regressive argumentation (perhaps he is one of those dogmatists who believes that the infinite can be algorithmically grasped as discussed above, then it is possible that he will be moved by an (INF*)-style argument. I already gestured at this possibility above, on pp.105-6.

[72] See pp.50-2and pp.84-6.

judgement because it was rational for someone to suspend judgement when confronted with a pair of incompatible hypotheses. Indeed, it was shown that being confronted with an undecided disagreement was equivalent to being confronted with a pair of equipollent arguments; and it was shown that being confronted with incompatible hypotheses was a limiting case of being confronted by a pair of equipollent arguments.

So, in the case of the modes of disagreement and hypothesis, the phenomenon of equipollence was central to both the dogmatic *and* the sceptical versions of the mode. The only difference between these two versions was that the dogmatist would frame an argument to himself and reason to the conclusion that it was rational for him to suspend judgement, whereas the sceptic would simply suspend judgement out of a psychological habit.[73]

By contrast, though the dogmatic version of the mode of infinite regression outlined in the present chapter, namely (INF), did *not* turn on any equipollent considerations, the sceptical version of the mode, namely (INF*), very much did. The dogmatic and sceptical versions of the mode of infinite regression, therefore, display different logical forms in a way in which the dogmatic and sceptical versions of the modes of disagreement and hypothesis did not. Elucidating the textual basis for (INF) and arguing for its dogmatic credentials has been one of the main tasks of this chapter. The other has been to motivate the sceptical version of the mode with an equipollent form analagous to (HYP). A similar task is carried out in connection with the mode of reciprocity in the next chapter.

[73] See Chapter 1, pp.46-50 for further discussion of how the sceptic came to *acquire* this psychological habit.

The Mode of Reciprocity

Reciprocity Parallel to Infinite Regression

The mode of reciprocity is, sequentially, the last of the five modes to which Sextus introduces us. As with infinite regression, reciprocity is said to give rise to the suspension of judgement. Indeed, on Barnes' view, the way in which the mode of reciprocity gives rise to the suspension of judgement is "parallel" to the way in which the mode of infinite regression gives rise to the suspension of judgement.[1] Thus we might formulate a version of the mode of reciprocity analogous to the version of the mode of infinite regression formulated at the beginning of Chapter 3:

(REC)(i) Reciprocal arguments are unacceptable arguments

(ii) The only argument S has for P is a reciprocal argument

(**) If the only argument S has for P is an unacceptable argument, then S should not accept P

therefore,

(iv*) S should not accept P.

In the previous chapter I undertook two tasks in respect of the parallel argument concerning infinitely regressive arguments – let it be referred to as the infinitely regressive version of the argument. The first was to offer some elucidation of its various premises and its conclusion and to investigate the extent to which an argument with those premises and conclusion could be mined from Sextus' text. The

[1] Barnes (1990a), p.65: "I [have] asked why infinite regression should be thought to lead to ἐποχη. The same question arises in the case of reciprocity. Since the answer in this case is parallel to the answer in the regressive case, I shall be brief."

second was to address the question as to whether the sceptic, by his own lights, was able to come to suspend judgement on the basis of such an argument. The same two tasks will be undertaken here. The conclusion reached will be that Barnes' reconstruction of the mode of reciprocity adequately explains how a dogmatist (or a proto-sceptic) might come to suspend judgement on the basis of the mode, but cannot explain how a fully fledged sceptic who lacks all theoretical beliefs might come to do so.

Given the isomorphism between the infinitely regressive version of the argument and the reciprocal version of the argument, much of what has been said regarding the infinitely regressive version of the argument in Chapter 3 can, *mutatis mutandis*, be repeated in connection with the reciprocal version of the argument. My treatment of premises (ii) and (**) and of the conclusion of (REC) will therefore be comparatively brief. My main focus will be the first premise of the argument, namely that reciprocal arguments are unacceptable arguments - for it is this premise which lies at the heart of the mode. First, however, it is important to be clear on what Sextus means by "reciprocity" for, as Barnes points out, a number of different kinds of reciprocity emerge from the pages of the *Outlines*.[2]

Formal Reciprocity

What I shall term formal reciprocity is the kind of reciprocity to which Sextus alludes during his formal presentation of the mode at *PH* 1.169:

ὁ δὲ διάλληλος τρόπος συνίσταται, ὅταν τὸ ὀφεῖλον τοῦ

[2] My debt to Barnes in my subsequent discussion of these three kinds reciprocity will be obvious. See Barnes (1990a), pp.59-65. My tripartite distinction of kinds of reciprocity is modelled on Barnes' though I adopt different terminology from him.

> ζητουμένου πράγματος εἶναι βεβαιωτικὸν χρείαν ἔχῃ τῆς ἐκ τοῦ ζητουμένου πίστεως· ἔνθα μηδέτερον δυνάμενοι λαβεῖν πρὸς κατασκευὴν θατέρου, περὶ ἀμφοτέρων ἐπέχομεν.
> 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 on both. (*PH* 1.169)

As with the mode of infinite regression, Sextus' description is here cast in general terms. He speaks of an object of investigation (τοῦ ζητουμένου) and some further unspecified item which ought to be confirmatory of the object of investigation (τὸ ὀφεῖλον τοῦ ζητουμένου πράγματος εἶναι βεβαιωτικὸν). Call the object of investigation *a* and the further unspecified item *b*. In *PH* 1.169 Sextus suggests that *a* is confirmatory (εἶναι βεβαιωτικὸν) of *b*, and that *b* needs to be made convincing (χρείαν ἔχῃ τῆς ἐκ τοῦ ζητουμένου πίστεως) by *a*.

The fact that Sextus uses different predicates to express the relation *a* holds to *b* ("…is confirmatory of…") and the relation *b* holds to *a* ("…makes convincing…") is not significant. At the heart of Sextus' presentation of the mode is the thought that *a* stands in need of support from *b* which itself stands in need of support from *a*. What, if anything, is objectionable about this situation is a question I postpone for later. For the moment, it is important to clarify what sort of "support" is meant when we speak of *a* standing in need of support of *b* and *b* of *a*. An example from elsewhere in the *Outlines* when Sextus actually employs the mode of reciprocity clarifies the abstract description of *PH* 1.169.

Consider *PH* 2.197. There Sextus is discussing syllogistic deductions (συλλογισμοι)[3]. He writes,

> παραπλησίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ τοιούτου λόγου 'Σωκράτης ἄνθρωπος, οὐδεὶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος τετράπους, Σωκράτης ἄρα οὐκ ἐστι τετράπους' τὴν μὲν 'οὐδεὶς ἄνθρωπος τετράπους' πρότασιν ἐκ τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἐπαγωγικῶς

[3] The notion of reciprocity that Sextus seems to be fastening on here is familiar from Aristotle *APst* 72b26-73a7.

> βουλόμενοι βεβαιοῦν, ἑκάστην δὲ τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἐκ τῆς ‘οὐδεὶς ἄνθρωπος τετράπους’ συλλογίζεσθαι θέλοντες, τῇ κατὰ τὸν διάλληλον ἀπορίᾳ περιπίπτουσιν.
> Similarly[4] in the case of the following argument - Socrates is human; but nothing human is a quadruped; therefore, Socrates is not a quadruped – wishing to confirm the proposition “Nothing human is a quadruped” inductively from the particulars and wanting to deduce each of the particulars from “Nothing human is a quadruped”, they fall into the impasse of reciprocity. (*PH* 2.197)

The “they”, the grammatical subject of περιπίπτουσιν, are the Stoics and the Peripatetics[5]. Sextus imagines them putting forward the following little argument:

(1) Socrates is human

(2) Nothing human is a quadruped

therefore,

(3) Socrates is not a quadruped,

But there is something objectionable in their procedure. What is objectionable is that one of the premises of the argument, namely (2), is confirmed inductively (ἐπαγωγικῶς) from a set of premises Γ_1 of which (3) is a member, and (3) is confirmed deductively (συλλογίζεσθαι) from a set of premises Γ_2 of which (2) is a member. Filling in the details, let Γ_1 be a set containing indefinitely many premises of the form, (3’) Socrates is human and Socrates is not a quadruped; (3’’) Plato is human and Plato is not a quadruped; (3’’’) Aristotle is human and Aristotle is not a quadruped, and so on. We then have the argument,

(A) Γ_1; therefore (2).

And let Γ_2 be a set containing two premises, namely (1) and (2). We then have the argument,

[4] Similar to what? Sextus has just discussed the syllogism “Eveything human is an animal; but Socrates is a human; therefore, Socrates is an animal” at *PH* 2.196. The argument mentioned at *PH* 2.197 is similar to the argument of *PH* 2.196 insofar as both suffer from the same kind of reciprocity, as I go on to discuss.

[5] Sextus refers to both groups by name (τῶν τε Στωικῶν καὶ τῶν Περιπατητικῶν) at *PH* 2.193.

(B) Γ_2; therefore (3).

Now of course there are differences between the two arguments (A) and (B). For one, the "therefore" in (A) acts as a marker for an inductive inference, whereas the "therefore" in (B) acts as a marker for a deductive one. Furthermore, in (B), (2) occurs as a premise of Γ_2, whereas, in (A), (3) occurs as a conjunct of one of the premises of Γ_1, namely the second conjunct of (3'). Sextus does not consider whether either of these differences are significant, or at least there is no evidence from the text to suggest that he did – so I do not explore these differences any further. At any rate, it is clear that Sextus thinks that (A) and (B) are a pair of arguments which fall into the impasse of reciprocity (κατὰ τὸν διάλληλον ἀπορίᾳ).

We might say then that formal reciprocity, at least insofar as *PH* 2.197 goes,[6] is a relation that holds between *two arguments*. And we might say that two arguments stand in a formally reciprocal relation to one another if and only if the conclusion of the first argument features as one of the premises of the second argument, and the conclusion of the second argument features as one of the premises of the first.

Of course there is no requirement that formal reciprocity involves only two elements, though it is an interesting fact that in the *Outlines*, Sextus restricts his reciprocities to those which only involve two elements. As Barnes notes[7], formal reciprocity, so defined, is merely a particular instance of a more general type of argumentation, namely circular argumentation. Consider the following three arguments:

(4) P_1; therefore P_2,

[6] See also passages like *PH* 2.9, 199, 202
[7] Barnes (1990a), p.61

(5) P_2; therefore P_3,

(6) P_3; therefore P_1.

Here, no two elements stand in a reciprocal relation to one another, but taken together they exhibit a circularity: the conclusion of (6) is the premise of (4). Nor is there any reason to stop at just three elements. Circular arguments can have any number of elements, *n*, provided that the conclusion of the first argument features as one of the premises of the second argument, the conclusion of the second argument features as one of the premises of the third argument and so on until some we reach some *n*th argument, which has as one of its premises the conclusion of the *n*-1st argument, and which has as its conclusion one of the premises of the first argument.

So, formal reciprocity involves only two elements, whereas circularity involves any number of elements. Anything, therefore, which is formally reciprocal will also be formally circular whereas not every formally circular sequence of arguments will be formally reciprocal. For the sake of simplicity I shall use the expression "formally reciprocal" to refer to both kinds of reciprocity unless I specify otherwise.

Regressive Reciprocity

There is a second kind of reciprocity alluded to in the *Outlines*, which I shall term "regressive reciprocity". An example of it is to be found at *PH* 1.116-7 during Sextus' discussion of the fourth Aenesideman mode, the mode of circumstance (περίστασις). There Sextus writes that to judge that a particular appearance (φαντασία) is true requires that the judger possess a standard (κριτήριον) by which

the matter might be judged, which in turn requires that he offer a proof that the standard in question is a reliable one, which in turn requires that he possess a further standard by which the proof might be judged sound (ὑγιὴς) and so on *ad infinitum.* Sextus continues,

> χρῄζει γὰρ ἀεὶ καὶ ἡ ἀπόδειξις κριτηρίου, ἵνα βεβαιωθῇ, καὶ τὸ κριτήριον ἀποδείξεως, ἵνα ἀληθὲς εἶναι δειχθῇ· καὶ οὔτε ἀπόδειξις ὑγιὴς εἶναι δύναται μὴ προϋπάρχοντος κριτηρίου ἀληθοῦς, οὔτε κριτήριον ἀληθὲς μὴ προπεπιστωμένης τῆς ἀποδείξεως. καὶ οὕτως ἐμπίπτουσιν εἰς τὸν διάλληλον τρόπον τό τε κριτήριον καὶ ἡ ἀπόδειξις, ἐν ᾧ ἀμφότερα εὑρίσκεται ἄπιστα· ἑκάτερον γὰρ τὴν θατέρου πίστιν περιμένον ὁμοίως τῷ λοιπῷ ἐστιν ἄπιστον.
> For a proof always requires a standard in order to be confirmed, and a standard always requires a proof in order to be shown to be true. A proof cannot be sound if there is no standard there already, nor can a standard be true if a proof has not already been made convincing. In this way standards and proofs fall into the reciprocal mode, by which both of them are found to be unconvincing: each waits to be made convincing by the other, and so each is as unconvincing as the other. (*PH* 1.116-7)

Let P stand for the proposition that a particular appearance is true; let K_i stand for some criterion and let A_i stand for some proof. On the *PH* 1.116-7 model, P is judged to be the case on the basis of K_1, K_1 is judged to be a reliable standard on the basis of A_1, A_1 is judged to be a sound proof on the basis of K_2, K_2 is judged to be a reliable standard on the basis of A_2, and so on *ad infinitum.* So we have an infinite sequence composed of alternating elements: [K_1, A_1, K_2, A_2, K_3, A_3…], and each element in this sequence is epistemologically suspect, in the sense that each standard looks to a proof for confirmation of its reliability and each proof looks to a standard for confirmation of its soundness. For any value of *n*, K_n requires confirmation from A_n and A_n requires confirmation from K_{n+1}.[8]

[8] For further examples of regressive reciprocity see *PH* 1.172 (objects of perception and objects of thought), 186 (apparent explanations and unclear explanations), 2. 92-3 (apparent things and unclear things), 183 (signs and proofs), 3.35 (criteria and proofs), 53 (incorporeal and corporeal items). Though Sextus in the *Outlines* always restricts his regressive reciprocities to sequences composed of *two* types of epistemologically suspect elements there is no *a priori* reason to restrict regressive reciprocities to those sequences which are composed of *two* types of epistemologically suspect claims rather than just one type (or, for that matter, three or more types).

Sextus describes the above scenario as an instance of the mode of reciprocity (τὸν διάλληλον τρόπον). Now plainly this kind of reciprocity is of a very different kind to the formal reciprocity discussed in the previous section. I have chosen to label this kind of reciprocity "regressive reciprocity" for the simple reason that it is a special case of an infinite regression. What, if anything, is wrong with regressively reciprocal arguments is a question I do not pursue in this chapter – for whatever may be wrong with them will be a feature of their regressive rather than their reciprocal character, and I discussed infinitely regressive arguments in the previous chapter.[9]

Conceptual Reciprocity

A third and final type of reciprocity to be found in the *Outlines* is what I shall term "conceptual reciprocity". Sextus focuses on this sort of reciprocity at *PH* 3.22 where he is elucidating the concepts of cause and effect.[10] He writes,

> εἰ οὖν, ἵνα μὲν ἐννοήσωμεν τὸ αἴτιον, δεῖ προεπιγνῶναι τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα, ἵνα δὲ τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα γνῶμεν, <ὡς> ἔφην, δεῖ προεπίστασθαι τὸ αἴτιον, ὁ διάλληλος τῆς ἀπορίας τρόπος ἄμφω δείκνυσιν ἀνεπινόητα, μήτε τοῦ αἰτίου ὡς αἰτίου μήτε τοῦ ἀποτελέσματος ὡς ἀποτελέσματος ἐπινοεῖσθαι δυναμένου·
> Thus if, in order to conceive of a cause, we must already have recognized its effect, and in order to know its effect, as I have said, we must already know the cause, the reciprocal mode of puzzlement shows that both are inconceivable: the cause cannot be conceived of as a cause nor the effect as an effect (*PH* 3.22)

Here we have a case where the concept of effect (ἀποτέλεσμα) is used in the elucidation of the concept of cause (αἴτιον) and, conversely, the concept of cause is

[9] Of course this is not to say that Sextus does not rely on regressive reciprocities in his arguments. See for example, Chapter 6, pp. 193-5, 205-7.

[10] See also *PH* 3.242 where the concept of an apprehensive appearance is elucidated in terms of real objects and real objects are elucidated in terms of apprehensive appearances.

used in the elucidation of the concept of effect.[11] A similar line of thought is voiced at *PH* 3.242, during Sextus' discussion of apprehensive appearances:

> ταῦτά τοι καὶ οἱ Στωικοὶ ἐν τῇ τῆς καταληπτικῆς φαντασίας ἐννοίας ἀποδόσει οὐχ ὑγιῶς φέρονται· καταληπτικὴν μὲν γὰρ φαντασίαν λέγοντες τὴν ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος γινομένην, ὑπάρχον δὲ εἶναι λέγοντες ὃ οἷόν τε κινεῖν καταληπτικὴν φαντασίαν, εἰς τὸν διάλληλον ἐμπίπτουσι τῆς ἀπορίας τρόπον.
> Moreover, the Stoics proceed unsoundly in their elucidation of the concept of an apprehensive appearance: in saying that an apprehensive appearance is one which comes from something real, and also saying that a real object is one capable of producing an apprehensive appearance, they fall into the reciprocal mode of puzzlement. (*PH* 3.242)

Here the concept of a real object (ὑπάρχον) is presupposed in the concept of an apprehensive appearance (καταληπτικὴ φαντασία), and the concept of an apprehensive appearance is presupposed in the concept of a real object. The import of both these passages should be clear. We have a case of reciprocity (Sextus uses the term in both passages) which involves the presupposing of one concept (call it C_1) in one's understanding of another concept (call it C_2), and presupposing concept C_2 in one's understanding of concept C_1.

Now, though conceptual reciprocities and formal reciprocities could, broadly speaking, both be said to involve moving from *x* to *y* and then back to *x* again, they are distinct kinds of reciprocity and ought to be distinguished – even though Sextus himself does not do so. For one, formal reciprocity is a feature of *arguments* whereas conceptual reciprocity is, trivially, a feature of concepts. Since the modes of Agrippa are meant to undermine the way in which a dogmatist *argues* for a given belief it seems that it is formal reciprocity upon which the mode of reciprocity, *qua* Agrippan mode, turns. It is for this reason that for the rest of this chapter I shall leave to one side conceptual reciprocities and instead focus on formal reciprocities.

[11] See Frede (1987b), pp.125-50 and, in particular, Barnes (1983b) for further discussion of Sextus' ruminations on causation.

Premise (i)

With these three kinds of reciprocity distinguished from one another we are now in a position to return to the argument laid out at the opening of the chapter and elucidate its first, and central premise, namely that reciprocal arguments (ie formally reciprocal arguments) are unacceptable arguments.[12] The first point to make is that just as Sextus never explicitly refers to infinitely regressive arguments as unacceptable, so he never explicitly refers to reciprocal arguments as unacceptable. However there are a number of passages in the *Outlines* from which it is possible to extract objections to reciprocal arguments. As with the mode of infinite regression two kinds of objection might be distinguished: there is the No-Starting-Point Objection and the Priority Objection. In what follows I argue that it is the Priority Objection and not the No-Starting-Point Objection which underlies (i). First, however, I comment on the No-Starting-Point Objection.

We might recall that Sextus brought a No-Starting-Point Objection against infinitely regressive argumentation.[13] Barnes claims[14] that the same kind of objection is raised against reciprocal arguments, namely that they are objectionable because they have no starting point. The evidence for this claim rests on *PH* 3.22, where Sextus claims that the concept of a cause is presupposed by the concept of effect and

[12] For those amongst the ancients who defended reciprocal argumentation see Barnes (1990a), pp.66-73. The texts Barnes discusses range from commentaries by Ammonius and Elias on Porphyry's *Introduction* (*isag* 4.4-9), to the the rhetorician Hermogenes' *On Style* (*id* I iii) and *Issues* (*stas* III) to Aristotle (*APst* 72b15-18). In addition, Barnes (1976), pp.281-288 takes the Aristotelian passage as a starting point and conjectures that that one of the defenders of reciprocal proof to whom Aristotle refers was the the Academic geometer Menaechmus, whom Proclus in his *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements* (*Comm in Eucl*. 67.8-12) tells us was a student of Eudoxus and an associate of Plato's. I do not engage with any of this material here. For one, my concern is to pinpoint what is *wrong* with reciprocal argumentation. For another, as Barnes himself points out, "A few ancient thinkers did indeed accept reciprocal or circular argumentation. But we do not know exactly what kind of argument they sanctioned, and we do not know what (if anything) they alleged in its defence." (Barnes (1990a), p.73.)

[13] See Chapter 3, pp.96-100.

[14] See Barnes (1990a), p.73: "Once or twice Sextus suggests that with circular reasoning, as with infinite regressions, we have no starting-point."

that the concept of effect is presupposed by the concept of a cause. He then observes,

> ἑκατέρου γὰρ αὐτῶν δεομένου τῆς παρὰ θατέρου πίστεως,
> οὐχ ἕξομεν ἀπὸ τίνος αὐτῶν ἀρξόμεθα τῆς ἐννοίας.
> For each of them needs to be made convincing by the other, and we shall not know from which to begin to form the concept. (*PH* 3.22)

The αὐτῶν refers back to the concepts of cause and effect. The concept of cause needs to be made convincing (δεομένου πίστεως) by the concept of effect and vice versa, and it is to this that Sextus objects.

However, it is not clear that a text like *PH* 3.22 really amounts to a No-Starting-Point Objection. For, strictly speaking, Sextus does not claim that reciprocal arguments have no starting point. For one, he is not discussing an *argument* at all, rather he is discussing as instance where the elucidation of a particular concept (cause) depends for its elucidation on another (effect) and vice versa. Secondly, the objection to this sort of conceptual analysis is *not* that there is no starting point to it but that we do not know (οὐχ ἕξομεν) which of two starting points to begin from, one starting point being the concept of cause, the other being the concept of effect.

A parallel objection in the case of the reciprocal pair of arguments,

(7) P_1; therefore P_2,

and

(8) P_2; therefore P_1,

would be that we do not know whether to start our argument from P_1 or from P_2. But if *this* is the objection to reciprocal arguments which we are meant to extract from *PH* 3.22, then we, along with Barnes, might respond as follows: "Why not start wherever you like? Any point on a circle - as Heraclitus observed - is a starting point".[15] This neat rejoinder, however, is too quick. Consider our pair of reciprocal arguments in (7)

[15] Barnes (1990a), p.73.

and (8). Even if it is true (and it is true) that one is perfectly free to choose to start one's argument from P_1 or from P_2, having done so one will encounter the second, and central, objection which might be raised against reciprocal arguments, namely the Priority Objection.

At several points in the *Outlines*, in the context of discussing the mode of reciprocity, Sextus makes reference to the idea of one item being prior to another. For example, when he is discussing the reciprocal relation between apprehending something (καταλαμβάνειν) and investigating something (ζητεῖν), he writes,

> τῆς μὲν γὰρ ζητήσεως χρῃζούσης τοῦ πρότερον ἀκριβῶς κατειλῆφθαι τὸ μέλλον ζητεῖσθαι καὶ οὕτω ζητεῖσθαι,τῆς δὲ καταλήψεως τοῦ ζητουμένου πράγματος δεομένης πάλιν αὐτῆς τοῦ προεζητῆσθαι πάντως αὐτό...
> For the investigation requires that what is going to be investigated should first have been accurately apprehended and then be investigated; and the apprehension of the object under investigation in turn demands that the object has already been investigated...(*PH* 2.9)

In this passage, priority is signalled by the adverb πρότερον, by the prefix προ-, and a few lines after the passage quoted by the preposition προ.[16] We are told that apprehension is prior to investigation and that investigation is prior to apprehension. This is a particular instance of a general characteristic of reciprocal reasoning. In a case of reciprocal reasoning some claim P_1 is prior to some other claim P_2 and P_2 is prior to P_1. The question is: what is objectionable about this? Clearly much depends on the sense given to the term "priority". Two senses in particular ought to be distinguished: temporal priority on the one hand, and epistemic priority on the other.

Temporal priority is a chronological relation. In a reciprocal scenario you are required *both* to φ before you ψ, *and* to ψ before you φ. Let us return to Socrates and the quadrupeds of *PH* 2.197:

[16] For other instances of the use of the of the prefix προ- to express priority see *PH* 2.68, 199, 202; 3.22; see *PH* 2.20 for another example of priority expressed by the adverb προτερον; and see *PH* 1.117 for priority expressed by the verb περιμενειν.

(1) Socrates is human

(2) Nothing human is a quadruped

therefore,

(3) Socrates is not a quadruped.

Recall that the reciprocity of this particular argument was articulated in terms of the following two arguments:

(A) Γ_1; therefore (2),

and

(B) Γ_2; therefore (3).

Further recall that Γ_1 is the set containing indefinitely many premises of the form (3') Socrates is human and Socrates is not a quadruped; (3'') Plato is human and Plato is not a quadruped; (3''') Aristotle is human and Aristotle is not a quadruped, and so on. (A) is, therefore, an inductive argument. Γ_2, by contrast, is the set containing premises (1) and (2). (B) is, therefore, a deductive argument.

In what sense, then, might temporal priority enter into the explanation of the reciprocity between (A) and (B)? One account might be as follows. On the assumption that the kind of reasoning captured by (A) and by (B) is a psychological process that unfolds through time, during which time the reasoner comes to acquire some new belief,[17] the premises contained in Γ_1 will be believed before (2) and the premises contained in Γ_2 will be believed before (3). But (3) is one of the premises contained in Γ_1 and (2) is one of the premises contained in Γ_2. So we end up with the absurdity that (3) is believed before (2) and (2) is believed before (3).

[17] (2) in the case of argument (A), (3) in the case of argument (B).

That is one way to reconstruct an objection to reciprocal arguments that is grounded in the notion of temporal priority. However there is a limitation to this way of construing the objection. As Barnes notes[18], interpreting the Priority Objection to reciprocal arguments in terms of temporal priority suffices on the assumption that all the sceptic's dogmatic opponents were doing were using reciprocal arguments to justify the acquisition or generation of *new* beliefs. However, justification is not *just* a matter of justifying why we hold new beliefs but also of warranting beliefs one already holds. Consider the quadruped syllogism once more. It seems perfectly plausible that my belief that (2) (and my belief that (1)) warrants my belief that (3), and that my belief that (3) is temporally prior to my belief that (2). I might have been aware that Socrates was not a quadruped by observing that he was not a quadruped before I was aware (as a result of further investigation) that nothing human is a quadruped. Reciprocal arguments, therefore, may be unable to justify the acquisition of new beliefs, but that does not entail that they are unable to warrant beliefs one already holds. If the Priority Objection is to be effective against this latter class of beliefs, it will have to invoke a different sort of priority from the temporal kind. This leads us to a second way of understanding the Priority Objection-in epistemic terms.

Epistemic priority, unlike temporal priority, is *not* a chronological relation. If P_1 is epistemically prior P_2, this says nothing about whether P_1 is believed before P_2 is believed. To give a fully worked out positive characterization of epistemic priority is beyond the scope of this chapter and indeed this thesis.[19] For my purposes, it will suffice to characterise the relation, roughly, as follows. P_1 is

[18] Barnes (1990a), p.75.

[19] Barnes drawing on Aristotle, characterises epistemic priority in a variety of ways. He speaks, for instance of *a* being epistemically prior to *b* if *a* "explains" *b* or makes *b* "rational to believe" or "illuminates" *b*. See Barnes (1990a), p.76. Barnes' characterisation of epistemic priority is heavily influenced by Aristotle, particularly passages like *Post An* 71b16-33. See Chapter 2, p. 75 n. 39. For a detailed recent treatment of the role priority plays in Aristotle's metaphysics see Peramatzis (2011).

epistemically prior to P_2 if and only if P_1 grounds or supports P_2 and it is not the case that P_2 grounds or supports P_1.

What, then, is wrong with reciprocal arguments when the Priority Objection is cashed out in terms of epistemic rather than temporal priority? The problem stems from the fact that the relation of epistemic priority, so characterized, is both asymmetric and transitive.[20] Asymmetry alone is sufficient to undermine *reciprocal* proof; and both asymmetry and transitivity are sufficient to undermine *circular* proof. Reciprocal proof comes to be undermined for the following reason. If P_1 is asymmetrically prior to P_2, then P_1 is prior to P_2 but P_2 is not prior to P_1. But a reciprocal argument, *ex hypothesi*, must allow for *both* P_1 to be prior to P_2 *and* for P_2 to be prior to P_1 which (by asymmetry) is impossible. Circular proof is undermined by combining asymmetry with transitivity, which states that if P_1 is prior to P_2 and P_2 is prior to P_3, then P_1 is prior to P_3. Consequently a circular argument of the form "P_1 therefore P_2, P_2 therefore P_3, P_3 therefore P_1" is undermined because (by transitivity) P_1 is prior to P_3, but (by asymmetry) P_1 is not prior to P_3[21].

The preceding remarks have offered two ways of understanding premise (i) of (REC), namely that reciprocal arguments are unacceptable arguments. The first explains what is unacceptable about reciprocal arguments by invoking the notion of temporal priority, the second by invoking the notion of epistemic priority. Here is not the place to adjudicate between these two interpretations[22], for such adjudication is irrelevant to my main concern, which is to determine, firstly, whether it is reasonable,

[20] Again a version of this objection to circular arguments is to be found in Aristotle. See *APst* 72b25-73a20.

[21] See Irwin (1988), p.125-7 for further detail regarding the application of asymmetry and transitivity to reciprocal and circular arguments.

[22] Though I, along with Barnes, have suggested that if we construe the Priority Objection in terms of temporal priority, it is only effective against a limited class of beliefs, namely those beliefs we come to acquire on the basis of reciprocal argument. On the other hand, construing the objection in terms of epistemic priority, undermines any belief that is warranted by a reciprocal argument, whether or not the belief in question was *acquired* on the basis of a reciprocal argument.

on textual grounds, to attribute to Sextus a premise like (i) and secondly, whether the sceptic, by his own lights, is entitled to accept something like (i).

The textual issue is quickly dealt with. I have already noted that Sextus never explicitly formulates a premise like (i) and so at best one can claim that (i) is implicit is his procedure, given what he does say. Though I have argued that the main textual evidence for attributing to Sextus the No-Starting-Point Objection, namely *PH* 3.22 is unconvincing, the evidence for attributing to Sextus the Priority Objection is more compelling. Texts like *PH* 1.117, 2.9, 20, 68, 199, 202 and, indeed, 3.22 all make reference to the notion of priority in contexts where the mode of reciprocity is being used. However, it should also be emphasised that at no point does Sextus explicitly formulate the Priority Objection in the way in which I have done above.

But leaving aside the question as to whether there is sufficient textual evidence to attribute something like (i) to Sextus, there is a further question that needs to be confronted, namely, whether Sextus, *qua* sceptic, was in a position to believe (i). Once again it will be useful to approach this question from the perspective of whether the sceptic is able to believe (i) on the basis on either a Barnes-Burnyeat or a Frede-Morison view.[23]

Clearly (i) is a premise which the sceptic, on the Barnes-Burnyeat view, is unable to hold. For it is a quintessentially philosophical claim and makes reference to a number of items (for example, reciprocal arguments) which the sceptic would consider unclear (ἀδήλα). One might, however, think matters are less straightforward when we come to the Frede-Morison view. For it is not clear from the text on what grounds the sceptic holds (i). I have suggested above two possible grounds someone might have for maintaining (i) – one which turns on a temporal notion of priority,

[23] See Chapter 1, pp. 35-7 for the distinction between these two views.

another which turns on an epistemic one. Now if either of these were, in fact, the grounds on which a sceptic maintained (i), then, by Frede's criterion, the sceptic would be unable to maintain (i). After all to maintain (i) on the basis of the Priority Objection (whether understood temporally or epistemically) is to maintain (i) on the basis of a reasoned argument, and holding beliefs on these grounds, is, on the Frede-Morison view, ruled out. Of course, it is logically possible that the sceptic believe (i) on the basis of no rational considerations whatsoever. On this picture the sceptic involuntarily assents to (i) just as he involuntarily assents to the claim that it is day (when it is day), and so is blameless in believing (i) on the Frede-Morison view. But of course, even if we grant this,[24] the sceptic will still be unable to maintain (i) on the Barnes-Burnyeat view.

Premises (**) and (ii)

As for premises (**) and (ii), analogous issues arise to those which arose when the counterparts to these premises were considered in connection with the mode of infinite regression, so I deal with these briefly. Regarding the extent to which they are grounded in the text, Sextus never explicitly commits himself to either (**) or (ii). Both premises are, however, needed for the argument to reach its conclusion. (**) and (ii), then, should be viewed as premises to which Sextus is, at best, implicitly committed.

As to their respective plausibility, (**) is trivially true. If A is an unacceptable argument for P, then, trivially, it is not rational for me to accept P on the

[24] And there is reason to think we should not grant this. After all the belief that it is day is very different in kind to the belief that reciprocal arguments are unacceptable. For one, the latter belief is much more abstract and complex than the former. Whether the abstractness and complexity of such a proposition is sufficient to render implausible the idea of someone's involuntarily assenting to it, is a question I do not pursue here.

basis of A. And if A is the *only* argument I have for P, then, equally trivially, it is not rational for me to accept P. (ii), on the other hand, is less obviously true. Indeed, it seems most *unlikely* that the *only* argument some dogmatist has for a particular claim will be a reciprocal argument. However, (ii) becomes much more plausible when the mode of reciprocity is considered not in isolation but in combination with the other Agrippan modes (in particular infinite regression and hypothesis). For, in this context some dogmatist will only be able to offer a reciprocal argument for some claim he believes in the sense that all other possible arguments forms he could offer are (for various reasons) unavailable to him.[25]

Regarding the question as to whether a sceptic is able to believe either of these premises, it seems that, on a Barnes-Burnyeat view, *both* (ii) and (**) will be ruled out for the sceptic, since they both make reference to those quintessentially unclear items which are the proper object of study of the philosophical logician – reciprocal arguments. And, on a Frede-Morison view, though it seems perfectly possible for the sceptic to believe a claim like (ii), if (ii) merely strikes the sceptic as being the case and is not held on the basis of any antecedent piece of reasoning, it is more difficult to tell a similar story for (**). For, given the content of (**), it seems the sort of claim which would be held on the basis of further reasons – perhaps connected with the requirements of rationality and what some epistemic subject ought to do to fulfil those requirements. But if (**) is held on the basis of reasons such as these (or indeed on the basis of any reasons whatsoever), then, on a Frede-Morison view, (**) is beyond the sceptic's doxastic ken.

[25] For further detail on why this is the case see Chapter 6, pp. 209-11.

The Conclusion

As for the conclusion of (REC), the first point to make is in connection with its form. Like the conclusion of (INF), the conclusion of (REC) is that S should not accept P. Sextus, on the other hand is quite clear at *PH* 1.164 that the modes of Agrippa (the mode of reciprocity included) are meant to promote the suspension of judgement. And as noted before, S not accepting P is different from S suspending judgement over P. For, although S suspending judgement over P entails S not accepting P, S not accepting P does *not* entail S suspending judgement over P. S suspends judgement over P only if S both does not accept P *and* does not accept not-P (having considered whether P).

The mode of reciprocity, so understood, *can* however lead to a suspensive conclusion in the following way.[26] Imagine a situation in which some dogmatist puts forward some claim, P, and is then trapped by a sceptic into offering a reciprocal argument for P.[27] He is then confronted by (or formulates to himself) an argument like (REC) and as a result concludes that he should not accept P. However, we are, for the sake of argument, also supposing that our dogmatist does *not* suspend judgement over P. Let us then suppose that he accepts not-P (for whatever reason). Now our dogmatist has simply introduced another claim which the sceptic can attack. Just as with P, so with not-P. Our dogmatist will be trapped by the sceptic into offering a reciprocal argument for not-P, will frame to himself an analogous version of (REC), with "not-P" substituted for "P", and will thereby come to accept not-P. So the first application of (REC) – let us call it (REC_P) – leads the dogmatist to conclude that he should not accept P. And the second application of (REC) – let us call it

[26] My remarks here are analogous to my remarks regarding the form of the conclusion of (INF). See Chapter 3, pp.109-13.
[27] The mechanics of the trapping will be discussed in Chapter 6.

($REC_{not\text{-}P}$) – leads the dogmatist to conclude that he should not accept not-P. The aggregate conclusion is that he should not accept P and not accept not-P, which is just to say that he should suspend judgement over P.

However, as with the premises of the argument, it is equally problematic to see how, on either a Barnes-Burnyeat view or a Frede-Morison view, a sceptic could believe the conclusion of (REC).[28] On a Frede-Morison view the conclusion of (REC) is clearly ruled out as something a sceptic could believe for, *ex hypothesi*, it is a claim that is held on the basis of various reasons- namely the reasons set out in (REC). It is less clear whether the conclusion is also barred on a Barnes-Burnyeat view. After all, to claim of some epistemic subject, S, that he or she should not accept some proposition P does not, on the face of it, involve reference to any mysterious philosophical items (like, for example, "reciprocal arguments"). However, a closer look complicates matters. The "should", for example, is presumably an epistemic "should": to say that S should not accept P in this sense is to say that it is not rational for S to accept P. But if this is what is meant by the "should", then the conclusion of (REC) makes reference to what it is rational for some epistemic subject to do in a particular set of circumstances. And one might think that in making this kind of reference to rationality the conclusion of (REC) *does,* count as a philosophic (in particular an epistemic) tenet, and as such, is not the kind of claim a sceptic can, on the Barnes-Burnyeat view, believe.

[28] Or indeed any of (REC)'s instances like (REC_P) and ($REC_{not\text{-}P}$).

A Sceptical Mode of Reciprocity

The preceding remarks have suggested that a sceptic could not come to suspend judgement on the basis of the mode of reciprocity by framing to himself an argument like (REC). For, whether on a Barnes-Burnyeat view or a Frede-Morison view, the sceptic will not be able to assent to all of the premises of (REC). Indeed, he will not be able to assent to the conclusion either. We might therefore call (REC) a dogmatic mode of reciprocity.

However, as with the mode of infinite regression it is possible to sketch a sceptical version of the mode of reciprocity, taking as its starting point (once again) the sceptic's method of equipollence. Confronted by some dogmatist who offers a reciprocal argument, A, for some claim, P, the sceptic exercises his equipollent ability and opposes to that argument, a rival reciprocal argument A*. It is important to note that having constructed and opposed his rival reciprocal argument A* to the dogmatist's A, the sceptic's work, *qua* practitioner of the mode of reciprocity is done – he has discharged his sceptical function by exercising his equipollent ability. However, if one *were* to ask the further question as to how the sceptic comes to suspend judgement when confronted by two arguments such as A and A*, the answer will be the same as was given in the preceding chapters.

The sceptic suspends judgement not because he frames to himself an argument like (REC), which would involve the holding of various theoretical beliefs to which he is not entitled. Rather, the sceptic suspends judgement, in such circumstances, because he has developed a psychological disposition to do so. In terms of the distinction introduced in Chapter 1, the sceptic suspends judgement out

of causal rather than rational necessity.[29] Of course, prior to acquiring this disposition to suspend judgement, during his proto-sceptical phase, the sceptic *will* suspend judgement out of rational necessity. That is to say, he will suspend judgement because he is an epistemically sensitive agent: when faced with two equipollent reciprocal arguments with incompatible conclusions he will suspend judgement because that is the reasonable thing to do and he because he is determined to do the reasonable thing. In this respect, the proto-sceptic comes to suspend judgement by framing to himself an argument analgous to (HYP) and to (INF*).[30] Confronted by two reciprocal arguments with incompatible conclusions, P and P*, the proto-sceptic might reason as follows:

(REC*) (i) If S is convincing in offering a reciprocal argument for P, then S* will be equally convincing in offering a reciprocal argument for P*

(ii) S cannot assent to both P and to P*

(iii) S cannot assent to one of P or P*

therefore,

(iv) S must assent to neither P nor to P*.

Now, (REC*) is not the means by which a mature sceptic, who lacks all theoretical beliefs might come to suspend judgement. After all, were the mature sceptic to frame to himself an argument like (REC*), then he would incur a number of illicit theoretical beliefs. For example premise (i) of (REC*) would, on a Barnes-Burnyeat view be ruled out for him, being as it is a logical-cum-epistemological

[29] See Chapter 1, pp. 46-50.
[30] See Chapter 3, p.118.

claim, and equally the conclusion of the argument would, on a Frede-Morison view, be ruled out for him since, *ex hypothesi*, it is held on the basis of reasons –namely the reasons set out in (REC*).[31] Nevertheless, it is plausible to think that it is in virtue of the fact that the proto-sceptic does, on numerous occasions, reason to a suspensive conclusion by means of something like (REC*), that he comes to acquire a disposition to suspend judgement when confronted by a pair of equipollent reciprocal arguments, and thus, *qua* mature sceptic, that he suspends judgement out of psychological habit without relying on any illicit theoretical beliefs.[32]

Concluding Remarks

The morals to be drawn from this chapter are similar to those of the previous one, so I shall be brief in drawing them. Just as the sceptical and dogmatic versions of the mode of infinite regression[33] have different logical forms, so too do (REC*) and (REC): whereas (REC) does not turn on any equipollent considerations, (REC*) very much does. Like (INF), (REC) is, at best, implicitly supported by Sextus' text. Just as (INF) is a dogmatic version of the mode of infinite regression, in the sense that it turns on a number of theoretical claims which a sceptic could not hold, so too is (REC). And, finally, just as (INF*) shares an equipollent structure with (HYP) and is thereby a version of the mode on the basis of which a sceptic might come to suspend judgement, so the same goes for (REC*).

[31] See pp.118-9 for analogous remarks about the first premise and conclusion of (INF*).
[32] As with (INF*), (REC*) is also a possible route by which a dogmatist might come to suspend judgement, though (REC*) will only move a dogmatist who is not already hostile ro reciprocal argumentation. Presumably those dogmatists who are hostile to reciprocal argumentation will be moved by the kind of reasoning set out in (REC). For further details on which ancient dogmatists were amenable to reciprocal argumentation see above p.130 n.12.
[33] Namely (INF*) and (INF) respectively.

The Mode of Relativity

The previous chapters concerned themselves with articulating the way in which the modes of disagreement, hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity gave rise to the suspension of judgement. The aim of this chapter is to try to gain some clarity on the content and function of the mode of relativity. I first attempt to clear up some of the textual complexities surrounding the mode - for more than one mode of relativity appears in the pages of the *Outlines*. Next, I consider its philosophical content. Finally, I address the question as to how the mode is meant to relate to the other four Agrippan modes I have so far considered and argue that the mode of relativity is incompatible with one of those modes – namely the mode of disagreement.

Modes of Relativity

One unavoidably curious feature unique to the mode of relativity is that in the *Outlines* it is presented to us in more than one guise. In his discussion of the Agrippan modes Sextus introduces us to relativity as the third mode out of five:

> ὁ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρός τι, καθὼς προειρήκαμεν, ἐν ᾧ πρὸς μὲν τὸ κρῖνον καὶ τὰ συνθεωρούμενα τοῖον ἢ τοῖον φαίνεται τὸ ὑποκείμενον, ὁποῖον δὲ ἔστι πρὸς τὴν φύσιν ἐπέχομεν.
> 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. (PH 1.167)

The first striking thing about this presentation of the mode is that it, unlike any of the other Agrippan modes to which Sextus introduces us at *PH* 1.164-169, contains a back reference (καθὼς προειρήκαμεν) to an earlier part of the *Outlines*. The reference must

be to the eighth of the ten Aenesideman modes (*PH* 1.135-144): both passages refer to a "mode of relativity" (τρόπος ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρός τι) and both passages distinguish between "that which is relative to the judger" (πρὸς μὲν τὸ κρῖνον) and "that which is relative to the things observed together with it" (πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα).[1]

So, in the *Outlines*, Sextus presents us with the mode of relativity twice, firstly in the context of the Aenesideman modes and secondly in the context of the Agrippan modes. Sextus does not seem to be unduly concerned about this repetition. Indeed, the back-reference seems to suggest that Sextus thought that his brief account at *PH* 1.167 was to be fleshed out by looking to his earlier account at *PH* 1.135-144. Be that as it may, there is still a need to explain this double occurrence of the mode.

One issue that some have puzzled over is whether the mode of relativity was Aenesideman in origin and then subsequently incorporated by Agrippa into his set of five modes as mode three or whether the mode was initially Agrippan and then incorporated by Sextus (or Sextus' source) into the Aenesideman modes as mode eight. One reason for favouring the second hypothesis is that relativity as it appears in the Aenesideman taxonomy is unlike any of the other nine modes there presented.[2] As a sample, the first Aenesideman mode (*PH* 1.40-78), collects antitheses like,

x appears *F* to an animal of kind K

x appears *F** to an animal of kind K*,

[1] I shall say more about this distinction below.

[2] Another is that when we look beyond the text of Sextus to Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Philosophers* (IX.87-8) and Philo's *On Drunkenness* (*de ebr.* 186-8) we find versions of the Aenesideman mode of relativity which are different in structure from the mode we get in Sextus. It is of course possible that some sceptical thinker some time after Agrippa and before Philo and Diogenes removed the originally Agrippan mode from the Aenesideman ten and replaced it with their own mode which Philo and Diogenes subsequently included in their taxonomies, but this seems less likely than the alternative, namely that what appears in Philo and Diogenes is the original Aenesideman mode, which Sextus replaced with the Agrippan mode. See Barnes (1988-90), p.11 for further discussion.

the fourth (*PH* 1.100-117) antitheses like,

x appears *F* to S in circumstance C

x appears *F** to S in circumstance C*,*

and the seventh (*PH* 1.145-163) antitheses like,

x appears *F* to S in quantity Q

x appears *F** to S in quantity Q*,*

where K and K* designate different kinds, C and C* different circumstances, Q and Q* different quantities and *F* and *F** incompatible properties.[3] The Aenesideman sceptic then uses these kinds of antitheses, coupled with several further assumptions, to reach a state of suspended judgement. Take the antithesis about circumstances. Given

x appears *F* to S in circumstance C

x appears *F** to S in circumstance C*,*

where the *F*-appearance and the *F**-appearance are incompatible , the Aenesideman would argue, something like the following:

(a) Either *x* is really *F* or *x* is really *F** but not both

but,

[3] These and the rest of the ten Aenesideman modes are discussed at length in Annas and Barnes (1985)

(b) There is no way of determining whether *x* is really *F* or whether *x* is really *F**

therefore,

(c) I am compelled to suspend judgement as to whether *x* is really *F* or really *F**.[4]

I do not wish to here get entangled in the thorny issues that are raised by this kind of argument. For instance, I leave to one side what justification, if any, an Aenesideman might give to support so *prima facie* radical a thesis as (b), and do not examine whether it is warranted to assume (a) on the basis of the antitheses outlined above. Nor do I ask whether "compelled" in (c) encodes a purely psychological compulsion on the part of the Aenesideman to suspend judgement or whether it points to a more robust normative requirement of rationality.[5]

Sextus himself is admirably circumspect about both the exhaustiveness and the logical power of the ten modes. He writes,

> οὔτε περὶ τοῦ πλήθους οὔτε περὶ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτῶν διαβεβαιούμενος· ἐνδέχεται γὰρ αὐτοὺς καὶ σαθροὺς εἶναι καὶ πλείους τῶν λεχθησομένων.
> But I make no affirmation either about their number or about their power- they may be unsound, and there may be more than those I shall describe. (*PH* 1.35)

One might add that in addition to not being exhaustive, the ten modes are not mutually exclusive. In principle, it seems that one and the same thing could appear *F* to an animal of kind K, appear *F** to an animal of kind K*, and also appear *F* to S in quantity Q and appear *F** to S in quantity Q*. As a result one might follow Barnes

[4] This is the standard reconstruction of the logical structure of the Aenesideman modes. See, for example, Annas and Barnes (1985), p.25, Hankinson (1995), p.156 and Striker (1996a), p.120. For an alternative treatment see Morison (2011), pp.289-293.

[5] See above, pp.41-45 for some remarks on this distinction. For the most recent example of the dialectic between the psychological compulsion reading and the rational requirement reading see Palmer (2000) and Perin (2010).

and say that the ten Aenesideman modes point to ten of the indices by which any occurrence of the verb "appears" must be qualified.[6] The general form of antithesis encoded by the Aenesideman modes would then be something like:

x appears F at $I_1, I_2, \ldots I_{10}$

x appears F^* at $I^*_1, I^*_2, \ldots I^*_{10.}$

But this is not the place to pursue such subtleties. I only wish to stress two features of the modes of Aenesidemus. Firstly, they are predominantly illustrative: they collate a great number of examples of the kinds of antitheses mentioned above, providing a sceptic with material upon which he might draw in his dialectic with his anti-sceptical opponent. Secondly, they reach the conclusion that for any x which appears F to S at I_i and F^* to S at I^*_i, S is compelled to suspend judgement as to whether x is really F or F^*.

In contrast to these nine Aenesideman modes, the eighth mode, that of relativity, has a very different structure. What it has in common with the other Aenesideman modes is that its aim is to bring about suspension of judgement with regard to the way things are by nature. This is what both *PH* 1.167 and *PH* 1.135 tell us is the outcome of the mode.[7] However, the steps by which this conclusion is reached in the case of the mode of relativity differ greatly from the kind of argument that is employed to reach the same suspensive conclusion in the case of the other nine Aenesideman modes[8]. It is the structure of this Aenesidemo-Agrippan mode of relativity to which I now turn.

[6] Barnes (1988-90), p.14
[7] *PH* 1.167 is quoted above, p.144; *PH* 1.135 is quoted on the next page.
[8] The point is emphasised by Annas and Barnes (1985), p.138ff.

Sextus does not present so much as a skeleton of an argument for his conclusion in *PH* 1.167, so it is to the earlier passage of *PH* 1.135-144 that we must turn, and to which Sextus himself invites us to turn, to fill out the picture. The nerve of Sextus' argument is to be found in the opening lines of the section to which I have just referred. There Sextus writes:

> Ὄγδοός ἐστι τρόπος ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρός τι, καθ' ὃν συνάγομεν ὅτι, ἐπεὶ πάντα ἐστὶ πρός τι, περὶ τοῦ τίνα ἐστὶν ἀπολύτως καὶ ὡς πρὸς τὴν φύσιν ἐφέξομεν.
> The eighth mode is the one deriving from relativity by which we conclude that, since everything is relative we shall suspend judgement as to what things are independently and in their nature. (*PH* 1.135)

Sextus is claiming,

> (1) If everything is relative, then we shall suspend judgement about the nature of everything.

The bulk of the rest of the section (*PH* 1.136-139) sees him providing arguments for the truth of the antecedent of the conditional, namely

> (2) Everything is relative,

thereby concluding, via *modus ponens*,

> (3) We shall suspend judgement about the nature of everything.[9]

[9] In the Introduction, pp.9-10 I claimed that one of the aims of this thesis was to see how far it was possible (*pace* Frede (1987c), p.204) to take the occurrences of the first persons in Sextus at face value - that is, to take them as referring to sceptics who lack theoretical beliefs. In the case of the mode of relativity I am in agreement with the Fredean line. A plausible way to make sense of the first-person locutions we get at *PH* 1.135 (συνάγομεν, ἐφέξομεν) is to interpret them dialectically: when Sextus claims "we shall suspend judgement about the nature of everything" I take him to mean "we sceptics, who are temporarily and for purely dialectical reasons taking on the assumptions of our dogmatic

Sextus does not spend any time at all in the *PH* 1.135-144 passage arguing for (1). But before moving on to consider the arguments Sextus gives for (2) it is worthwhile dwelling on whether it is possible to glean any evidence Sextus might have had for thinking (1). The first point to note is that one need not think that the use of the future indicative ἐφέξομεν implies that there is no normative force behind the suspension of judgement in (1). From his remarks at the end of the section, it is clear that Sextus thinks that the relativity of everything gives his dogmatic opponent reason to suspend judgement with regard to what things are in their nature. He writes, at *PH* 1.140,

> πλὴν ἀλλ᾽ οὕτω παριστάντων ἡμῶν ὅτι πάντα ἐστὶ πρός τι, δῆλόν ἐστι λοιπόν, ὅτι ὁποῖον ἔστιν ἕκαστον τῶν ὑποκειμένων κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν καὶ εἰλικρινῶς λέγειν οὐ δυνησόμεθα, ἀλλ᾽ ὁποῖον φαίνεται ἐν τῷ πρός τι.< ᾧ > ἀκολουθεῖ τὸ περὶ τῆς φύσεως τῶν πραγμάτων δεῖν ἡμᾶς ἐπέχειν.
> So, since we have established in this way that everything is relative, it is clear that we shall not be able to say what each existing object is like in its own nature and purely, but only what it appears to be like relative to something. It follows that we must suspend judgement about the nature of objects. (*PH* 1.140)

The line of thought seems to be this. If everything is relative, we (as dogmatists) can only make the claims of the kind "*x* appears *F* relative to S", and we cannot make claims of the kind "*x* really is *F*". The fact that we can only make claims of the kind "*x* appears *F* relative to S" and that we cannot make claims of the kind "*x* really is *F*", is sufficient reason for us to suspend judgement with regards to whether *x* really is *F*. Why it is that we can only make claims of the kind "*x* appears *F* relative to S" and why we cannot make claims of the kind "*x* really is *F*" is a question to postpone until we have discussed how Sextus understood the notion of relativity.

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opponents, shall suspend judgement about the nature of everything". This is not the only respect in which the mode of relativity is a *sui generis* Agrippan mode, as will become clear.

The important point to note here is that Sextus is offering his dogmatic opponent a reason for why he should suspend judgement with regards to whether *x* really is *F*. The reason is this: the fact that everything is relative places a constraint on the types of utterances that we make, and this in turn places a constraint on what we are justified in believing. The underlying assumption seems to be that what we cannot justifiably assert we cannot justifiably believe. I leave to one side discussion of the plausibility of this line of reasoning. The point to emphasise is that a natural way to understand Sextus here is to be making a normative claim about what we, as dogmatists, *should* say or think given that everything is relative.

But if the plausibility of (1) calls out for defending, the plausibility of (2) cries out for it. Sextus is more forthcoming in offering an argument in favour of (2) than he is in the case of (1). He first clarifies what he takes himself to mean by (2) by writing,

> ἐκεῖνο δὲ χρὴ γινώσκειν ὅτι ἐνταῦθα, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις, τῷ 'ἔστι' καταχρώμεθα ἀντὶ τοῦ 'φαίνεται', δυνάμει τοῦτο λέγοντες 'πρός τι πάντα φαίνεται.'
> It should be recognised that here, as elsewhere, we use "is" loosely, in the sense of "appears", implicitly saying "everything appears relative". (*PH* 1.135)

Sextus therefore takes himself to be defending the claim that everything appears relative[10] rather than everything is relative.[11] He then goes on to offer three different

[10] There are different ways of interpreting the claim that everything appears relative. For instance, "Every appearance is relative" (sense 1) and "Everything appears to be relative" (sense 2). In sense 2 the domain is unrestricted, in sense 1 restricted. In sense 2 relativity characterises the way in which everything appears to be, namely relative; in sense 1 relativity does not characterise the way in which everything appears to be. Indeed, it does not even characterise the way in which appearances appear to be; if it did we would end up with the claim that every appearance appears relative. Rather, sense 1 says of every appearance that it satisfies the predicate "is relative". Barnes (1988-90) seems to construe (2') in the first sense. But it should be noted that the *PH* 1.135 passage, at the very least, does not rule out the second sense.

[11] Noting these qualifications as to how (1) and (2) are to be understood, for the rest of this chapter I shall speak in terms of (1) and (2) rather than e.g. (1') If everything appears relative, then we should suspend judgement about the nature of everything and (2') Everything appears relative. This is for the simple reason that, throughout his scattered discussion of relativity in the *Outlines*, Sextus chooses to express himself in terms of (1) and (2) rather than (1') and (2') so it is more convenient to use the former pair of premises than the latter. However, it what follows it should be kept in mind that Sextus'

sub-arguments for (2). In the next three sections I briefly outline how I take these arguments to be structured. Then, in the subsequent section, I offer some criticisms of them by examining what concept of relativity each invokes - for each sub-argument invokes a different kind of relativity. The first sub-argument draws on the kind of Aenesideman material already discussed. The second and third sub-arguments offer new non-Aenesideman arguments for (2).

Sub-Argument 1

The first sub-argument occurs at *PH* 1.136

> ὅτι δὲ πάντα ἐστὶ πρός τι, ἐπελογισάμεθα μὲν καὶ ἔμπροσθεν, οἷον κατὰ τὸ κρῖνον, ὅτι πρὸς τόδε τὸ ζῷον καὶ τόνδε τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τήνδε τὴν αἴσθησιν ἕκαστον φαίνεται καὶ πρὸς τοιάνδε περίστασιν, κατὰ δὲ τὰ συνθεωρούμενα, ὅτι πρὸς τήνδε τὴν ἐπιμιξίαν καὶ τόνδε τὸν τρόπον καὶ τὴν σύνθεσιν τήνδε καὶ τὴν ποσότητα καὶ τὴν θέσιν ἕκαστον φαίνεται.
> We have in fact already deduced that everything is relative, i.e. with respect to the subject judging (since each thing appears relative to a given animal and a given human and a given sense and a given circumstance), and with respect to the things observed together with it (since each thing appears relative to a given admixture and a given composition and quantity and position). (*PH* 1.136)[12]

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remarks at *PH* 1.140 do not rule out a normative interpretation of (1), and that his remarks at *PH* 1.135 positively stipulate that by (2) he means (2').

[12] The *PH* 1.136 passage is probably corrupt. Mutschmann and Mau print "and a given mode" (καὶ τόνδε τὸν τρόπον) (MSS) between the reference to a given mixture (τήνδε τὴν ἐπιμιξίαν) and a given composition (τὴν σύνθεσιν τήνδε); Pappenheim changes τρόπον to τόπον; and Kayser excises the whole phrase. As Annas and Barnes (1985), p. 186 note, Pappenheim's alteration has the rather strange consequence that Sextus misses out one of three elements that compose the fifth mode – ie "intervals"(διαστήματα) - but mentions the other two - ie "place" (τόπον) and, albeit out of order, "position" (θέσις). As for going down the route of Mutschmann and Mau, reference to "a given mode" makes no sense given the fact that Sextus is listing the first seven Aenesideman modes (and still leaves us with the problem of the out of place reference to θέσις). Both Annas and Barnes (2000), p.35 and Hankinson (1995), p.342 n.24 favour excision, with Hankinson conjecturing that the phrase is a bit of marginalia that was added by a commentator who noticed that, in the early Aenesideman taxonomy, the eighth mode itself figured in one of the subdivisions. But even excision (albeit the lesser of three evils), leaves us with a passage which makes reference to the first seven Aenesideman modes, but only to one of the three elements that compose the fifth mode ie "position" (θέσις), a reference which, ironically, is made in the wrong place.

It is clear that Sextus thinks that in this passage he has provided an argument for the claim that everything is relative (πάντα ἐστὶ πρός τι). However, it is less clear what the premises of this argument are meant to be. The passage draws on the results of those seven Aenesideman modes that Sextus has already covered. Since the mode of relativity is the eighth mode it is unsurprising that Sextus does not here mention either mode nine (the mode of varying frequency) or mode ten (the mode of varying custom). But what exactly is the argument that is being presented?

The lines immediately preceding the passage in question see Sextus distinguishing between two ways in which something could be said to be relative (τοῦτο δὲ διχῶς λέγεται). A thing might be "relative to the judger" (πρὸς μὲν τὸ κρῖνον) or "relative to the things observed together with it" (πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα). What this distinction captures I take to be the following. Consider the pair of propositions

(A) *x* is *F*

and

(B) *x* is *F**.

Now, given that *F* and *F** are incompatible properties, as things stand it cannot be the case that both (A) and (B) are true. But there are two ways in which pairs of propositions like (A) and (B) *can* be qualified such that it *is* possible for both (A) and (B) to be true. And the two ways such a pair of propositions can be qualified is captured by Sextus' πρὸς τὸ κρῖνον...πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα distinction.

Sextus helps clarify his point by referring back to those of the Aenesideman modes he has already outlined in *PH* 1.35-134. The πρὸς τὸ κρῖνον

case involves relativising (A) and (B) either to a different epistemic subjects, or to one and the same epistemic subject under different descriptions. For instance, in the case of modes 1 and 2 (concerned with variations among animals and among human beings) (A) is relativised to one epistemic subject and (B) to another epistemic subject. In the case of modes 3 and 4 there is only one epistemic subject, but (A) and (B) are relativised either to different sense-modalities of that one subject or to different circumstances that that subject finds himself in. By contrast, in the πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα case, the truth of both (A) and (B) is preserved not by subject-based qualification, but by qualification of *x*. For instance in the case of mode 5 it is not the case that *x* appears *F* to S and *x* appears *F** to S, but rather it is *x*-in-position-P that appears *F* to S and it is *x*-in-position-P* that appears *F* to S. Similarly, in the case of mode 6, the oppositions are of the form *x*-in-mixture-M appears *F* to S and *x*-in-mixture-M* appears *F** to S, and in the case of mode 7 they are of the form *x*-in-quantity-Q appears *F* to S and *x*-in-quantity-Q* appears *F** to S.

With this understanding of the πρὸς τὸ κρῖνον - πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα, distinction, Sextus can argue for the thesis that everything is relative in the following way

> [(1a) Everything is either relative πρὸς τὸ κρῖνον or relative πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα.][13]
>
> (2a) What is relative πρὸς τὸ κρῖνον is relative.
>
> (3a) What is relative πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα is relative.

therefore,

[13] Is this disjunction to be interpreted exclusively or inclusively? At *PH* 1.38 Sextus states that there was a third class alongside "relative to the judger" and "relative to the things observed together with it", namely the combination of both classes, which is strong evidence for thinking that Sextus did not think the two classes were mutually exclusive. Furthermore in the *PH* 1.38 passage Sextus classifies modes 5 and 6 in this combined class, and mode 7 in the class "relative to the things observed together with it", in contrast to his taxonomy in *PH* 1.136 where modes 5, 6 and 7 all fall under the class "relative to the things observed together with it".

(2) Everything is relative.

Of the premises, (1a) is not in the text[14]. However, some claim to the effect that everything is relative in one or other of these ways is necessary if we are to conclude, as Sextus does conclude, to the universally quantified proposition that everything is relative. Premisses (2a) and (3a) are little more than tautologies, and I take it that they are implied by the οἷον κατὰ τὸ κρῖνον... ἕκαστον φαίνεται clause.

Sub-Argument 2

The second argument Sextus gives follows quickly on the former's heels. Sextus tells us that this argument is ἰδίᾳ in a way in which the preceding argument failed to be. But this is not meant to capture anything more than the fact that the argument Sextus now proposes does not draw on material he has already covered in the *Outlines*. The text reads:

> καὶ ἰδίᾳ δὲ ἐνδέχεται συνάγειν ὅτι πάντα ἐστὶ πρός τι, τόνδε τὸν τρόπον· πότερον διαφέρει τῶν πρός τι τὰ κατὰ διαφορὰν ἢ οὔ; εἰ μὲν οὐ διαφέρει, καὶ αὐτὰ πρός τι ἐστίν· εἰ δὲ διαφέρει, ἐπεὶ πᾶν τὸ διαφέρον πρός τι ἐστίν (λέγεται γὰρ πρὸς ἐκεῖνο οὗ διαφέρει), πρός τι ἐστὶ τὰ κατὰ διαφοράν.
> We can also conclude in particular that everything is relative in the following way. Do relatives differ or not from things which are in virtue of a difference? If they do not differ, then the latter are relative too. But if they do differ, then, since everything which differs is relative (it is spoken of relative to what it differs from), things in virtue of a difference will be relative. (*PH* 1.137)

One might extract the following kind of argument from it:

[(1b) Everything is either relative or non-relative]

[14] Hence my enclosing it in square brackets.

[(2b) Either non-relatives[15] do not differ from relatives or non-relatives do differ from relatives.] [16]

(3b) If non-relatives do not differ from relatives, then non-relatives are relatives.

(4b) If non-relatives do differ from relatives, then non-relatives are relatives.

therefore,

(2) Everything is relative.

Once again we have had to supply a number of premises which are not explicitly stated in the text in order to reach the universally quantified conclusion. (1b) plays the same role in this argument as (1a) does in sub-argument 1, though it should be noted that whereas (1a) draws a contrast between two ways of being relative, namely being relative πρὸς τὸ κρῖνον and being relative πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα, (1b) draws a contrast between that which is relative and that which is not relative. (2b) though not stated in that form in the text is implied by Sextus' question, πότερον διαφέρει τῶν πρός τι τὰ κατὰ διαφορὰν ἢ οὔ;. (3b) and (4b) are clearly stated by Sextus in the text.[17]

[15] Throughout the argument, whenever I speak of "non-relatives", I mean to refer to τὰ κατὰ διαφορὰν, which literally translates as "things in virtue of a difference". I choose to refer to them as "non-relatives" because this is in fact what Sextus means by the expression (see for example *M* 8.161-2, a passage I discuss below on p.156), and because it makes the argument as a whole more intelligible.
[16] Once again the square brackets signal that this premise is not explicitly stated in the Greek.
[17] Sub-argument 2 is in fact the first of four arguments Sextus offers at *PH* 1.137-139, but as both Barnes and Annas (1985), p.140 and Barnes (1988-90), p.17 observe, all four arguments have the same structure. That is to say, all four arguments turn on the idea that for any putatively non-relative individual, there is some relative predicate they satisfy: "...differs from..." in the case of the first arugment (ie sub-argument 2); "...is a genus of...", and "...is a species of..." in the case of the second argument (*PH* 1.138); "...is a signifier of...", and "...is signified by..." in the case of the third argument (*PH* 1.138); and "....is similar to...", "...is dissimilar to...", "...is equal to..." and "...is unequal to..." in the case of the fourth argument (*PH* 1.139). I follow Barnes' and Annas' lead in focusing on the first of these arguments. My analysis of how the argument is meant to work follows below, pp.161-4.

Sub-Argument 3

The third, and final argument Sextus offers is as follows:

> καὶ ὁ λέγων δὲ μὴ πάντα εἶναι πρός τι βεβαιοῖ τὸ πάντα εἶναι πρός τι· καὶ αὐτὸ γὰρ τὸ πάντα εἶναι πρός τι πρὸς ἡμᾶς εἶναι δείκνυσι, καὶ οὐ καθόλου, δι᾽ ὧν ἡμῖν ἐναντιοῦται.
> And anyone who says that not everything is relative confirms that everything is relative. For by opposing us he shows that the very relativity of everything is relative to us and not universal. (*PH* 1.139)

Sextus here argues that anyone who denies that everything is relative, in so doing, merely confirms the thesis that everything is relative. Now it is plain to see that sub-argument 3 is rather different from either sub-argument 1 or sub-argument 2. For one thing, in both sub-arguments 1 and 2, it is clear that Sextus intends to argue for the conclusion that everything is relative on the basis of various premises. In sub-argument 1 we are said "to have deduced" (ἐπελογισάμεθα) that everything is relative, while in sub-argument 2 we are said "to draw the conclusion" (συνάγειν) that everything is relative. By contrast, in sub-argument 3, Sextus' vocabulary is vaguer. It is not the technical vocabulary of deducing conclusions and drawing inferences. Instead, Sextus speaks of "confirming" (βεβαιοῖ) or "showing" (δείκνυσι) that everything is relative.

In fact this sort of argument of Sextus' is an instance of a self-refuting argument, or a peritropic[18] argument of which there are a number of species. The general form such arguments take is as follows. Some claim, P, is advanced and then is, in one way or another, "reversed into" (περιτραπήσεται εἰς) not-P. In some cases,

[18] The term "peritropic" comes from the Greek περιτροπή which can be translated variously as "self-refutation" or "reversal". Sextus uses the term a number of times in the *Outlines*. See *PH* 2.193, 206, 222; 3.28, 103, 109, 130, 161, 197, 259.

the content of P is directly responsible for its own falsity. For example, the claim "Nothing is true" directly establishes its own falsity by necessarily applying to itself. In other cases, there is no coherent way of presenting P without falsifying P. For example, there is no coherent way in which I can present, either in speech or in thought, a claim like "Everything that I say is false", without falsifying that very claim. And, in other cases, P is falsified by the particular way in which it is presented. For example, if I were to whisper "I am not whispering". In the secondary literature, these three kinds of self-refutation are often labelled, respectively, absolute self-refutation, operational self-refutation and pragmatic self-refutation.[19]

I do not wish to get sidetracked here into whether this is the best way in which to taxonomise self-refuting arguments, or which of these kinds of self-refutation are to be found in the pages of Sextus and where.[20] The only purpose of these remarks is to provide some background against which to understand the *PH* 1.139 argument. In this passage the claim to be refuted is the claim that it is not the case that everything is relative. Sextus casts his argument in the form of an imagined dialogue between two participants one of whom, call him S_1, maintains that everything is relative the other of whom, call him S_2, maintains that it is not the case that everything is relative. Letting P stand for the proposition that everything is relative, Sextus' thought then seems to be the following.

(1c) If S_2 maintains not-P, then P is true relative to S_1

(2c) If P is true relative to S_1, then P

therefore,

(3c) If S_2 maintains not-P, then P

[19] The labels ultimately derive from Mackie (1964).

[20] For this see Burnyeat's classic (1976) paper, and for an overview of self-refutation arguments in ancient logical texts in general see Castagnoli (2010), though neither of these treatments deal with the *PH* 1.139 passage I consider here.

In terms of our threefold taxonomy of kinds of self-refutation here we seem to have a case of operational self-refutation. If we accept (1c) and (2c) and allow "maintains" (λέγων) in (1c) a broad sense, such that it covers vocalised assertions and silent assertion in thought, then there is no coherent way of presenting the thesis that not-P without falsifying that very thesis, ie without confirming (βεβαιοῖ) that P, ie that everything is relative.

The Nature of Sextan Relativity

I have pointed to three different arguments that Sextus uses to argue for the thesis that everything is relative, which itself is a premise in his wider argument the conclusion of which is that we shall suspend judgement about the way things are by nature. Here I evaluate the worth of these three arguments by clarifying the concept of relativity that is involved in each.

First consider sub-argument 3. Clearly the plausibility of the argument turns on how we interpret the predicate "... is true relative to..." in (1c) and (2c). In *PH* 1.139 Sextus draws a contrast between those who maintain that everything is relative (S_1 in my argument schema) and those who maintain that it is not the case that everything is relative (S_2 in my argument schema). Sextus then reasons from the divergence of opinion over the claim that everything is relative, to the claim that the claim that everything is relative is true only relative to those who maintain that everything is relative.[21] But if this is how Sextus reasons, then the claim "P is true

[21] Sextus does not, in addition, reason from the divergence of opinion over the claim that everything is relative to the claim that the claim that it is not the case that everything is relative is true only relative to those who maintain that it is not the case that everything is relative. But there is no reason why he should not have done.

relative to S" merely amounts to the claim that S stands in some attitude of epistemic endorsement towards P, for example, "S maintains P", or "S believes P". The conclusion of sub-argument 3, therefore, is simply false. Letting P stand for the claim that everything is relative, even if S_2's denial of P entails that P is only true relative to S_1, that is not to say that S_2's denial of P entails that P. All that can be inferred from S_1 and S_2's different doxastic attitudes towards P is precisely that: there are differing doxastic towards P, at most one of which can be true. [22]

The kind of relativity invoked sub-argument 3 is therefore a very meagre kind of relativity. It can be reduced to facts about contrary doxastic states. All it takes for P to be true relative to S_1 is for S_1 to believe that P; and all that it takes for not-P to be true relative to S_2 is for S_2 to believe that not-P. From these facts, all Sextus can infer is that S_1 and S_2 hold contrary beliefs about P. If this is all Sextus means by his conclusion "everything is relative", all well and good, but it is nowhere nearly as radical a conclusion as he requires to push through his argument.

Recall that the claim that everything is relative is the antecedent of the conditional

> (1) If everything is relative, then we shall suspend judgement about the nature of everything.

Sextus wants to establish the antecedent so he can conclude, via *modus ponens*,

> (3) We shall suspend judgement about the nature of everything.

[22] This fallacy in Sextus' reasoning has been noted by Annas and Barnes (1985), p.141.

But if we understand the claim that everything is relative as the claim that there are contrary doxastic attitudes towards the claim that everything is relative, then (1) becomes highly implausible, unless a good deal more is said about the connection between there being contrary doxastic attitudes with regard to the claim that everything is relative and suspending judgement about the nature of everything.

A charge of triviality also affects the kind of relativity invoked by sub-argument 2:

[(1b) Everything is either relative or non-relative]

[(2b) Either non-relatives do not differ from relatives or non-relatives do differ from relatives.]

(3b) If non-relatives do not differ from relatives, then non-relatives are relatives.

(4b) If non-relatives do differ from relatives, then non-relatives are relatives.

therefore,

(2) Everything is relative.

Unlike sub-argument 3, which spoke of the relativity of a particular proposition (namely the proposition that everything is relative), sub-argument 2 speaks of the relativity of things in the world. The argument turns on the expression "...differs from...", which has a different sense in (3b) and in (4b). In (3b) "to differ from..." means something like "to be non-identical to...". (3b) therefore expresses the trivial truth that if A is not non-identical to B, then A is identical to B. In (4b), however, the expression has a different sense, which can be brought out if we consider a passage

from another of Sextus' works where he clarifies what relatives, as opposed to non-relatives, are.

At *M* 8.161-2, Sextus distinguishes between "things in virtue of a difference" (τα κατὰ διαφοράν) and "things that are somehow in relation to something" (τὰ πρός τι πῶς ἔχοντα). The former are non-relatives, the latter relatives. And each type of entity is conceived of (νοεῖται) in a different way:

> καὶ κατὰ διαφορὰν μὲν ὁπόσα κατ᾽ ἰδίαν ὑπόστασιν καὶ ἀπολύτως νοεῖται, οἷον λευκὸν μέλαν, γλυκὺ πικρόν, πᾶν τὸ τούτοις παραπλήσιον· ψιλοῖς γὰρ αὐτοῖς καὶ κατὰ περιγραφὴν ἐπιβάλλομεν καὶ δίχα τοῦ ἑτερόν τι συνεπινοεῖν. πρός τι δέ ἐστι τὰ κατὰ τὴν ὡς πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσιν νοούμενα καὶ οὐκέτι ἀπολελυμένως λαμβανόμενα, τουτέστι κατ᾽ ἰδίαν, οἷον τὸ λευκότερον καὶ μελάντερον καὶ γλυκύτερον καὶ πικρότερον, καὶ πᾶν εἴ τι τῆς αὐτῆς ἐστιν ἰδέας.
>
> In virtue of a difference are those which are thought of in virtue of a subsistence of their own and absolutely - e.g. pale and dark, sweet and sour, and everything of this sort. For we light on them as things which are naked and circumscribed, and we do not at the same time think of anything else. Relative are the things thought of in virtue of the way they hold in relation to something else and which are no longer grasped absolutely, i.e. on their own - e.g. paler and darker, and sweeter and sourer, and anything there may be of this form (*M* 8.161-2)[23]

The basic difference is as follows. There are certain things of which it is possible to think without thinking of any other things. By contrast there are other things of which it is not possible to think without thinking of other things. Sextus illustrates the distinction grammatically, in terms of the distinction between adjectives and comparative adjectives. The thought seems to be the following: I can think of, say, the paleness of a face without having to think of anything else, but I cannot think of a paler face without thinking of that than which the face in question is paler. One might express this distinction by saying that "...is pale" is an example of a non-relative

[23] This passage is cited in Barnes (1988-90), p.20. The translation is his.

predicate whereas "...is paler..." is an example of a relative predicate because any proposition of the form "*x* is paler..." is elliptical for a proposition of the form "*x* is paler than *y*".

With this distinction between relative and non-relative predicates in place, we can return to (4b) of Sextus' sub-argument 2 at *PH* 1.137, and reconstruct the following kind of argument for it:

(4bi) If non-relatives differ from relatives, then non-relatives satisfy the predicate "...differs from..."

(4bii) "...differs from..." is a relative predicate

(4biii) Anything which satisfies a relative predicate is a relative thing

therefore,

(4b) If non-relatives differ from relatives, then non-relatives are relatives.

Now (4bi) and (4bii) might be granted. (4biii) on the other hand appears outrageous. Socrates satisfies the relative predicate "...differs from...", in the sense that Socrates differs from Thrasymachus, by virtue of being non-identical with Thrasymachus, but from this fact it is absurd to infer that Socrates is himself a relative thing. For Socrates also satisfies a glut of other predicates including the non-relative predicate "...is a man". Perhaps Sextus could have sidestepped this problem by refining (4biii) to

(4biii') Anything which satisfies a relative predicate and does not satisfy any non-relative predicate is a relative thing,

but he does not opt for this move. Perhaps he felt that such a move would restrict his class of relative things such that he could no longer maintain the universal generality of his conclusion, or perhaps he found it difficult to think of entities which satisfied only relative-predicates.

In any case, even if we set aside these difficulties with the argument, the supposed conclusion is a trivial one. Everything is relative but only in the trivial sense that for all *x*, either *x* is identical to a relative or *x* satisfies the predicate "...differs from...". Once again, if we interpret the claim that everything is relative in this sense in the conditional

> (1) If everything is relative, then we shall suspend judgement about the nature of everything,

then without a good deal of additional support (1) simply seems false.

Finally, let us turn to sub-argument 1, which draws on Aenesideman rather than Agrippan material. Recall that the argument ran as follows:

> [(1a) Everything is either relative πρὸς τὸ κρῖνον or relative πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα]
>
> (2a) What is relative πρὸς τὸ κρῖνον is relative
>
> (3a) What is relative πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα is relative

therefore,

> (2) Everything is relative.

What this argument amounts to is the following. Those things which fall under the

class of things relative πρὸς τὸ κρῖνον are relative in the sense that for any *x* which might be said to be *F*, it is merely the case that *x* appears *F* to S. And those things which fall under the class of things relative πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα are relative in the sense that for any *x* which might be said to be *F*, it is merely the case that, e.g. *x*-in-quantity-Q appears *F* to S. But these two classes of things exhaust the kinds of things there can be. Therefore, for any *x* which might be said to be *F*, *x* appears *F* in a certain relation R, where R stands for a general relation that incorporates both πρὸς τὸ κρῖνον relativity and πρὸς τὰ συνθεωρούμενα relativity.[24]

Sub-argument 1, then, does not turn on a trivial conception of relativity as sub-arguments 2 and 3 turned. Unlike sub-argument 3, the kind of relativity at play in sub-argument 1 does not reduce the claim that everything is relative to the claim that there are differing opinions with regards to the truth of the claim that everything is relative. Nor, unlike sub-argument 2, does it reduce the claim that everything is relative to the claim that everything is either identical to a relative or satisfies the relative-predicate "...differs from...". Rather, to say of everything that it is relative in the sense in which relativity is used in sub-argument 1, is to make the substantive metaphysical claim that no claims of the form "*x* is *F*" or "*x* appears *F*" are true. Rather, only claims of the form "*x* appears *F* in R" are true. Understanding relativity in this sense therefore opens up a door to a reading of

> (1) If everything is relative, then we shall suspend judgement about the nature of everything,

which is not obviously false (as was the case with the other two versions of relativity

[24] Once again *x* is taken to range over things in the world.

considered above). For if everything is relative in the sense that the only claims which are true are claims of the form "*x* appears *F* in R", then one should not assent to claims of the form "*x* is by nature *F*" nor claims of the form "*x* is by nature not-*F*", which is just to suspend judgement over the nature of *x*.

Given the fact that the kind of relativity invoked by sub-argument 1 does not seem to trivialise Sextus' interim conclusion that everything is relative, and given the fact that it is possible to conceive of a sense in which (1) might be true when relativity is understood in this way, one might think that the relativity of sub-argument 1 was the central kind of relativity at play in the mode. However, once we try to locate the mode of relativity, understood in this sense, in the context of the other four Agrippan modes, one sees that the relativity invoked by sub-argument 1, if not trivial, is still deeply problematic. I examine this issue in the following section.

The Mode of Relativity and the Other Agrippan Modes

How did Sextus think the mode of relativity[25] related to the other four Agrippan modes? A stretch of text which is crucial for settling this question is *PH* 1.170-177, for this is the only place in the *Outlines* where Sextus purports to show "that every object of investigation" can be referred to the five Agrippan modes (ὅτι δὲ πᾶν τὸ ζητούμενον εἰς τούτους ἀνάγειν τοὺς τρόπους ἐνδέχεται). The vast majority of the passage is concerned with the interrelation of the modes of disagreement, infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis. But the mode of relativity is also mentioned twice, at *PH* 1.175 and at *PH* 1.177. These are the only passages in the

[25] Unless I specify otherwise, by relativity I mean that non-trivial kind of relativity which is invoked in sub-argument 1.

Outlines where Sextus explicitly purports to articulate how the mode of relativity is meant to fit into an Agrippan system. They therefore deserve close scrutiny.

PH 1.170-177 is a dense and complicated passage. My full account of it is to be found in the next chapter so here I only present a rough outline of it with the sole aim of making Sextus' references to the mode of relativity within it intelligible. At the beginning of the passage, Sextus draws a distinction between two possible kinds of object of investigation: objects of perception (τὰ αἰσθητά) on the one hand and objects of thought (τὰ νοητά) on the other.[26] The rest of the passage is then structured around showing that the five modes of Agrippa can be deployed both against any αἰσθητόν (*PH* 1.171-175) and against any νοητόν (*PH* 1.175-177).

That is all I shall say here about the structure of *PH* 1.170-177. However, before examining how the mode of relativity fits, or fails to fit, into this structure a word of explication on the terms τὰ αἰσθητά and τὰ νοητά is required. This distinction is to be understood the same way in which the distinction between τὰ φαινόμενα and τὰ νοούμενα was understood back in Chapter 1.[27] That is to say τὰ αἰσθητά and τὰ νοητά are propositional items. More specifically, any proposition that is held on perceptual grounds counts as an αἰσθητον, and any proposition that is held on non-perceptual grounds counts as a νοητόν. For example, the proposition that snow is white would count as an αἰσθητόν provided that it was held on grounds that made reference to snow's being perceived of as white. By contrast the proposition that snow is black would count as a νοητόν provided that it was not held on grounds that made reference to snow's being perceived of as black but on other grounds, for example the Anaxagorean grounds that snow is frozen water and that water is black.[28]

[26] "Objects of perception" and "objects of thought" are Annas and Barnes' translation.
[27] I only assert and do not argue for this claim here. For the argument see Chapter 6, pp.181-4.
[28] These examples are the ones Sextus uses to illustrate the distinction he draws between τὰ φαινόμενα and τὰ νοούμενα at *PH* 1.31-33. I have discussed this passage and its complexities in

How, then, does the mode of relativity fit into the *PH* 1.170-177 passage? The first reference to relativity occurs after Sextus has shown (or has purported to show)[29] that every αἰσθητόν is vulnerable to the modes of disagreement, infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis. Sextus then adds,

> ὅτι δὲ καὶ πρός τι ἐστὶ πάντα τὰ αἰσθητά, δῆλον· ἔστι γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς αἰσθανομένους. φανερὸν οὖν ὅτι ὅπερ ἂν ἡμῖν προτεθῇ πρᾶγμα αἰσθητόν, εἰς τοὺς πέντε τρόπους ἀνάγειν τοῦτο εὐμαρές ἐστιν.
> That all objects of perception are relative is clear: they are relative to those perceiving them. It is thus evident that whatever perceptible object is proposed to us may easily be referred to the five modes. (*PH* 1.175).

Similarly, after Sextus has shown (or has purported to show) that every νοητόν is also vulnerable to the modes of disagreement, infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis, we get the following lines:

> ἀλλὰ καὶ πρός τί ἐστι τὰ νοητά· πρὸς γὰρ τὸν νοῦν νοητὰ[30] λέγεται, καὶ εἰ ἦν τῇ φύσει τοιοῦτον ὁποῖον λέγεται, οὐκ ἂν διεφωνήθη. ἀνήχθη οὖν καὶ τὸ νοητὸν εἰς τοὺς πέντε τρόπους, διόπερ ἀνάγκη περὶ τοῦ προτεθέντος πράγματος πάντως ἡμᾶς ἐπέχειν.
> And objects of thought are relative too: they are called objects of thought relative to the thinker, and if they were by nature such as they are said to be there would have been no dispute about them. Thus objects of thought too are referred to the five modes-and for that reason it is absolutely necessary to suspend judgement about the object proposed. (*PH* 1.177).

Sextus' remarks here are highly compressed, much more so than his remarks regarding the other four modes. Both passages raise difficulties. I deal with each in turn.

The *PH* 1.175 passage seems to be claiming the following: the fact that all αἰσθητα are relative, that is to say relative to a particular perceiver (πρὸς τοὺς αἰσθανομένους), is sufficient for all αἰσθητα to be referred to the five Agrippan

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greater detail in Chapter 1. See p.43 n.77.

[29] The significance of the parenthesis will emerge during my discussion of the *PH* 1.170-177 passage in Chapter 6.

[30] Mutschmann and Mau, following the Latin translation print νοῦν νοητα. Annas and Barnes retain νοοῦντα with the MSS.

modes. Given this remark follows immediately on from *PH* 1.171-174, where Sextus has purported to show how any αἰσθητον might be referred to four of the Agrippan modes (of disagreement, hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity), it is reasonable to think that Sextus' remarks at *PH* 1.175 are meant to offer grounds for thinking that any αἰσθητον might be referred to the last remaining mode - relativity.[31]

But how is this claim to be understood? Recall that the mode of relativity turned on the claim that

> (1) If everything is relative, then we shall (or should[32]) suspend judgement about the nature of everything.

PH 1.175 might therefore be thought of as offering us a version of (1) with a restricted domain of quantification:

> (1α) For all *x*, if *x* is an αἰσθητόν and *x* is relative, then we shall (or should) suspend judgement about the nature of *x*.

But what does it mean to say that every αἰσθητόν is relative to some perceiver? And what does it mean to say that we shall suspend judgement about the nature of every αἰσθητόν?

There seem to be two ways in which these claims might be taken. The first way is to think of an αἰσθητόν, as I suggest above and elsewhere,[33] as a propositional item, for example the proposition that snow is white. On this account,

[31] By the same token, it is reasonable to think that the *PH* 1.177 passage is offering grounds for thinking that every νοητόν can be referred to the mode of relativity.
[32] For a discussion of the possible normative force of (1') see pp. 150-1.
[33] Elsewhere: pp.181-4.

what it would mean for such a proposition to be relative to a particular individual, S, is for the claim to be true for S. The claim that snow is white is therefore only true relative to certain individuals because there are other individuals (for instance our Anaxagoreans) for whom the claim that snow is white is false. Furthermore, what it would mean for S to suspend judgement regarding the nature of the proposition that snow is white would be for S to suspend judgement with regard to the proposition that snow is, by nature, white.

There are two difficulties, however, with this reconstruction. The first is that it strains the sense of αἰσθανομένους. We are told in *PH* 1.175 that all αἰσθητα are relative πρὸς τοὺς αἰσθανομένους and, on the current interpretation, this is taken to mean that some proposition (like the proposition that snow is white) has a relative truth value – it is true for some individuals but not for others. But to describe these individuals as "perceivers" (αἰσθανομένους) of the relevant propositions is an unnatural way of taking the expression. More natural is to think of an individual perceiving not a proposition but some perceptible item in the world.[34] The second difficulty is that the kind of relativity invoked by this reconstruction is the sort of trivial relativity which underpinned sub-argument 3. A claim is relative in this sense, merely if someone believes that claim to be the case. But from the fact that different individuals hold different beliefs over the claim that snow is white, it by no means follows that I should suspend judgement over the claim that snow is by nature white.

The alternative interpretation is to think of the αἰσθητά referred to in *PH* 1.175 not as propositions of a certain kind, but as perceptible items. This would give a smoother sense to αἰσθανομένους: the object of perception would no longer be a proposition (for example, the proposition that snow is white) but a perceptible item

[34] The verb αἰσθάνεσθαι is repeatedly used in this way in the *Outlines*. See, for example, *PH* 1.44, 64, 101, 3.58.

(for example, snow, which would be perceived to be white). On this way of thinking the claim Sextus is making is that every perceptible item is relative in the sense that it appears one way to a certain perceiver under a certain set of conditions and another way to another perceiver under a different set of conditions. However, the drawback of this interpretation is that it involves changing the sense of αἰσθητόν from the propositional sense it bore in *PH* 1.170-174 to a non-propositional sense in *PH* 1.175. As I go on to outline in Chapter 6, treating αἰσθητά and νοητά as propositional items is central to one way of reconstructing how the remaining four Agrippan modes might work in combination with one another.[35] Adopting a non-propositional reading of αἰσθητά at *PH* 1.175, therefore has the unfortunate consequence that Sextus adopts one sense for αἰσθητά when discussing the modes of disagreement, hypothesis, infinite regression, and recioprocity, and another when discussing the mode of relativity in the same stretch of text.

In any case, whichever one of these interpretations one adopts, it is difficult to see, on the basis of *PH* 1.175 alone, how the mode of relativity is meant to dovetail with the other four Agrippan modes. Sextus tacks on his reference to the mode of relativity at the end of his exposition of how the modes of disagreement, infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis are meant to apply to every αἰσθητόν without saying anything about how relativity is meant to work in combination with any of these other modes.

Consquently, we might think to turn to Sextus' remarks at *PH* 1.177 for further illumination regarding how relativity was meant to relate to the other Agrippan modes. For, although *PH* 1.177 is silent on the question of how relativity interacts with infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis, it *does* remark upon a connection

[35] See pp.184-197.

between relativity and disagreement. However, this discussion of Sextus' raises more problems than it solves – for it ends up pointing to a fundamental incompatibility between the mode of relativity and the mode of disagreement.

Relativity and Disagreement

In *PH* 1.177 Sextus claims that the fact that all νοητά are relative to some thinker (νοοῦντα)[36] is sufficient for us to suspend judgement about the nature of all νοητά. We might say that *PH* 1.177 offers us an analogous version of (1α) namely,

> (1ν) For all *x*, if *x* is a νοητόν and *x* is relative, then we shall (or should) suspend judgement about the nature of *x*.

Again we might wonder how the claim that all νοητά are relative to a particular thinker and how the claim that we shall suspend judgement about the nature of all νοητά is to be understood. Take an example of a νοητόν, for example the proposition that snow is black.[37] Now when Sextus claims that the proposition that snow is black is relative to a particular thinker what he might mean is that the proposition that snow is black is true relative to some Anaxagorean, say, who also maintains that snow is frozen water and that water is black. For someone who does not hold these further Anaxagorean background assumptions, the proposition that snow is black is false. Likewise, when Sextus claims that one should suspend judgement with regard to the nature of the proposition that snow is black, he might mean that one should suspend judgement with regard to the proposition that snow is, by nature, black.

[36] Or to some intellect (νοῦν). The MSS print νοοῦντα.
[37] Unlike the αἰσθητά of *PH* 1.175, it is natural to treat the νοητά of *PH* 1.177 as propositions.

Now *PH* 1.177 raises similar difficulties to *PH* 1.175. For one, the kind of relativity at play here seems to be the kind of relativity at play in sub-argument 3. To say that the νοητόν that snow is black is true for some Anaxagorean is just to say that some Anaxagorean (given some further beliefs he holds) believes that snow is black. But from the fact that different epistemic subjects hold different attitudes towards the proposition that snow is black, it does not follow that one must suspend judgement over the claim that snow is by nature black.

However, this sort of difficulty is tangential to the main problem which is raised by the *PH* 1.177 passage, which is the fundamental incompatibility of the mode of relativity with the mode of disagreement. I quote the text again:

> ἀλλὰ καὶ πρός τί ἐστι τὰ νοητά· πρὸς γὰρ τὸν νοῦν νοητὰ λέγεται, καὶ εἰ ἦν τῇ φύσει τοιοῦτον ὁποῖον λέγεται, οὐκ ἂν διεφωνήθη.
> And objects of thought are relative too: they are called objects of thought relative to the thinker, and if they were by nature such as they are said to be there would have been no dispute about them. (*PH* 1.177).

Crucial to the understanding of this passage is the clause καὶ εἰ ἦν τῇ φύσει τοιοῦτον ὁποῖον λέγεται; and crucial to the understanding of this clause is the sub-clause ὁποῖον λέγεται. The sub-clause is incomplete. What is missing is the implied subject of λέγεται. Two possible subjects might be supplied: dogmatists, on the one hand, and relativists on the other.[38] What then might these dogmatists or relativists be saying? Well dogmatists ordinarily make statements of the form "*x* is *F*", and relativists ordinarily make statements of the form "*x* appears *F* in relation *R*".[39] We

[38] In speaking of dogmatists and relativists here I do not mean to imply that a relativist philosopher is not a dogmatic philosopher. Relativists are types of dogmatist. The contrast I am drawing is therefore between dogmatic relativists and dogmatic non-relativists.

[39] Of course, it is not only dogmatic relativists who make claims of this form. Recall sub-argument 1 which involved a sceptic making claims of precisely the same form. There is, however, a crucial difference between the relativist and the sceptic. The sceptic *restricts* himself to claims of the form "*x* appears *F* in R" and "*x* appears *F** in R*". For all the sceptic knows, *x* may well really be *F* (or *F**), but whether *x* is really *F* or *F** is a question over which he suspends judgement. A relativist, by contrast, though he also makes claims of the form "*x* appears *F* in R" and "*x* appears *F** in R*", goes beyond such claims, and states that there is, ultimately, no fact of the matter as to whether *x* really is *F*

therefore have two kinds of counterfactuals suggested by the καὶ εἰ ἦν τῇ φύσει τοιοῦτον sub-clause. First the dogmatic version which would be a νοητόν of the form,

(#) By nature snow is black,

and second, a relativist version, which would be a νοητόν of the form:

(##) By nature snow is black in relation R.

Whether one chooses to read (#) or (##) problems arise. Let us consider the dogmatic version first.

According to this version, the sense given to the whole clause would be something like the following. Were snow by nature black, then there would be no disagreement over whether or not snow is black. But there is ample disagreement over whether or not snow is black. Witness all the non-Anaxagoreans who maintain that snow is white. Therefore it is not the case that snow is by nature black. On this way of thinking, Sextus is offering a *reductio* of νοητά such as (#) by presupposing the existence of disagreement. However, what does the real argumentative work here is, unsurprisingly, the mode of disagreement. It is because there are *disagreements* about whether or not snow is black that νοητά such as (#) are shown to be false. Sextus' argument is of the form:

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or really is *F**. For the relativist, not only is it the case that *x* appears *F* in R and *x* appears *F** in R*; it is also the case that x *is F* in R and *x is F** in R. Barnes (1988-90), p.5 rightly emphasises this point. To capture this point, from now on I use the language of "is" rather than "appears" in my characterisation of the relativist position.

(4) If snow is by nature black, then there is no disagreement about whether snow is black

(5) There is disagreement about whether snow is black

therefore,

(6) It is not the case that snow is by nature black.

Whether this argument succeeds or not is how plausible one thinks premises (4) and (5) are. But the plausibility of both these premises will depend on how one understands the phenomenon of disagreement[40]. We therefore arrive at a conclusion, (6), which Sextus elsewhere endorsed on relativistic grounds[41], by means of the mode of disagreement. The relativistic arguments Sextus gave us earlier for claims like (6) are, if the *PH* 1.177 argument is probative, redundant.

What then, if we were to take the relativists as the subject of λέγεται and read (##) for (#)? Then the sense of the passage would be even stranger. It would amount to the following claim: were snow by nature black in relation R, then there would be no disagreement over whether snow is black. Now there is certainly a sense in which what Sextus is saying here is true. If we were all relativists then there would be no disagreements, or at least no substantive disagreements. For example, if I maintain that snow is white relative to background condition C and you maintain that snow is black relative to background condition C* (where C and C* designate different background conditions) then there can be *no* disagreement between us for the simple reason that our two claims are not incompatible with one another. All well and good, but if this is the sense of the passage, then we do not so much have an argument for a relativistic conclusion but a mere assertion of that conclusion and the

[40] For an analysis of what Sextus means by disagreement see Chapter 1.

[41] Technically, none of sub-arguments 1, 2 or 3 argued for a claim like (6). But they did, each, argue for the claim that everything is relative, which entails claims like (6).

pointing out of an unfortunate corollary of that conclusion namely that there is no such thing as real disagreement. Unlike reading (#) which reached a relativistic conclusion by means of disagreement, thereby rendering the mode of relativity redundant, reading (##) claims that there is no such thing as disagreement.

The dilemma between reading (#) or reading (##) is difficult to resolve. The fact that Sextus so often utilises the mode of disagreement both on its own (as shown in Chapter 1) and in combination with the other Agrippan modes (to be shown in Chapter 6) might be thought of as reason enough to rule out reading (##). However, adopting reading (#) instead, raises two difficulties of its own. Firstly, Sextus' use of the mode disagreement to reach a relativistic conclusion in the way in which reading (#) of *PH* 1.177 suggests, is highly idiosyncratic. On all other occasions in the *Outlines* when it is deployed, the mode of disagreement is presented as reaching a conclusion of the form "S should suspend judgement over P"[42]. By contrast, reading (#) of *PH* 1.177 has it that disagreement issues in a conclusion that all νοητά have relative truth values.

Secondly, that all νοητά have relative truth values is just the sort of claim over which the sceptic would suspend judgement.[43] Of course, for all the sceptic knows, the relativistic conclusion might be the right one: all νοητά (and, for that matter, all αἰσθητά) may, fundamentally, have no non-relative truth values. But then again the relativist might be wrong: maybe there are some αἰσθητά or some νοητά which *do* have non-relative truth values. The sceptic realises what the relativist does not: that his epistemic situation is such that he is not in a position to judge between these two positions.

Furthermore, even if one opts for reading (#) over reading (##), at best

[42] See Chapter 1, p.33-5.
[43] See above p.173 n.39.

this settles a local issue of the interpretation of the sense of the *PH* 1.177 passage. It does nothing to mitigate the fundamental incompatibility between the thesis of relativism and the phenomenon of disagreement. For, if everything is relative in the sense that all incompatible claims of the form "*x* is *F*" and "*x* is not-*F*" are elliptical for claims of the form ""*x* is *F* in R" and "*x* is not-*F*" in R*", where R and R* are different relations, then all disagreements will turn out to be pseudo-disagreements and will bottom out in a relativistic truce.

Concluding Remarks

It seems that any interpreter of Sextus has to face at least two difficulties when it comes to elucidating the mode of relativity. The first dilemma he faces is whether to embrace, on the basis of the three different sub-arguments of *PH* 1.136-9, a trivial or a non-trivial kind of relativity. The trivial kind either reduces relativity to the fact that there is a disagreement over the truth of the proposition that everything is relative or to the fact that everything is either identical to a relative or satisfies the relative predicate "...differs from...". The non-trivial kind of relativity amounts to the claim that any proposition of the form "*x* is *F*" is elliptical for a proposition of the form "*x* is *F* in R."

However, if our interpreter embraces non-triviality, he then faces another dilemma when it comes to integrating the non-trivial version of the mode into a system which includes the other four Agrippan modes. For the non-trivial version of the mode is incompatible with the mode of disagreement. Should our interpreter, then reject the mode of relativity or the mode of disagreement? As just mentioned, the fact that the mode of disagreement is so often utilised by Sextus during his tussles with his

dogmatic opponents - both on its own (as discussed in Chapter 1) and in combination with the other Agrippan modes (to be discussed in the subsequent chapter) – suggests that our interpreter should choose the first horn of this dilemma.

The mode of relativity has no place in Sextus' system of the five modes. It has made its last appearance in these pages. The next and final chapter revisits the remaining four modes and investigates how they are meant to work in combination with one another.

The Modes Combined

The preceding five chapters have been devoted to understanding the workings of the five Agrippan modes individually. In this final chapter I consider how Sextus uses them in combination with one another. Barnes speaks of the combined modes as a "Pyrrhonian net...in which the sceptical gladiators thought they could entangle their Dogmatic opponents"[1]. I shall appropriate Barnes' retiarian terminology and also speak in terms of nets.

Sextus presents us with two distinct nets in the *Outlines* (at *PH* 1.170-177 and at *PH* 1.178-179) and Barnes presents us with a third of his own. The majority of this chapter will be spent elucidating the two nets presented in the *Outlines*. Barnes' net, and a modified version of it, will also be discussed, and though it is noted that Barnes' version (and the modified version) depend on fewer theoretical underpinnings than either of the nets presented by Sextus, it is argued that the construction of all four nets depend on a number of dogmatic assumptions which the sceptic himself cannot make. First, however, some preliminary remarks are required.

Preliminary Remarks

Sextus' first description of how the modes are meant to work together is prefaced, at *PH* 1.169, by the remark that every object of investigation (πᾶν τὸ ζητούμενον) can be referred (ἀνάγειν) to the five Agrippan modes. It is important to note that the term ἀνάγειν here bears a non-technical sense. Its root meaning is "to bring", which is the sense the term more often than not bears in Sextan texts.[2] So

[1] Barnes (1990a), p.113

[2] For example, at *M* 7.261 Sextus speaks of bringing a counterargument to bear against the criterion of

when Sextus makes a claim of the form "it is possible ἀνάγειν *x* to *y*", all he means is that it is possible to bring (or "refer" in Annas and Barnes' translation) *x* to *y*, or that it is possible for *y* to be applied to *x*. This, however, leaves open the question as to what Sextus might mean when he speaks of bringing or referring "every object of investigation" (πᾶν τὸ ζητούμενον) to the Agrippan modes. Crucial to understanding *this* part of Sextus' claim is a distinction he draws in the next sentence, where he writes,

> [T1] τὸ προτεθὲν ἤτοι αἰσθητόν ἐστιν ἢ νοητόν
> What is proposed is either an object of perception or an object of thought (*PH* 1.170)

τὸ προτεθὲν picks up τὸ ζητούμενον from *PH* 1.169. Sextus is saying that whatever is proposed *for investigation* is either an αἰσθητόν or a νοητόν. In the previous chapter I asserted, rather than argued, that αἰσθητά or νοητά are to be understood as propositional items of a certain kind.[3] But why think this the case?

Here are two defeasible pieces of evidence from the immediate context of *PH* 1.170 for thinking so. The first is that Sextus speaks of τὰ αἰσθητά and τὰ νοητά as having truth-values.[4] The second is that Sextus treats τὰ αἰσθητά and τὰ νοητά as

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truth (τῆς ἀντιρρήσεως ἐφάπτεσθαι καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ κριτήριον ἐπανάγειν), at *M* 7.443 he speaks of bringing competing considerations into equipollence with one another (καὶ εἰς ἰσοσθένειαν αὐτῶν ἕκαστον ἀνάγειν), and, most vividly, at *M* 1.308, he speaks of suffers of pleurisy bringing up bile when they cough (τὸ τοὺς πλευριτικοὺς βήσσοντας ὑπόχολον ἀνάγειν). See also *PH* 1.228, 2.6. There is perhaps a semi-technical flavour to the term when it is deployed at *PH* 1.39. In that passage Sextus is offering a taxonomy of the ten Aenesideman modes and speaks of various sets of modes "being subordinated" (ἀνάγονται) to the mode of relativity. However, even taking into account this semi-technical usage, Sextus' use of ἀνάγειν stands in marked contrast to the technical sense the term bears in, for example, Aristotle, where it is often rendered "to reduce". For example, at *APr A* 29b1 syllogisms are said to "be reduced" to other syllogisms, and at *APr A* 46b40 arguments are described as "being reduced" into the various figures. Here, however, is not the place to enter into an analysis of these different Aristotelian senses of reduction. See Barnes (1983), p.286 n.3 for further details.

[3] See Chapter 5, p.167.

[4] At *PH* 1.170 Sextus distinguishes between those dogmatists who think only αἰσθητά are true, those dogmatist who think that only νοητά are true, and those dogmatists who think that some αἰσθητα are true and some νοητά are true.

the objects of verbs like προτιθὲναι and ζητεῖν. [5] Such considerations support[6] the idea that τὰ αἰσθητά and τὰ νοητά are propositional items given two further assumptions: that the sorts of items which have truth values are propositions and that the sort of items which are proposed for investigation are also propositions. However, even if one rejects both of these assumptions, there is still the following argument to consider. Sextus must treat τὰ αἰσθητά and τὰ νοητά as propositional items because he takes τα αἰσθητα to be the same items as τὰ φαινόμενα, τὰ νοητά to be the same items as τὰ νοούμενα and τὰ φαινόμενα and τὰ νοούμενα to be propositional items.

How plausible is such an argument? I have argued elsewhere that τὰ φαινόμενα and τὰ νοούμενα are best understood as propositions when they are introduced by Sextus at *PH* 1.31-33, so I do not rehearse these considerations here.[7] Recall that a φαινόμενον is a proposition which is held on grounds that make reference to perception. For instance, the claim that snow is white would be classed as a φαινόμενον provided that the claim was held on grounds that made reference to snow being perceived of as white. By contrast a νοούμενον is understood as a proposition which is held on grounds that do not make reference to perception. For instance the claim that snow is black would be classed as a νοούμενον provided that it is held on grounds that do not make reference to snow's being perceived of as black but on some other grounds, for example on the Anaxagorean grounds that snow is frozen water and

[5] Other references from the *Outlines* which are consistent with the verbs προτιθὲναι and ζητεῖν governing propositions include *PH* 1.2, 19, 20, 61, 174 (ζητεῖν) and *PH* 1.165, 166 (προτιθὲναι)

[6] It should be noted that neither of these considerations provide conclusive reasons for thinking that αἰσθητά and νοητά are propositions. An alternative interpretation would be to think of αἰσθητά and νοητά as being objects about which one comes to have knowledge through the grasping of various propositions. (I discuss this sort of interpretation of αἰσθητά in connection with *PH* 1.175 in Chapter 5, pp. 170-1). To decisively settle this sort of question, even if one were only to use the two heuristics mentioned above, would require an extensive survey of Greek philosophical texts with an eye to what kinds of entity verbs like προτιθὲναι and ζητεῖν govern, coupled with an examination of the concept of ἀλήθεια and whether it was a property only of propositions. This is beyond the scope of the current thesis, but in one sense the settling of this question is not of central importance for my purposes, for whether one takes αἰσθητά and νοητά to be propositions or to be objects in the world that we come to know on the basis of grasping propositions, this does not substantively affect the logic of my argument.

[7] See Chapter 1, pp. 39-46.

that water is black.[8]

On the assumption then that, in *PH* 1.31-33, Sextus took τὰ φαινόμενα and τὰ νοούμενα to be propositional items it remains to be shown that Sextus thought τὰ φαινόμενα to be the same items as τὰ αἰσθητά and τὰ νοητά to be the same items as τὰ νοούμενα. A crucial text which provides support for this view is *PH* 1.9, where Sextus writes,

> [T2] 'φαινόμενα' δὲ λαμβάνομεν νῦν τὰ αἰσθητά, διόπερ ἀντιδιαστέλλομεν αὐτοῖς τὰ νοητά.
> Things which appear we now take to be objects of perception, which is why we contrast them with objects of thought (*PH* 1.9)

Sextus is being explicit. He is taking (λαμβάνειν) τα φαινομένα to be equivalent to τὰ αἰσθητά. Now there are two possible objections against taking a passage such as this as evidence for the fact that Sextus treated the αἰσθητά - νοητά distinction to be one and the same as the φαινόμενα –νοούμενα distinction, but both can be countered.

To the person who objects that the claim made at *PH* 1.9 is contextually restricted by the adverb νῦν, one might agree that this is indeed so: Sextus is saying that, *in the present context*, τὰ φαινόμενα are to be understood as τὰ αἰσθητά.[9] However, when we come to examine "the present context" we find that Sextus is offering a *general* characterisation of what scepticism is (*PH* 1.8) and then glossing various technical terms that feature in that general characterisation (*PH* 1.9-10). The fact that Sextus' claim about understanding τὰ φαινόμενα as τὰ αἰσθητά is made in a context in which Sextus is offering a *general* characterisation of scepticism, licenses the inference that, in the *Outlines* in general, τὰ φαινόμενα are to be understood as equivalent to τὰ αἰσθητά, for example at *PH* 1.170.

[8] I discuss these and other examples Sextus gives of φαινόμενα and νοούμενα in greater detail in Chapter 1. For complications regarding the thought that the claim that snow is black is held on non-perceptual grounds see p.43 n.77.

[9] Barnes and Annas (2000) p.4 render the νῦν of *PH* 1.9 as "in the present context".

Secondly, someone might argue that, strictly speaking, all Sextus shows in *PH* 1.9 is that there is an equivalence between τὰ φαινόμενα and τὰ αἰσθητά. He is silent on the relation between τὰ νοούμενα and τὰ νοητά. To this it will be responded that it is not difficult to infer, from the surrounding context, that Sextus also intends to map τὰ νοούμενα onto τὰ νοητά. Sextus has just contrasted τὰ φαινόμενα and τὰ νοούμενα (*PH* 1.8). He now tells us that the former are to be understood as τὰ αἰσθητά and that this explains why (διόπερ) τὰ φαινόμενα[10] are contrasted (ἀντιδιαστέλλομεν) with τὰ νοητά. So, we have a contrast between τὰ φαινόμενα and τὰ νοούμενα, and a correspondence between τὰ φαινόμενα and τὰ αἰσθητά. It is natural to conclude from this that just as τὰ φαινόμενα are to be understood as τὰ αἰσθητά, so τὰ νοούμενα are to be understood as τὰ νοητά.

These preliminary remarks have shown that when Sextus speaks of "referring objects of investigation" to the Agrippan modes by this he means that all five modes can be applied to any αἰσθητόν and to any νοητόν. From now on I shall refer to αἰσθητά as "α-propositions" and νοητά as "ν-propositions". An α-proposition is a φαινόμενον, that is to say a proposition which is held on grounds that make reference to perception. An ν-proposition is a νοούμενον, that is to say a proposition which is held on grounds that do not make reference to perception. We are now in a position to outline Sextus' first description of how the modes are meant to operate together.

[10] I take the referent of αὐτοῖς in *PH* 1.9 to be τὰ φαινόμενα and not τὰ αἰσθητά. The latter reading is syntactically possible, but if understood in this way the sense of the passage, given the surrounding context, would be strange. Sextus would be saying that the fact that τὰ φαινόμενα are to be understood as τὰ αἰσθητά gives us a reason to contrast τὰ αἰσθητά with τὰ νοητά.

Net 1

At *PH* 1.170-177 Sextus attempts to weave all five of the Agrippan modes into a sceptical net. In my treatment of this net I shall omit discussion of the mode of relativity and speak of four rather than five modes. I do this partly because I have already (in Chapter 5) discussed the texts in which relativity features (*PH* 1.175 and *PH* 1.177) and partly because I have argued (also in Chapter 5) that the mode of relativity is incompatible with the mode of disagreement.[11] But even with this first net cut down to four modes, it is still elaborate and at times difficult to follow. In Barnes' view, it is "positively rococo in its complexity, yet it possesses neither aesthetic elegance nor philosophical cohesion"[12] - and, perhaps wisely, Barnes offers no elaboration of it.[13] The charge of rococo complexity (if a charge it be) and the charge of aesthetic inelegance may stick. However, I shall argue that it is possible to extract something philosophically coherent from Sextus remarks at *PH* 1.170-177, even if, ultimately, the net is founded on a number of implausible assumptions.

Sextus begins his description of Net 1 by assuming, at *PH* 1.170, that whatever is proposed for investigation is either an α-proposition or a ν-proposition (τὸ προτεθὲν ἤτοι αἰσθητόν ἐστιν ἢ νοητόν). On the face of it the overall form of Sextus' argument is as follows:

(#) Whatever is proposed for investigation is either an α-proposition or a ν-proposition

(1) It is possible to refer any α-proposition to the four modes,

[11] See Chapter 5, pp.172-177.
[12] Barnes (1990a), p.114
[13] Neither in Barnes (1990a) nor in Barnes (1990b). Hankinson (1995), p.191 does offer a reconstruction but it glosses over a number of difficulties in Sextus' presentation. In particular, no mention is made of the dialectical complexity of the situation, as I outline below.

(2) It is possible to refer any ν-proposition to the four modes,

therefore,

(3) It is possible to refer whatever is proposed for investigation to the four modes.[14]

(3) is merely a restatement of Sextus' claim at *PH* 1.168 that every object of investigation can be referred to the Agrippan modes (δὲ πᾶν τὸ ζητούμενον εἰς τούτους ἀνάγειν τοὺς τρόπους ἐνδέχεται). (1) is supported by the stretch of argument at *PH* 1.170-175 and (2) by the stretch of argument at *PH* 1.175-177, each of which I shall come to in due course.

However, first it is important to note that the argument, as it stands, is only valid if the disjunctive connector in (#) is understood exclusively: whatever is proposed for investigation must be either an α-proposition or a ν-proposition but not both. Fortunately, Sextus himself defines the disjunctive connector "ἤτοι...ἢ..." in exclusive terms at *PH* 2.191:

> [T3] τὸ γὰρ ὑγιὲς διεζευγμένον ἐπαγγέλλεται ἓν τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ ὑγιὲς εἶναι, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἢ τὰ λοιπὰ ψεῦδος ἢ ψευδῆ μετὰ μάχης.
> For a sound disjunction announces that one of its elements is sound and the other or others are false and conflicting. (*PH* 2.191)[15]

The sense of this passage seems to be that a disjunction is true just in case exactly one of its disjuncts is true.[16] Understanding the disjunction in (#) in this way gives us a valid argument whose premises are (#), (1) and (2) and whose conclusion is (3). It

[14] There is scope ambiguity in both my (and Sextus') formulation of premisses (1), (2) and (3). The expression "is possible to refer some *x* to the four modes" could be taken to mean either that it is possible to refer some *x* to at least one of the four modes or that it is possible to refer some *x* to all four of the modes. As my discussion of Net 1 goes on to show, Sextus intends the second of these two senses.

[15] Along with Barnes and Annas (2000) I retain the manuscript reading of ὑγιὲς in the expression ἓν τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ ὑγιὲς εἶναι. Mutschmann-Mau print ἀληθὲς.

[16] In fact disjunction was almost always taken in the exclusive rather than the inclusive sense in ancient logical texts. So Barnes (2007), p. 1: "Inclusive disjunction was known to ancient logic and to ancient grammar. But the exclusive variety was the normal case...". For more on ancient disjunction see Barnes (2005) and (2007), pp. 1-2, 82-3, 217-8.

remains to give some support to the other two premises of the argument, (1) and (2). As mentioned above, (1) is supported by the stretch of argument at *PH* 1.170-175 and (2) by the stretch of argument at *PH* 1.175-177, and it is to these I now turn.

Sextus' support of (1) and (2) is convoluted. His first move is to adduce the mode of disagreement (διαφωνία). At *PH* 1.170 he states that whatever is put forward for investigation, whether an α-proposition or a ν-proposition, will be subject to disagreement:

> [T4] ὁποῖον δ' ἂν ᾖ, διαπεφώνηται
> whichever it is [whether an α-proposition or a ν-proposition] it is subject to disagreement (*PH* 1.170).

Without wishing to revisit all of the complexities surrounding the mode of disagreement,[17] it will suffice for present purposes to say that, for Sextus, two (or more) opinions stand in a relation of disagreement to one another if they cannot all be true at the same time. In what sense, then, is it true to say that any α-proposition or ν-proposition will be subject to a disagreement of this sort? For the sake of simplicity let us for the moment restrict ourselves to some particular α-proposition, for example the α-proposition:

(P_w) Snow is white.

We might, reasonably, think that for (P_w) to be subject to disagreement is for some epistemic subject, S, to maintain that (P_w) and some other epistemic subject, S*, to maintain Q[18] where Q is incompatible with (P_w).[19]

Sextus' next move, however, is puzzling. He does *not* offer us an example of disagreement like the one just mentioned, but something rather different. In the next sentence he writes,

[17] Those who wish to revisit are directed to Chapter 1.
[18] It is irrelevant whether Q is an α-proposition or a ν-proposition.
[19] This is what Barnes terms a "positive disagreement". For further details on these and other sorts of disagreement that appear in the *Outlines* see Chapter 1, pp. 19-24.

[T5] οἱ μὲν γὰρ τὰ αἰσθητὰ μόνα φασὶν εἶναι ἀληθῆ, οἱ δὲ μόνα τὰ νοητά, οἱ δέ τινα μὲν αἰσθητὰ, τινὰ δὲ νοητά.
For some say that only α-propositions are true, some say that only ν-propositions are true and some say that some α-propositions are true and some ν-propositions are true. (*PH* 1.170)

Now there *is* a disagreement in these lines, namely a disagreement between those who maintain

(ϕ) Only α-propositions are true,

those who maintain,

(ψ) Only ν-propositions are true,

and those who maintain,

(χ) Some α-propositions are true and some ν-propositions are true.

However, this is clearly a different sort of disagreement to the sort of disagreement to which Sextus gestured in the preceding sentence.

There we imagined a case where some α-proposition, for example the proposition that snow is white, was subject to disagreement in the sense that some epistemic subject maintained that snow is white and another maintained some other proposition incompatible with that proposition. We might call this sort of disagreement a first-order disagreement about an α-proposition: we have some α-proposition and different epistemic subjects disagree over whether the proposition in question is true.[20]

On the other hand, the disagreement between (ϕ), (ψ) and (χ) is what we might call a second-order disagreement. It is not a disagreement over whether some particular α-proposition (or some particular ν-proposition) is true, but a disagreement over whether the only kinds of proposition which are true are α-propositions. The

[20] The choice of an α-proposition (as opposed to a ν-proposition) is arbitrary. At *PH* 1.170 Sextus tells us that both α-propositions and ν-propositions are subject to disagreement. First-order disagreements regarding the truth of a ν-propositions are readily constructed and analogous to first-order disagreements regarding the truth of α-propositions so described.

endorser of (ϕ) claims that this is so, while the endorsers of (ψ) and (χ) deny this: according to the (ψ)-endorser the only kinds of proposition which are true are ν-propositions and according to the (χ)-endorser both α-propositions and ν-propositions can be true.

Now the inclusion of γὰρ at the beginning of [T5] suggests that, in that text, Sextus is giving grounds for what he has claimed in the preceding sentence (which includes [T4]), namely that whatever is proposed for investigation, whether an αἰσθητόν (α-proposition) or a νοητόν (ν-proposition) is subject to disagreement. But it is by no means obvious how a second order-disagreement between (ϕ)-endorsers, (ψ)-endorsers and (χ)-endorsers is to explain why every α-proposition or ν-proposition is subject to disagreement.

To motivate this idea a number of additional assumptions need to be made. By way of illustration, let us return to our token α-proposition[21],

(P_w) Snow is white.

Now, (P_w) will be subject to disagreement, provided that the following three assumptions are made. First, that every epistemic subject is either a (ϕ)-endorser or a (ψ)-endorser or a (χ)-endorser; second, that there are at least some (ϕ)-endorsers, some (ψ)-endorsers and some (χ)-endorsers; and third that at least some (ψ)-endorsers believe not-(P_w) and that either at least some (ϕ)-endorsers believe (P_w) or at least some (χ)-endorsers believe (P_w).[22] Given these assumptions, all those (ψ)-endorsers

[21] An analogous story can, of course, be told for any ν-proposition.

[22] This third assumption is required because of three unfortunate consequences of the way in which (ϕ)-endorsers, (ψ)-endorsers and (χ)-endorsers have been characterised by Sextus. First, it does not follow from the fact that there are at least some (ϕ)-endorsers that there are at least some (ϕ)-endorsers who believe some particular α-proposition (e.g. (P_w)). For though a (ϕ)-endorser maintains that only α-propositions are true, he does not maintain that *all* α-propositions are true. Second, it does not follow from the fact that there are at least some (ψ)-endorsers that there are at least some (ψ)-endorsers who believe that not-(P_w). For though (ψ)-endorsers believe that only ν-propositions are true, this is consistent with no (ψ)-endorser believing that not-(P_w). Third, it does not follow from the fact that there are at least some (χ)-endorsers that there are at least some (χ)-endorsers who believe that (P_w).

who believe not-(P_w) will stand in a relation of διαφωνία with anyone who believes (P_w), whether a (ϕ)-endorser or a (χ)-endorser. *mutatis mutandis*, the same story can be told for some token ν-proposition. Take the ν-proposition,

(P_b) Snow is black.

In this case every (ϕ)-endorser who believes that not-(P_b) will stand in a relation of διαφωνία with anyone who believes that that (P_b), whether a (ψ)-endorser or a (χ)-endorser.

For the moment I leave to one side the plausibility of the three assumptions mentioned in the preceding paragraph. At any rate, they, or something like them, will be required if a first-order disagreement over some token α-proposition (or ν-proposition) is to be explained by a second-order disagreement between (ϕ)-endorsers, (ψ)-endorsers and (χ)-endorsers. However, if such assumptions *are* made, then Sextus' subsequent motivation of premises (1) and (2) becomes much more complicated. For there are now three possible dogmatic opponents of the sceptic - a (ϕ)-endorser, a (ψ)-endorser and a (χ)-endorser – and three corresponding nets in which these three dogmatists will be ensnared. Sextus' task has therefore shifted from motivating the claim that any α-proposition or ν-proposition can be referred to the four Agrippan modes to motivating the claim that any α-proposition or ν-proposition maintained by either a (ϕ)-endorser or a (ψ)-endorser or a (χ)-endorser can be referred to the four Agrippan modes.

The easiest way to work through this complicated dialectical situation is to work through the three possible dialectical scenarios in turn: sceptic against (ϕ)-endorser; sceptic against (ψ)-endorser; and sceptic against (χ)-endorser. Sextus

For a (χ)-endorser maintains that *some* α-propositions are true but it is left open which ones. However, given the fact that we are assuming that there are at least some (ϕ)-endorsers and at least some (χ)-endorsers, and that any epistemic subject who is not a (ψ)-endorser is either a (ϕ)-endorser or a (χ)-endorser, *if* there are some epistemic subjects who *do* believe that (P_w), it *does* follow that they are either (ϕ)-endorsers or (χ)-endorsers.

himself invites us to do so when, at *PH* 1.170, he asks the following ambiguous question:

> [T6] πότερον οὖν ἐπικριτὴν εἶναι φήσουσι τὴν διαφωνίαν ἢ ἀνεπίκριτον;
> Now will they say that the dispute is decidable or undecidable? (*PH* 1.170)

The "they" are presumably one of the three groups of dogmatists to whom Sextus has just alluded in [T5] - the (ϕ)-endorsers, (ψ)-endorsers and (χ)-endorsers - though Sextus does not specify which group he means. But it is not only ambiguous as to which group of dogmatists Sextus has in mind.[23] It is also ambiguous as to what the referent of τὴν διαφωνίαν is meant to be. For, as noted above, Sextus has just outlined two distinct διαφωνίαι: a first-order διαφωνία over whether some α-proposition or ν-proposition is true and a second-order διαφωνία over whether (ϕ), (ψ) or (χ) is true. But which of these is meant?

Given the overall shape of Sextus' argument at *PH* 1.170-177 it must be the first. For Sextus goes on to describe how any α-proposition (*PH* 1.171-175) and how any ν-proposition (*PH* 1.175-177) can be referred to the four Agrippan modes. (ϕ), (ψ) and (χ) are themselves, presumably, all ν-propositions (and part of a special class of ν-proposition which themselves make reference to α-propositions and ν-propositions) and therefore cannot be the sorts of claim Sextus is discussing (at least in the *PH* 1.171-175 stretch of argument).

How then, would the dialectic proceed between a sceptic and a (ϕ)-endorser? Recall that a (ϕ)-endorser believes that only α-propositions are true. The kinds of propositions over which the sceptic and (ϕ)-endorser will lock horns will therefore have to be α-propositions. Let us begin by assuming that our (ϕ)-endorser believes some token α-proposition, like (P_w). The first move a sceptic will make is to

[23] To unpack this ambiguity fully, Sextus could be referring to any one of the three groups of dogmatists, or to any two of the three groups, or to all three groups.

draw his opponent's attention to the fact that there is a disagreement over (P_w). He might do this by alerting his opponent to the fact that other dogmatic (ψ)-endorsers deny that (P_w). Now our (ϕ)-endorser faces a choice. He either maintains that the dispute to which the sceptic has drawn his attention is decidable (ἐπίκριτος) or that it is undecidable (ἀνεπίκριτος[24]). If he maintains that the dispute is undecidable, then the sceptic points out that he (the (ϕ)-endorser) has no more reason to support (P_w) than not-(P_w) and suspension of judgement results.[25] If he instead maintains that the dispute is decidable (and decidable in favour of, say, (P_w), then he will argue for (P_w) in one of three ways. Either he will simply assert (P_w) without any further explanation, in which case the mode of hypothesis comes into play (*PH* 1.173-174), or he will provide some reason for why he maintains (P_w). Now given background assumption (#) this reason will either be an α-proposition or ν-proposition, but because our dogmatist is a (ϕ)-endorser, presumably he can *only* offer an α-proposition as justification, because he only believes that α-propositions are true. But now the sceptic simply asks what justification the (ϕ)-endorsing dogmatist has for maintaining the α-proposition he has just put forward, and, on pain of falling foul of the mode of hypothesis, the dogmatist must offer a reason for maintaining his α-proposition. Given that our dogmatist is a (ϕ)-endorser the only reason he can offer is another α-proposition, which itself requires justification. We therefore get a chain of α-propositions which is either infinitely long, and thereby succumbs to the mode of infinite regression (*PH*.1.171) or which stops at some point, in which case the mode of hypothesis, once again, is violated.

[24] Though a sceptic would not claim a dispute is in principle undecidable, but merely undecidable up until now (or indeed merely undecided), it is important to note that it is the *dogmatist* who, at *PH* 1.170 is claiming that the dispute is undecidable – it is possible therefore to construe the term in this passage in a strongly modal sense – hence the translation "undecidable" rather than the translation "undecided" that figured in Chapter 1. For further detail on the ambiguities of ἀνεπίκριτος see pp.27-32.

[25] See Chapter 1, pp 33-5 for further details on the connection between ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία and the suspension of judgement.

This kind of dialectic between sceptic and (ϕ)-endorser therefore makes use of three of the Agrippan modes: disagreement, hypothesis and infinite regression. Reciprocity is tellingly absent from this schema. Sextus does not seem to consider the possibility of the (ϕ)-endorser at some point repeating some α-proposition he has already offered thereby offering a reciprocal or a circular argument for (P_w), a move which would be ruled out by the mode of reciprocity.[26] That is an oversight - there seems no reason why the (ϕ)-endorser should not think to argue in this way, and then be confronted by the mode of reciprocity.

So goes a reconstruction of how the dialectic between a sceptic and a (ϕ)-endorsing dogmatist would unfold. Precisely analogous comments can be made if our (ϕ)-endorsing dogmatist were replaced by a (ψ)-endorsing dogmatist. The only salient difference in this case is that every reference to an α-proposition will be replaced by reference to an *ν*-proposition, for, *ex hypothesi*, a (ψ)-endorsing dogmatist believes that only *ν*-propositions are true.

If, however, the dialectic is between a sceptic and a (χ)-endorsing dogmatist the situation is rather different. For the (χ)-endorser is less constrained than either the (ϕ)-endorser or the (ψ)-endorser. After all, the (χ)-endorser, unlike the others, can advert to both α-propositions and *ν*-proposition in his attempted justifications, for he believes that some α-propositions are true and that some *ν*-propositions are true.

The dialectic between the sceptic and the (χ)-endorser then goes like this. Let us say that the proposition under discussion is an α-proposition.[27] The sceptic will draw the (χ)-endorser's attention to the fact that the α-proposition under

[26] It should be noted that Sextus does *mention* reciprocity at *PH* 1.172 but there it is not the sort of reciprocity of the kind just sketched . *PH* 1.172 in fact raises a number of complications of its own and I postpone my discussion of it. See below, pp.193-5.

[27] In what follows, precisely analogous claims can be made if a *ν*-proposition had been chosen instead. Sextus outlines the course of the argument in the case of an *ν*-proposition at *PH* 1.175-7.

discussion is disputed. The (χ)-endorser will then either claim that the dispute is decidable (and decidable in his favour) or undecidable. If the latter, suspension of judgement follows. If the former, then on pain of falling foul of the mode of hypothesis, the (χ)-endorser will have to put forward a reason for maintaining his α-proposition. Sextus distinguishes three possibilities for the sceptic's interlocutor at *PH* 1.171-2. First, the α-proposition might be justified by some further α-proposition leading to an infinite regression of α-propositions:

> [T7] οἷον τὸ αἰσθητόν (ἐπὶ τούτου γὰρ προτέρου στήσομεν τὸν λόγον) πότερον ὑπὸ αἰσθητοῦ ἢ ὑπὸ νοητοῦ; εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὑπὸ αἰσθητοῦ, ἐπεὶ περὶ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ζητοῦμεν, καὶ ἐκεῖνο ἄλλου δεήσεται πρὸς πίστιν. εἰ δὲ κἀκεῖνο αἰσθητὸν ἔσται, πάλιν καὶ αὐτὸ ἄλλου δεήσεται τοῦ πιστώσοντος, καὶ τοῦτο μέχρις ἀπείρου.
> For instance, is an object of perception (for we shall rest the argument on this first), to be decided by an object of perception or by an object of thought? If by an object of perception, then since we are investigating objects of perception, this too will need something else to make it convincing; and if this further thing also is an object of perception it too will again need something further to make it convincing and so *ad* infinitum. (*PH* 1.171)

The other two possibilities are presented by Sextus in the following passage:

> [T8]εἰ δὲ ὑπὸ νοητοῦ ἐπικρίνεσθαι δεήσει τὸ αἰσθητόν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ νοητὰ διαπεφώνηται, δεήσεται καὶ τοῦτο νοητὸν ὂν κρίσεώς τε καὶ πίστεως. πόθεν οὖν πιστωθήσεται; εἰ μὲν ὑπὸ νοητοῦ, εἰς ἄπειρον ἐκπεσεῖται ὁμοίως· εἰ δ' ὑπὸ αἰσθητοῦ, ἐπεὶ πρὸς μὲν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ παρελήφθη νοητόν, πρὸς δὲ τὴν τοῦ νοητοῦ πίστιν αἰσθητόν, ὁ διάλληλος εἰσάγεται τρόπος.
> But if the object of perception needs to be decided by an object of thought, then, since objects of thought are also in dispute, it too, being an object of thought, will need to be judged and made convincing. Now where will it get its conviction from? If from an object of thought, the business will proceed *ad infinitum* in the same way; but if from an object of perception then, since an object of thought was adduced to make the object of perception convincing and an object of perception for the object of thought, we have brought in the reciprocal mode. (*PH* 1.171-2)

Sextus here imagines a case where the original α-proposition is not supported by another α-proposition, but by a ν-proposition. He then imagines two alternatives. If

this ν-proposition is in turn supported by another ν-proposition then we are at the beginnings of an infinite regression; if on the other hand, the ν-proposition is supported by a futher α-proposition, then, since both kinds of proposition are disputed, the reciprocal mode will be brought in (ὁ διάλληλος εἰσάγεται τρόπος).

Now though there are objections to be raised regarding Sextus' procedure here - especially in connection with [T8] – these objections do not run deep. One objection might be that it is not clear why the only two alternatives chains of justification he considers in [T8] are an α-proposition supported by an infinite sequence of ν-propositions and an infinite sequence of alternating α-propositions and ν-propositions. To take but one example, what of the possibility that our α-proposition is supported by a ν-proposition which is in turn supported by an infinite sequence of α-propositions?[28] However, to this it might be responded that *whatever* the configuration of the infinite sequences in question, *qua* infinite sequences, they will still fall foul of the mode of infinite regression.

Another objection might be that the sort of reciprocity mentioned by Sextus is underdescribed. It is ambiguous whether he intends to point to a formal reciprocity or a regressive reciprocity.[29] If the reciprocity involves *token* propositions such as,

ν-proposition$_1$; therefore α-proposition$_1$

α-proposition$_1$; therefore ν-proposition$_1$,

then we have a formal reciprocity. If, however, the reciprocity involves *types* of proposition where each α-proposition is supported by an ν-proposition and each ν-

[28] There are, of course, an infinite number of possible configurations of infinite sequences composed of both α-propositions and ν-propositions

[29] See Chapter 4, pp. 122-8 for more on these two different kinds of reciprocity.

proposition is supported by an α-proposition, then we have a regressive reciprocity. However, to this it will be responded that, either way, the sceptic's interlocutor will be on epistemologically dubious ground: in the first case the mode of reciprocity is violated; and in the second case a special instance of the mode of infinite regression is violated.

To sum up, Net 1 offers us three possible dialectical scenarios between a sceptic and three kinds of dogmatic opponents: a (ϕ)-endorser; a (ψ)-endorser; and a (χ)-endorser. In all three cases the modes of Agrippa (in various combinations) bring it about that the dogmatist comes to suspend judgement. In the case of the sceptic's dialectic with a (ϕ)-endorser and a (ψ)-endorser, any token α-proposition (maintained by a (ϕ)-endorser) and any token ν-proposition (maintained by a (ψ)-endorser) will be referred to the modes of disagreement, infinite regression and hypothesis. Sextus makes no mention of the mode of reciprocity in this regard but, as noted above, this seems to be a simple oversight. There seems to be, in principle, no reason why either a (ϕ)-endorser or a (ψ)-endorser should not attempt to offer a reciprocal (or circular) argument for their token α-proposition or ν-proposition, and thereby fall victim to the mode of reciprocity. And in the case of the sceptic's dialectic with a (χ)-endorser, depending on the stance taken on the ambiguous term "reciprocal", the token α-proposition or ν-proposition will be referred either to the modes of disagreement, hypothesis and infinite regression (if "reciprocal" is understood in its regressive sense) or to the modes of disagreement, hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity (if "reciprocal" is understood in its formal sense).

So runs an attempted reconstruction of Sextus' first sceptical net. Though it no doubt suffers from Barnes' charges of inelegance and complexity, at least it is not incoherent. However, I end my exposition of it by drawing attention to two non-

trivial drawbacks from which it does suffer. Firstly, it depends for its effectiveness on a theoretical background assumption that Sextus never argues for, namely

> (#) Whatever is proposed for investigation is either an α-proposition or a ν-proposition,

and which a sceptic's opponent is by no means committed to accepting. For example, a dogmatist who claimed that there are some propositions which are held on inextricably perceptual and non-perceptual grounds would not accept the exclusively disjunctive claim made in (#) and therefore would not be moved by Sextus' subsequent arguments.

Secondly, even setting this difficulty to one side, if Net 1 is meant to be a net by which *every* object of investigation (πᾶν τὸ ζητούμενον) might be referred to the various Agrippan modes as Sextus informs us at *PH* 1.169, then, given the fact that Sextus presents us with a sceptic engaging with three kinds of dogmatic opponent (namely (ϕ)-endorsers, (ψ)-endorser and (χ)-endorsers), these three kinds of dogmatic opponent of the sceptic must exhaust all possible kinds of dogmatic opponent. But there is no good reason to think this. Why must a dogmatist believe *any* of (ϕ), (ψ) or (χ)? Indeed, why must a dogmatist have even given (ϕ), (ψ) or (χ) a moment's thought? So, inspite of Sextus' claim that Net 1 will promote universal suspension of judgement, it turns out that it is only effective (if indeed it is effective at all) against a very particular sort of dogmatist who holds a very particular set of theoretical beliefs about the nature of α-proposition and a ν-propositions. Its claims to general applicability to any and every object of investigation are illusory. Let us now turn to Net 2.

Net 2

Net 2 (*PH* 1.178-179) is briefer and clearer than Net 1 though it too is not free from exegetical difficulty. Rather confusingly Sextus introduces it by saying, at *PH* 1.178, that he will go on to discuss "two other modes of suspension of judgement" (δύο τρόπους ἐποχῆς ἑτέρους),[30] the implication being that these modes are different from any of the five Sextus has considered previously. This is not so. In fact Sextus goes to outline a net woven out of not two but three modes, indeed three modes we have already encountered. They are the modes of disagreement, infinite regression and reciprocity.

Sextus opens with the following remark:

> [T9]ἐπεὶ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ καταλαμβανόμενον ἤτοι ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ καταλαμβάνεσθαι δοκεῖ ἢ ἐξ ἑτέρου, <ὑπομιμνήσκοντες ὅτι οὔτε ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ τι οὔτε ἐξ ἑτέρου>[31] καταλαμβάνεται, τὴν περὶ πάντων ἀπορίαν εἰσάγειν δοκοῦσιν.
> Since everything apprehended is thought to be apprehended either by means of itself or by means of something else, they are thought to introduce puzzlement about everything by suggesting that nothing is apprehended either by means or itself or by means of something else. (*PH* 1.178)

The grammatical subject of δοκοῦσιν is the same as the grammatical subject of παραδιδόασι at the opening of *PH* 1.178. Those Agrippan sceptics who handed down the "two modes" are those who are thought to introduce puzzlement about everything

[30] In fact this second sceptical net is introduced in the third person. "They also offer (παραδιδόασι) two modes of suspension of judgement", writes Sextus at *PH* 1.178. Who are "they"? A natural thought is that the "they" are those more recent sceptics (οἱ νεώτεροι σκεπτικοὶ) referred to at *PH* 1.164 and *PH* 1.177, whom Diogenes Laertius IX 88 identifies with Agrippan scepticism. Than whom are these more recent sceptics more recent? On this matter see Introduction, p.6 n.6.

[31] The claim in the angular brackets is supplied on the basis of the Latin translation. Mutschmann-Mau's *apparatus* reads "suppl. e T *ex alio rememorantes quia neque ex se ipso quid neque ex alio*". The text makes perfectly good sense without the contents of the brackets included, but no violence is done to the overall sense of the passage if it is included. Indeed Sextus goes on in the rest of *PH* 1.178-179 to argue first that nothing is apprehended by means of itself and that nothing is apprehended by means of something else, which are precisely the two options laid out in the brackets.

by means of Net 2.[32] By contrast, the grammatical subject of δοκεῖ are unnamed dogmatists. It is a dogmatic not a sceptical assumption that everything is either apprehended by means of itself or by means of something else (πᾶν τὸ καταλαμβανόμενον ἤτοι ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ καταλαμβάνεσθαι...ἢ ἐξ ἑτέρου). It is this assumption which structures our second net. Sextus undermines both disjuncts by various combinations of the modes of disagreement, infinite regression and reciprocity and thereby introduces universal aporia (πάντων ἀπορίαν).

How best to understand the assumption? The distinction between that which is apprehended by means of itself and that which is apprehended by means of something else is a commonplace not only among ancient epistemologists, but among epistemologists generally. At bottom, the distinction is between that which is basic or foundational and that which is non-basic or non-foundational. Those items which are foundational do not depend on any further items, and those items which are not foundational do. Such a description, though true, is perhaps too abstract to be helpful. Let us speak, more concretely, in terms of beliefs and their justification.

A non-foundational belief will be a belief that is not self-standing. It depends for its justification on other beliefs, and it becomes justified by standing in some justification-transmitting inferential connection to some further belief or set of beliefs. A foundational belief, by contrast is self-standing. It depends for its justification on no other beliefs. Foundational beliefs therefore belong to a special class of belief which can be (and have been) characterised in innumerable ways - perhaps they are *a priori* true, or definitionally true, or immediately given in perception, or fundamental in some other sense. Taxonomising and evaluating these

[32] The presence of these third persons in connection with Net 2, as opposed to the first person ὑποδείξομεν which opens the discussion of Net 1 at *PH* 1.169, might lead some to draw the inference that Net 1 is a specifically Sextan construction and Net 2 the product of an Agrippan imagination. But this is not an inference that must be drawn. Net 1 may itself be an Agrippan relic. The presence of the ὑποδείξομεν at *PH* 1.169 is in no way probative.

various characterisations of foundational beliefs is well beyond the scope of this thesis.[33] For my purposes, the distinction need only be fleshed out to the extent that it makes Sextus' subsequent remarks about it intelligible.

How then does Sextus apply the Agrippan modes to both foundational and non-foundational beliefs? He first deals with foundational beliefs at *PH* 1.178 and then with non-foundational beliefs at *PH* 1.179. I shall examine both passages in turn though (for reasons which shall become plain) my discussion of Sextus' remarks regarding foundational beliefs will take up the lion's share of the rest of this section.

The mode by which Sextus first chooses to attack foundational beliefs is the mode of disagreement:

> [T10]καὶ ὅτι μὲν οὐδὲν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ καταλαμβάνεται, φασί, δῆλον ἐκ τῆς γεγενημένης παρὰ τοῖς φυσικοῖς περί τε τῶν αἰσθητῶν καὶ τῶν νοητῶν ἁπάντων οἶμαι διαφωνίας, ἣ δὴ ἀνεπίκριτός ἐστι μὴ δυναμένων ἡμῶν μήτε αἰσθητῷ μήτε νοητῷ κριτηρίῳ χρῆσθαι διὰ τὸ πᾶν, ὅπερ ἂν λάβωμεν διαπεφωνημένον, εἶναι ἄπιστον
> That nothing is apprehended by means of itself is, they say, clear from the dispute which has occurred among natural scientists over, I suppose, all objects of perception and of thought – a dispute which is undecidable[34] since we cannot use either an object of perception or an object of thought as a standard because anything we may take has been disputed and so is unconvincing. (*PH* 1.178)

The claim that nothing is apprehended by means of itself (ie that there are no foundational beliefs) is said to be clear (δῆλον) on account of the fact that undecided disagreement (ἀνεπίκριτός διαφωνία) has occurred among natural scientists (παρὰ τοῖς φυσικοῖς) over all objects of perception and thought (περί τε τῶν αἰσθητῶν καὶ τῶν νοητῶν ἁπάντων). In fact, there are a number of unclarities in Sextus'

[33] The *locus classicus* for the ancient discussion of this question is Aristotle's account of first principles in *Post An* A 1-6 which is discussed (among others) by Barnes (1990), Irwin (1988) and Taylor (1990). For a contemporary treatment (and defence of) epistemological foundationalism see, for example, Chisholm (1982).

[34] "Undecidable" is Annas and Barnes' (2000) translation. Unlike Net 1, in the case of Net 2 it is the sceptic and not the dogmatist who makes claims about the undecidability of the disagreement. Though I adopt their translation, it should be borne in mind that ἀνεπίκριτος excludes a strongly modal sense in line with my remarks in Chapter 1, pp.27-32.

presentation here.

Firstly, recall the presentation of the mode of disagreement in Chapter 1. There ἀνεπίκριτός διαφωνία was seen to promote the suspension of judgement via the following Principle of Disagreement:

> (PD) If S is aware that there is an ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία over P, then S should suspend judgement over P.

However, in the *PH* 1.178 passage, ἀνεπίκριτος διαφωνία is said to lead not to the suspension of judgement but to a claim of the form "nothing is apprehended by means of itself" or "there are no foundational beliefs". I shall proceed on the assumption that this is just carelessness on the part of Sextus and that the conclusion of the *PH* 1.178 passage should, if the account of the mode of disagreement in Chapter 1 is correct, be of the form "one ought to suspend judgement about whether there are any such things as foundational beliefs".

But in that case, what is the disagreement over? And on what grounds is it ἀνεπίκριτος? Sextus tells us that the disagreement is περί τε τῶν αἰσθητῶν καὶ τῶν νοητῶν ἁπάντων. The natural way to take the expression[35] is to think of it as referring to the various items philosophers and scientists have put forward as epistemologically foundational. There is a disagreement over these epistemologically foundational items in the sense that different philosophers and scientist have advanced different and incompatible items as epistemologically foundational. Some philosophers, for example, may claim that those propositions which are *a priori* true are foundational, whereas others might contend that whatever is immediately given in

[35] Both Barnes and Hankinson take it in this way. See Barnes (1990b), p.219; Hankinson (1995), p.190.

perception plays that role.[36]

Now if the account in the preceding paragraph is correct, then the resulting disagreement will be local. It will hold between those philosophers who propose incompatible epistemologically foundational principles. However, Sextus seems to be making a much more radical (and on the face of it implausible) claim than this. In fact it is radical in two respects. For not only does Sextus claim that there will be universal disagreement over *every* (ἁπάντων) epistemologically foundational candidate that is proposed, but also that this disagreement will be ἀνεπίκριτος in the sense that no decisive reasons will have been adduced to decide the matter one way rather than another.

Both these contentions require further argumentative support. Consider an example given by Barnes of an epistemologically foundational item namely the Euclidean claim that "equals taken from equals leave equals".[37] Why think that there would even be disagreement among philosophers and scientists over such a claim, let alone ἀνεπίκριτος disagreement? The answer comes if we turn to the latter half of *PH* 1.178 where Sextus draws attention to a second kind of disagreement – a disagreement not over whether a claim like the Euclidean one above is epistemologically foundational, but a disagreement over what criterion be used to judge it to be so.

The term κριτήριον is a technical one and was a commonplace in Hellenistic epistemological discussions. To elucidate all its various senses would go well beyond the scope of this chapter.[38] For present purposes, all that is required is a basic characterisation. Sextus himself provides one at during his discussion of the

[36] A claim which is *a priori* true would, in Sextus' vocabulary, presumably count as a νοητόν; and a claim which is immediately given in perception would, presumably count as an αἰσθητόν.
[37] See Barnes (1990b), p.219. This is Euclid I common notion 3. Aristotle refers to it at *APst* 76a41, b20 and 77a31.
[38] For a classic treatment of this see Striker (1996b).

criterion which occupies *PH* 2.14-97. He observes,

> [T11]κριτήριον μὲν λέγεται τό τε ᾧ κρίνεσθαί φασιν ὕπαρξιν καὶ ἀνυπαρξίαν καὶ τὸ ᾧ προσέχοντες βιοῦμεν
> The word "criterion" is used both of that by which they say reality and unreality are judged and that by attending to which we live our lives. (*PH* 2.14)

It is the former and not the latter sense which is operative here (and indeed throughout Sextus' discussion at *PH* 2.14-97). A criterion then is a standard or yardstick by which the truth or falsity of a claim is determined. For example, for an Epicurean the criterion of truth is perception.[39] An Epicurean judges that there is frost on the lawn because he perceives it to be so: the truth of the claim that there is frost on the lawn is determined by the Epicurean's perception that there is frost on the lawn.

Returning to the second half of *PH* 1.178, the line of reasoning is as follows. The disagreement over the foundational status of our Euclidean claim is ἀνεπίκριτος because we cannot use (μὴ δυναμένων χρῆσθαι) any criterion to determine whether the Euclidean claim is foundational. And we cannot use a criterion to determine whether the Euclidean claim is foundational because there is an ἀνεπίκριτος disagreement[40] over every proposed criterion.

There are three questions one might raise in connection with this argument. First, why think the fact that I cannot use a criterion to determine whether the Euclidean claim is foundational means that the dispute over that claim is ἀνεπίκριτος? Second, why think the fact that there is a higher-order ἀνεπίκριτος disagreement over every proposed criterion means that I cannot use a criterion to determine whether the Euclidean claim is foundational? And third, why think that the higher-order disagreement over every proposed criterion is ἀνεπίκριτος in the first

[39] See Taylor (1980) for further elucidation of this claim.
[40] In fact in *PH* 1.178 Sextus merely says that there is disagreement (διαπεφωνημένον) over every proposed criterion and not undecided or unresolved disagreement, but for his argument to go through he must mean the latter and not the former.

place? My main concern here will be to offer an answer to the third of these questions – for not only do the answers given to the first and second questions depend on the answer given to the third, but in answering the third question one comes to see how three of the Agrippan modes (of hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity) might be utilised effectively in combination with one another.

The criticism lying behind the third question can be put as follows. In *PH* 1.178 Sextus claimed that there was an ἀνεπίκριτος first-order disagreement over every epistemologically foundational claim. And to justify this claim Sextus appealed to another ἀνεπίκριτος higher-order disagreement over any criterion for deciding those first-order disagreements. But this simply pushes the puzzle a step back. First, why think that there is this higher-order disagreement, and, second, why think that this higher-order disagreement is itself unresolved?

Sextus provides an answer to neither of these questions, but answers may be supplied on his behalf. Regarding the first question, one might simply say it was an empirical fact that the dogmatists of Sextus' day disagreed over what the criterion of truth was: the Epicureans endorsed one criterion, the Stoics another, the Platonists another, the Peripatetics another and so on. As Sextus himself remarks at *PH* 2.14 regarding the "criterion through which" (τὸ δι' οὗ)[41] the disagreement between dogmatists on this subject is great, indeed, pretty well infinite (πολλὴ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄπειρος σχεδὸν ἡ περὶ αὐτὸ γέγονε διαφωνία παρὰ τοῖς δογματικοῖς).

But what of the second question? Why think that a higher-order disagreement between, say, an Epicurean and a Platonist over the standard of truth is a disagreement that is ἀνεπίκριτος? An answer is provided not in the *PH* 1.178

[41] This is one of three species of the criterion of truth which Sextus discusses at *PH* 2.22-79. The other two are the criterion by which (τό ὑφ' οὗ) and the criterion in virtue of which (τὸ καθ' ὅ). The various distinctions between these three species are not my concern here. For Sextus' own elucidation see *M* 7.36-7. For a more recent elucidation see Hankinson (1995), pp.193-200.

passage, but material from which an answer can be fashioned is to be found later on at *PH* 2.20 during Sextus' actual discussion of the criterion of truth. There he writes,

> [T12]καὶ ἄλλως, ἵνα ἡ γενομένη περὶ τοῦ κριτηρίου διαφωνία ἐπικριθῇ, δεῖ κριτήριον ἡμᾶς ἔχειν ὡμολογημένον, δι' οὗ δυνησόμεθα κρίνειν αὐτήν· καὶ ἵνα κριτήριον ὁμολογούμενον ἔχωμεν, δεῖ πρότερον ἐπικριθῆναι τὴν περὶ τοῦ κριτηρίου διαφωνίαν. οὕτω δὲ εἰς τὸν διάλληλον ἐμπίπτοντος τρόπον τοῦ λόγου, ἄπορος ἡ εὕρεσις τοῦ κριτηρίου γίνεται, μήτε ἐξ ὑποθέσεως ἡμῶν ἐώντων αὐτοὺς κριτήριον λαμβάνειν, ἐάν τε κριτηρίῳ τὸ κριτήριον κρίνειν ἐθέλωσιν, εἰς ἀπειρίαν αὐτοὺς ἐκβαλλόντων.
>
> Again, in order for the dispute that has arisen about standards to be decided, we must possess an agreed standard through which we can judge it; and in order for us to possess an agreed standard, the dispute about standards must already have been decided. Thus the argument falls into the reciprocal mode and the discovery of a standard is blocked- for we do not allow them to assume a standard by hypothesis, and if they want to judge the standard by a standard we throw them into an infinite regress. (*PH* 2.20)

Admittedly the context here is slightly different to the context of *PH* 1.178. The main difference is the dispute in question. In *PH* 1.178 the dispute is between those dogmatists who offer rival and incompatible criteria of truth. At *PH* 2.20, by contrast, the dispute is between those dogmatists who reject there being a criterion of truth altogether and those who affirm that there is one.[42] Despite this difference, *PH* 2.20 provides a useful template from which to approach the question as to why the Epicurean and Platonist's disagreement over the standard of truth is irresolvable. For the passage purports to show that the dispute between those dogmatists who affirm that there is a criterion of truth and those who deny that there is one, can be referred to the three Agrippan modes of hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity.

Now Sextus' procedure here is not completely clear – in particular in connection with the mode of reciprocity. Sextus claims reciprocity is violated for the following reason: if a dogmatist is to decide the initial disagreement over whether the criterion of truth exists he must possess (δεῖ ἔχειν) some criterion, K, by which the

[42] I have discussed the details of the dispute of *PH* 2.20 and whether the sceptic should be counted as part of it in greater detail in Chapter 1, pp.24-7.

matter can be judged. But to possess K the dispute in question must already (πρότερον) have been decided.[43] The presentation of the mode is curious – for if Sextus' reasoning is correct, then his subsequent deployment of the modes of infinite regression and hypothesis becomes redundant. For these two modes can come into play only if it *is* possible for the dogmatist to appeal to some criterion, K, by which the initial disagreement can be decided. For only then will it be possible to scrutinize the credentials of K, to ask of it whether it is merely hypothesised (in which case the mode of hypothesis is violated) or whether it is ratified by some further criterion K_1 which is is turn ratified by some further criterion K_2 and so on *ad infinitum* (in which case the mode of infinite regression is violated).

Barnes also finds Sextus' use of reciprocity in *PH* 2.20 curious but for a different reason.[44] According to Barnes, the kind of reciprocity at play here is what I have termed regressive reciprocity (and what is termed by Barnes "generic reciprocity").[45] Now there *is* a straightforward reference to regressive reciprocity immediately following on from the text in [T12], which reads,

> [T13]ἀλλὰ καί, ἐπεὶ ἡ μὲν ἀπόδειξις δεῖται κριτηρίου ἀποδεδειγμένου, τὸ δὲ κριτήριον ἀποδείξεως κεκριμένης, εἰς τὸν διάλληλον ἐκβάλλονται τρόπον
> Again, since a proof needs a standard which has been proved and a standard needs a proof which has been judged, they are thrown into the reciprocal mode. (*PH* 2.20)

However, Barnes' remarks about regressive reciprocity are made in the context of

[43] For the moment I leave unexamined the claim that (i) to decide a disagreement I must possess a criterion by which to decide it and the claim that (ii) to possess a criterion by which to decide a disagreement that very criterion must not itself be subject to undecided disagreement. Below, pp.200-2 I offer some motivation for two claims Sextus makes at *PH* 1.178: namely, that (i*) to decide a disagreement I must be able to use a criterion to decide it; and that (ii*) to use a criterion to decide a disagreement that very criterion must not itself be subject to undecided disagreement. On the assumption that if I am able to use a criterion, K, to judge a dispute, then I must possess K, the arguments I offer below to motivate (i*) and (ii*) also motivate (i) and (ii). For a recent treatment which argues that one need not possess a criterion of truth in order to make judgements see Schwab (2013), pp. 334-40.

[44] See Barnes (1990a), p.115.

[45] See Chapter 4, pp.126-8.

[T12] not [T13], so it is worth dwelling on whether the reference to reciprocity in [T12] can be construed a reference to regressive reciprocity. To do so involves construing [T12] in the following manner. The dispute over whether there exists a criterion of truth has to be decided by appeal to some criterion, K. But given the fact that the very existence of the criterion of truth is disputed, K itself will be disputed and therefore having to be decided by appeal to some further criterion K_1, and so on *ad infinitum*. The difference between my construal of [T12] and Barnes' is that I take the expression τὴν περὶ τοῦ κριτηρίου διαφωνίαν in line 4 of [T12] to refer back to περὶ τοῦ κριτηρίου διαφωνία in line 1, whereas Barnes takes the expression to refer to the (unstated) dispute over the standard by which the τὴν περὶ τοῦ κριτηρίου διαφωνίαν in line 1, is to be decided. Either reading is possible, but both raise puzzles for *PH* 2.20. On Barnes' reading, though *PH* 2.20 purports to rely on three Agrippan modes, in fact it only relies on two – hypothesis and infinite regression (for regressive reciprocities are instances of infinite regression); on mine, the modes of hypothesis and infinite regression are rendered redundant, as outlined on the previous page.

Nevertheless, *PH* 2.20, however imperfect, does suggest a way in which, by combining the three modes of infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis, the higher-order disagreement between our Epicurean and Platonist over the standard of truth in *PH* 1.178 can be shown to be ἀνεπίκριτος. Let us put ourselves in the shoes of the Epicurean who maintains that the criterion of truth is perception, a claim which is disputed by his Platonist interlocutor. How might the Epicurean resolve the dispute in his favour? Either (a) he asserts that the criterion of truth is perception without supplying any further reason for thinking so or (b) he does supply some further reason for thinking it so. If (a), then the mode of hypothesis comes into play and there will be nothing to stop his Platonist rival from hypothesising that perception is not the

criterion of truth. If (b), then there are three options open to him. Either he can embark on providing an infinite sequence of reasons or he can choose to stop giving reasons at some point or he can repeat one of the reasons he has already given. But he can do none of these since the first course of action falls victim to the mode of infinite regression, the second to the mode of hypothesis and the third to the mode of reciprocity. Precisely analogous reasoning can be brought to bear against the Platonist and any criterion of truth he offers. The higher-order dispute between our Epicurean and Platonist over the criterion of truth is therefore ἀνεπίκριτος.

Of course, even if the reasoning of the previous paragraphs is plausible our first and second questions regarding the *PH* 1.178 passage remain to be addressed. Underlying the first question was the demand that some reason be given for thinking that some first-order disagreement (e.g. over the foundational nature of the Euclidean claim that equals taken from equals leave equals) is undecided so long as we cannot use a criterion (μὴ δυναμένων χρῆσθαι) to decide it one way or the other. Underlying the second question was the demand that some reason be given for thinking that the irresolvability of the higher-order disagreement over the criterion of truth means that one is unable to use some criterion (μὴ δυναμένων χρῆσθαι) to decide some first-order disagreement.

Now the reasonableness of these demands varies depending on the sense given to the modal expression μὴ δυναμένων. If the expression is understood in terms of psychological necessity, then these demands seems perfectly reasonable. Consider our second demand. From the fact that I am aware that there is an undecided higher-order disagreement over whether K_1 or K_2 is the criterion of truth, it does *not* follow that I am psychologically unable to use K_1 (say) to decide some first-order disagreement. Analogously: from the fact that I am aware that there is (let us

suppose) an undecided disagreement over whether coffee or tea is better for the concentration, it does *not* follow that I am physically unable to use coffee to get me through the morning.

By contrast, if the modality of the expression μὴ δυναμένων is understood in terms of rational necessity, then the demand seems less reasonable. For if I am aware that there is an undecided higher-order disagreement over whether K_1 or K_2 is the criterion of truth, then there is reason to think that I would be being *unreasonable* were I to use K_1 (or K_2) as a criterion by which to judge some first-order disagreement. And there is reason to think that I would be being unreasonable were I to act in this fashion *precisely because* I am aware that there are no decisive reasons which settle the matter as to whether K_1 or K_2 is the criterion of truth.

A similar point can be made in connection with the first demand. If μὴ δυναμένων is understood in terms of psychological necessity, then the demand seems reasonable. Just because I am psychologically incapable of using a criterion to decide a dispute one way rather than another, this does not mean that the dispute is ἀνεπίκριτος. Recall that a dispute is ἀνεπίκριτος just in case no decisive reasons have yet been adduced which decide the matter one way rather than another. If this is the case, then my psychological incapability of using a criterion to decide a dispute is completely independent from the question as to whether decisive reasons have yet been adduced which decide the matter one way rather than another. And one would require a further for thinking that the two were connected. By contrast, if μὴ δυναμένων is understood in terms of rational necessity, then the demand seems less reasonable. For if I am incapable of using a criterion to decide a dispute, in the sense that I am not aware of any criterion which decisively settles the matter, then that is just to say that, given all I know, there is an ἀνεπίκριτος disagreement over the

dispute.

So the plausibility of Sextus' claims here, depend on the way in which the expression μὴ δυναμένων is construed. However, I do not pursue this question any further, for it is tangential to my main concern, which is to have elucidated how the Agrippan modes were used by Sextus to target foundational beliefs. Recall that the position is as follows: foundational beliefs are referred in the first instance to the mode of disagreement, and this mode in turn depends for its effectiveness on the combined force of the modes of hypothesis, reciprocity and infinite regression. Sextus does not say this explicitly in *PH* 1.178, but, *pace* the caveats mentioned above, it is reasonable to attribute to him something like this thought on the basis of a passage like *PH* 2.20.

But what of the second class of beliefs mentioned in *PH* 1.178-9, namely non-foundational beliefs? Sextus' line of reasoning here is much clearer than his line of reasoning regarding foundational beliefs, and so my treatement of it will be much briefer. He writes,

> [T14]διὰ δὲ τοῦτο οὐδ' ἐξ ἑτέρου τι καταλαμβάνεσθαι συγχωροῦσιν. εἰ μὲν γὰρ τὸ ἐξ οὗ τι καταλαμβάνεται ἀεὶ ἐξ ἑτέρου καταλαμβάνεσθαι δεήσει, εἰς τὸν διάλληλον ἢ τὸν ἄπειρον ἐμβάλλουσι τρόπον. εἰ δὲ βούλοιτό τις λαβεῖν ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ καταλαμβανόμενόν τι ἐξ οὗ καταλαμβάνεται ἕτερον, ἀντιπίπτει τὸ μηδὲν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ καταλαμβάνεσθαι διὰ τὰ προειρημένα.
>
> And for the following reason they do not consider either that anything can be apprehended by means of something else. If that by means of which something is apprehended will itself always need to be apprehended by means of something else, they throw you into the reciprocal or the infinite mode; and if you should want to assume that that by means of which another thing is apprehended is itself apprehended by means of itself, then this is countered by the fact that, for the above reasons, nothing is apprehended by means of itself. (*PH* 1.179).

The import of the passage should be clear. Say a dogmatist maintains some non-foundational belief, P. Now *qua* non-foundational belief, P will be not stand alone

but will be supported by some further belief, Q. Now, the dogmatist is presented with a dilemma. Either Q itself is a foundational belief or it is a non-foundational belief. If it is a foundational belief, then it is susceptible to the argument Sextus has already outlined in [T10]. If it is non-foundational, then Q will either be the same as P or different from P. If it is the same as P, then it falls foul of the mode of reciprocity. If it is different from P, then, being non-foundational, it will be supported by some further belief R. The same questions now arise for R. Either it is foundational or it is non-foundational. If it is foundational, then, once again, it is susceptible to the argument outlined in [T10]. If it is non-foundational, then it will either be the same as Q (or P) in which case it falls foul of the mode of reciprocity or it will be supported by some further belief S. But supporting P by Q, Q by R, R by S cannot go on *ad infinitum* for then the mode of infinite regression is violated.

That then is the weave of Sextus' second net. Beginning with the assumption that every belief is either foundational or non-foundational Sextus proceeds to show that whether we are dealing with a foundational or a non-foundational belief one should suspend judgement. Sextus' attack on foundational beliefs purported to introduce suspension of judgement by one mode: the mode of disagreement. But as has been shown this mode itself depends for its effectiveness on the combined force of the modes of infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis. On the other hand, his attack on non-foundational beliefs relies on the modes of reciprocity and infinite regression.[46]

[46] Hypothesis is conspicuously absent. I discuss this omission in the next section.

The Modes Recombined

The preceding pages have attempted to extract from Sextus' text two nets which illustrate how four of the Agrippan modes could be used in combination with one another. Neither is free from fault. Net 1 is a complex beast and I have argued the best way to approach it is to think of it in terms of three possible dialectical scenarios that could obtain between sceptic and dogmatist. However, none of these scenarios present the modes in the most lucid fashion. Sextus' description of the sceptic's dialectic with a (ϕ)-endorser and with a (ψ)-endorser (as far as it could be gathered from the text) made no mention of the mode of reciprocity. And in the case of the sceptic's dialectic with a (χ)-endorser, Sextus' description of the mode of reciprocity was underdescribed - it was unclear whether he was targeting regressive or formal reciprocities.

Net 2, by contrast, has often been seen as superior to Net 1 in respect of the clarity with which the modes are presented in a combined system. Barnes counsels, "If we wish to assess the systematic power of the [modes] we shall do better to look first at [Net 2] which Sextus appends to [Net 1]"[47], while Hankinson calls Net 2 "the ultimate distillation of the sceptical liquor".[48] However, as presented above, Net 2's ordering of the modes is less than felicitous.

For one, though my reconstruction of Sextus' attack on foundational beliefs at *PH* 1.178 involved all four of the Agrippan modes, in the text Sextus speaks only of one – the mode of disagreement. The remaining modes (of infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis) have to be supplied by drawing on texts like *PH* 2.20,

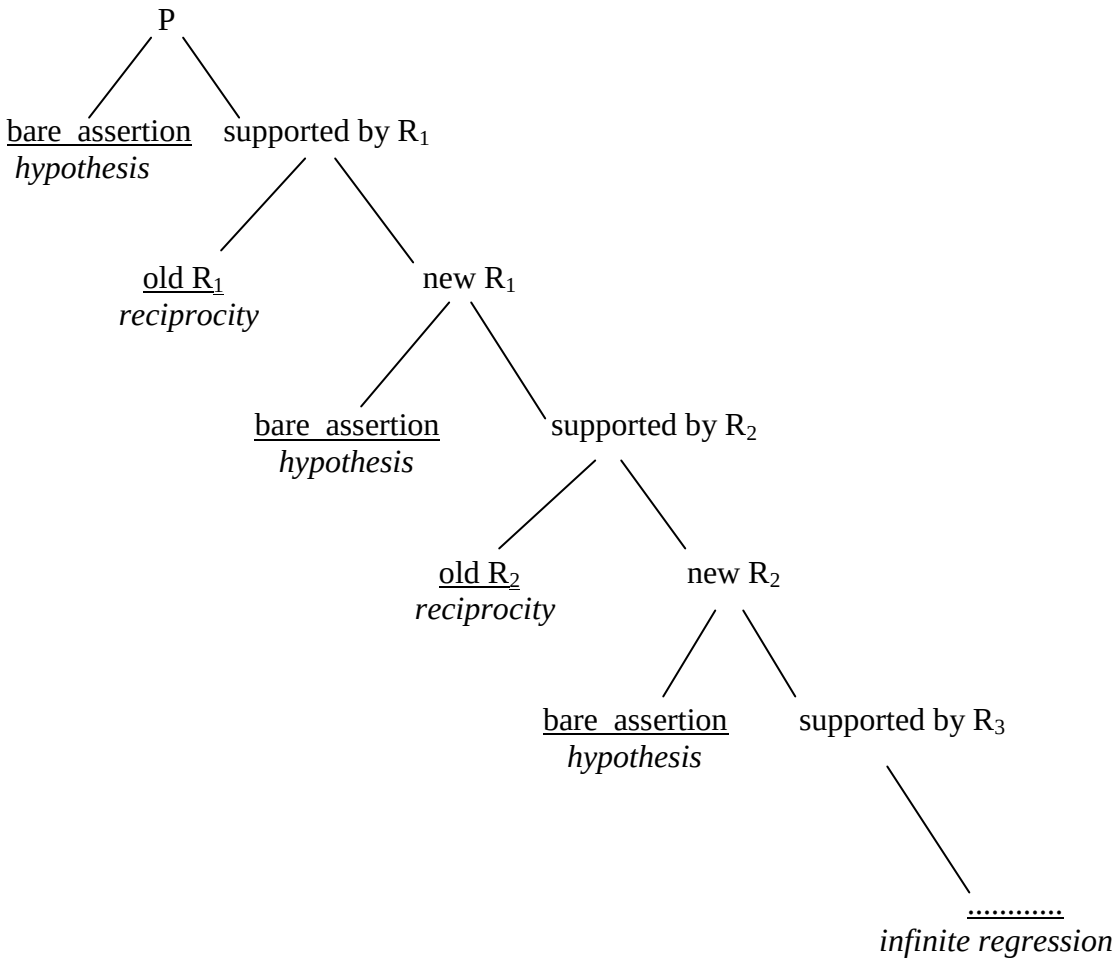
[47] Barnes (1990b), p.213. I have recast some of Barnes' vocabulary so it fits more smoothly with the vocabulary used in this chapter. Barnes speaks in terms of sceptical "Ways" rather than in terms of "modes" or "nets".
[48] Hankinson (1995), p.189

which itself does not offer a clear instance of the mode of reciprocity.

For another, when Sextus comes to outline how the modes are meant to target non-foundational beliefs at *PH* 1.179 he speaks only of the modes of infinite regression and reciprocity – hypothesis is absent. This is not only a conspicuous absence but a regrettable one. Firstly, hypothesis was shown to play a crucial role when the modes were combined in Net 1 (and indeed in *PH* 2.20) - it ensured the dogmatist did not arbitrarily stop at some point in the giving of reasons, thereby making him a potential victim of either the mode of infinite regression or reciprocity. Secondly, as I have suggested in Chapter 3, the mode of hypothesis, being a limiting case of the sceptic's method of equipollence,[49] provides a template along which to construct what I have termed sceptical versions of the modes of infinite regression and reciprocity – that is versions of those modes by means of which a sceptic himself and not merely his dogmatic opponent might reach the suspension of judgement.

Perhaps it is unsurprising that these various infelicities of the combined versions of the modes with which Sextus presents us have lead commentators such as Barnes to construct a third sceptical net which no Sextan text explicitly endorses and which combines the modes of hypothesis, infinite regression, and reciprocity. This combination of modes – let us call it Net 3 - is merely a schematic version of the particular combination of modes that was employed above to ground the irresolvability of the disagreement between the Epicurean and Platonist over the standard of truth in *PH* 1.178.[50] Rather than repeat it here I shall follow Barnes' lead, who helpfully represents Net 3 by means of a tree schema, a version of which is reproduced below:[51]

[49] See Chapter 3, pp.84-5.
[50] See above, p.206-7
[51] See Barnes (1990a), p.118 for the original version. Any differences between the version printed here and Barnes' version are purely cosmetic.



The diagonal lines are meant to represent the possible paths a dogmatist might take. Wherever there is a horizontal line that means that the path in question has been blocked by one of the Agrippan modes (the mode in question is written in italics below the horizontal line). P is some claim made by the dogmatist, and $R_{1...}R_n$ are the various reasons the dogmatist adduces to support P. When an item is called "old" that means it has already appeared in the schema. When an item is called "new" that means that the item occurs for the first time. Therefore, in the schema above old R_1 = P, old R_2 = R_1 or old R_2 = P, and so on. The fact that every path ends in a horizontal lines illustrates the inevitability of the suspension of judgement.

Barnes' Net 3 certainly has many virtues in comparison with Nets 1 and 2. It is more streamlined and easier to comprehend than either of the other two. It does not omit the mode of hypothesis as Net 2 did in connection with its attack on non-foundational beliefs. Nor does it omit the mode of reciprocity as Net 1 did when it targeted (ϕ) and (ψ)-endorsers. Furthermore, thanks to Barnes' distinction between "old" and "new" items, there is no ambiguity between cases of regressive and formal reciprocity which affected Net 1 when it targeted (χ)-endorsers.

However, there is one obvious omission from Barnes' net: the mode of disagreement. This was a mode that featured in both Net 1 and Net 2, though it played a different role in each. In the case of Net 2, which was structured around a distinction between foundational and non-foundational beliefs, undecided disagreement was utilised by Sextus to argue against the possibility of a dogmatist relying on foundational beliefs. The sole role of disagreement in Net 2, then, was to block off one of two possible routes open to the dogmatist.

In Net 1, by contrast, disagreement is not merely used to block off one of two possible routes open to the dogmatist, rather the mode itself structures the net. For, whether the sceptic's dogmatic opponent is a (ϕ)-endorser or a (ψ)-endorser or a (χ)-endorser, at the outset of his dialectic with the sceptic, he will be presented with the following dilemma. On the assumption that there is a disagreement over whatever α-proposition or ν-propositoin is advanced (an assumption to which I shall return), is the disagreement in question decidable or undecidable? If undecidable, then suspension of judgement follows by virtue of the mode of disagreement. If decidable, then, notwithstanding the difficulties raised by Sextus' exposition, the modes of hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity will apply.

Now, as well as offering us Net 3, Barnes weaves together a net which

does include the mode of disagreement. In fact he does this twice.[52] In both cases the mode of disagreement is used as it was in Net 2 to bring about the suspension of judgement regarding foundational beliefs.[53] I close this section by considering an alternative way of weaving disagreement into a net like Net 3. On this way of thinking, the mode of disagreement does not merely block off a route down which a dogmatist might travel as it did in the case of Net 2, rather the mode structures the net in a manner analogous to the way in which it does in the case of Net 1.

Let us imagine that some dogmatist puts forward some claim, P. Now, on the assumption that there is a disagreement over P, the dogmatist will be confronted with the same dilemma he faced in the case of Net 1: will the dogmatist say of this disagreement that it is decidable or undecidable? If he claims it is undecidable, then, via the mode of disagreement, he will suspend judgement immediately. If on the other hand he claims the disagreement is decidable (let us say decidable in favour of P rather than not-P), then the dogmatist will expose himself to the modes of hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity when he attempts to argue for P over not-P, just as outlined in Net 3.

Two significant features emerge from this revised version of Barnes' third net (let us call it Net 4). The first is that it points towards a function of disagreement that has so far not been considered. Chapter 1 focused on how the phenomenon of *undecided* disagreement brought about the suspension of judgement. What Net 4

[52] In Barnes (1990b), p.216 and in Barnes (1990a), p.118.

[53] The difference between Barnes (1990b), p.216 and Barnes (1990a), p.118 is that in the latter case Barnes offers us a net composed of three modes where disagreement replaces hypothesis, whereas in the former case Barnes offers us a net of four modes which includes both disagreement and hypothesis. The net Barnes offers in (1990a), p.118 is therefore identical to what I have called Net 3 save for the fact that the mode of disagreement is used to block foundational or self-supporting items in place of the mode of hypothesis blocking bare assertions as it does in Net 3. In Barnes (1990b), p.216 the mode of hypothesis is used to block bare assertions, while the mode of disagreement is used to block foundational or self-supporting items. Non self-supporting items which are not themselves bare assertions then either fall victim to the mode of reciprocity or the mode of infinite regression. However, these differences are, for my purposes, unimportant, so I pursue them no further.

draws attention to is the fact that simple disagreement can bring about suspension of judgement in another, more indirect, way. The thought is this. By drawing some dogmatist's attention to the fact that (let us suppose) some other dogmatist disagrees with him over P, the sceptic places the dogmatist in a context in which he is obliged to enter into the business of giving reasons for P. But once he is the business of giving reasons for P, he opens himself up to the combined modes of hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity, the outcome of each of which is the suspension of judgement, as illustrated by Barnes' Net 3.

The crucial claim here is the claim that by virtue of being alerted to the fact that some other dogmatist disagrees with him, our dogmatist is placed in a context in which he is obliged to offer reasons for P. To fully unpack the nature of the obligation involved here or what norm or norms (if any) would be violated were the dogmatist *not* to offer reasons for P, would go well beyond the scope of this thesis. For present purposes it will be enough to note two features of Net 4.

First, to return to a theme from Chapter 1, in order for the claim to become plausible, some reference needs to be made to the fact that the two dogmatists are epistemic peers - that is, equally familiar the evidence and arguments that bear on the question and equal with respect to various epistemic virtues such an intelligence, diligence, freedom from bias and so on.[54] Furthermore, the sceptic's interlocutor must be aware that this is the case. Incorporating these two assumptions, the picture is as follows. A sceptic alerts some dogmatist who maintains P to the fact that some epistemic peer of his disagrees with him. Given this, it seems plausible that the dogmatist, if he wishes to continue maintaining P, is obliged either to deny that he is being confronted by an epistemic peer or provide some additional reason for thinking

[54] See Chapter 1, p.31.

P rather than not-P. But if he does either of these things he has already entered into the business of giving reasons, and the sceptic can begin to exercise his equipollent ability and wheel out the modes of hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity.

The second point of interest that emerges from Net 4 is that, unlike Net 1 and 2, it does *not* purport to bring about universal suspension of judgement. For, according to Net 4, the modes of hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity are only brought into play when some dogmatist enters into the process of offering reasons for P, having been made aware that some epistemic peer disagrees with him over P. Where there is no such disagreement, there will be no obligation on the part of the dogmatist to enter into the business of offering reasons for P and the modes of hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity will be idle.

The kind of suspension of judgement created by Net 4 is therefore piecemeal and *ad hoc*. Suspension of judgement will only arise once some dogmatist has become trapped by the modes of infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis; but he will only be trapped by these modes if he enters into the business of giving reasons for what he believes; and he will only enter into the business of giving reasons for what he believes if he is aware that some epistemic peer of his disagrees with him.

This *ad hoc* aspect of Net 4 could both be seen as an advantage and a disadvantage. Clearly, it is a disadvantage if one wants one's net to promote, as Sextus seems to suggest at *PH* 1.169, universal suspension of judgement. However, if one returns to one of the central themes of this thesis and considers matters from the perspective of a sceptic who lacks all theoretical beliefs, in *not* aiming to promote universal suspension of judgement, the weaver of Net 4 escapes from holding a

number of illicit theoretical beliefs, from which the weavers of Nets 1 and 2, do not.[55] I take up this issue in the next (and final) section of this thesis.

Dogmatic Nets

We have before us four nets. The first two are found in the pages of Sextus' text; the third is devised by Barnes; and the fourth is a modified version of the third, incorporating disagreement. It was suggested at the end of the previous section that the fourth net carried less theoretical baggage than either the first or the second. Here I offer some reasons for thinking why this is so.

Consider Net 1. The systematiser of this net, if he believes that it brings about universal suspension of judgement, will have to believe that whatever is proposed for investigation is either an α-proposition or a ν-proposition (but not both) and that there are three and only three positions regarding the nature of α-propositions and ν-propositions which can be adopted: that only α-propositions are true, that only ν-propositions are true, and that some α-propositions and some α-propositions are true. As for the systematiser of Net 2, if he believes that it brings about universal suspension of judgement, he will have to believe that every belief is either foundational or non-foundational.

Now, all of the beliefs alluded to in the previous paragraph are theoretical beliefs. They could all be said to belong to the domain of epistemology and so on a Barnes-Burnyeat view are not the sort of beliefs a sceptic, who lacks all theoretical beliefs, could hold. Equally, these beliefs are not the kinds of beliefs that merely unreflectively strike someone as being the case but rather are beliefs that will be held

[55] I leave the relationship between Net 4 and Net 3 till the next section.

on the basis of further reasons. As such, they are also excluded as possible beliefs for a sceptic on a Fredean view.

Of the beliefs underpinning Net 1 and Net 2 one, in particular, stands out: the belief that the net in question brings about universal suspension of judgement.[56] It is by virtue of the fact that the systematisers of these nets aim to bring about universal suspension of judgement that they have to take on board the various other background theoretical assumptions highlighted above. The systematiser of Net 4, by contrast, has no such grand aim.

As suggested in the previous section, given the role played by disagreement in Net 4, the kind of suspension of judgement that is reached on the basis of this net is *ad hoc* and piecemeal rather than universal. Suspension of judgement is reached, but only in those cases where some dogmatist, who believes P, has his attention drawn to the fact that some epistemic peer of his disagrees with him. As a result, the systematiser of Net 4 need hold no beliefs about α-propositions and ν-propositions (as the systematiser of Net 1 must do), nor hold any beliefs about the exhaustive distinction between foundational and non-foundational beliefs (as the systematiser of Net 2 must do).

Indeed, analogous remarks might be made about the systematiser of Net 3. For, though Net 3 excludes the mode of disagreement, it does not require the systematiser to hold any of the theoretical beliefs a systematiser of Net 1 or Net 2 must hold. In the case of Net 3 the modes of infinite regression, reciprocity and hypothesis will be brought to bear on some claim a dogmatist makes but only if he asserts that claim. Where no claim is asserted, no modes are brought to bear, and no suspension of judgement follows.

[56] Recall that at *PH* 1.168, before outlining both Net 1 and Net 2 Sextus claims that *every* object of investigation can be referred to the Agrippan modes (δὲ πᾶν τὸ ζητούμενον εἰς τούτους ἀνάγειν τοὺς τρόπους ἐνδέχεται).

However, to infer from such considerations that the systematisers of Net 3 and Net 4 are somehow free from *all* theoretical commitments would be too swift. In fact, it turns out that the systematisers of Net 3 and Net 4 hold beliefs which, though different from those held by the systematisers of Net 1 and Net 2, are equally theoretical. For though the purpose of Nets 3 and 4 (unlike Nets 1 and 2) is not to bring about *universal* suspension of judgement, it is to bring about *inevitable* suspension of judgement, with regard to some particular belief. But someone will only believe that suspension of judgement is inevitable in the case of Nets 3 and 4 if they believe the following two claims. First, that there are three and only three paths some epistemic subject can take when it comes to the business of giving reasons for some belief he holds – that (as the contemporary literature likes to put it) Agrippa's trilemma is logically exhaustive.[57] And second, that each one of these paths reaches a cul-de-sac in the form either of the mode of infinite regression, reciprocity or hypothesis, as a result of which he must suspend judgement.[58]

Both these sorts of belief, however, are just as theoretical as the beliefs which underscored the Net 1 and Net 2. They are claims which belong to the domain of epistemological theorising and furthermore they are claims which are held on the basis of reasons. That they have the first of these two characteristics rules them out as candidates for belief for a sceptic on a Barnes-Burnyeat view; that they have the second, rules them out on a Fredean one.

The picture we are left with is this. To believe that the suspension of judgement produced by a net like Net 1 or Net 2 is universal, one must hold various theoretical beliefs; and to believe that the suspension of judgement produced by a net like Net 3 or Net 4 is inevitable, one must hold theoretical beliefs. Barnes speaks of

[57] See, for example, Williams (1999), p.39, Klein (2008), p.485.
[58] As Barnes' tree schema makes particularly clear. See above, p.213.

these various nets as the sceptic's.[59] In light of the preceding considerations it would, perhaps, be more accurate to speak of them as "dogmatic nets". For the systematising of the modes into one or other of these configurations depends on the systematiser holding a variety of theoretical beliefs denied to the sceptic.

Concluding Remarks

I end this chapter (and this thesis) on an ironical note. It has been one of the morals of the preceding chapters that a theoretically unencumbered sceptic can come to suspend judgement on the basis of equipollent versions of the modes of hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity.[60] In terms of Barnes' tree schema, the sceptic can reach suspension of judgement by travelling down one or the other of the routes drawn for him. Another moral of the preceding chapters has been that such a sceptic can also deploy the modes of hypothesis, infinite regression and reciprocity (for in so deploying them he is merely exercising his equipollent ability) and thereby bring his dogmatic interlocutor to suspend judgement on the basis of them. In terms of Barnes' tree schema, the sceptic can push his dogmatic opponent down one or other of Barnes' routes to an epistemological cul-de-sac.

But though the sceptic can do all this, there are at least two things he cannot do. He cannot himself come to believe that the suspension of judgement that arises from a net like Net 3 or Net 4 is in any way inevitable. The logical power of the combined modes – so admirably brought out by Barnes' tree schema – is not something to which the sceptic can assent. And he cannot systematically organise these modes into a net by which to ensnare his dogmatic opponent, for to do so would

[59] The title of the fifth chapter of Barnes' (1990a) is "The Sceptic's Net".
[60] See pp.80-1 for (HYP), p.118 for (INF*) and p.142 for (REC*)

go beyond the exercising of his equipollent ability and require the holding of a number of illicit theoretical beliefs. It turns out, then, that though the Agrippan modes can be deployed, individually, by a sceptic, it is only against a framework of dogmatic assumptions that the full sceptical force of their collective deployment can be felt. But this need not trouble our sceptic, who, no doubt, would suspend judgement over such matters.

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