

A DEFENSE OF AUTHENTIC NEO-PYRRHONISM

Review of Plínio Junqueira Smith's, *Sextus Empiricus' Neo-Pyrrhonism: Skepticism as a Rationally Ordered Experience*. Cham: Springer, 2022.

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1 A new image of Neo-Pyrrhonism in the midst of a variety of interpretations

Skepticism is an ancient school that lacks neither influence (suffice it to mention Montaigne, Hume, Wittgenstein, Mautner, e.a.) nor research attention.¹ On the question of whether a skeptic has beliefs (δόγμα), there are two opposing approaches: the so-called “rustic” interpretation (see: [Barnes 1982; Burnyeat 1998a]) and the “urban” interpretation (see: [Frede 1998a; 1998b; Porchat Pereira 2007b]). According to the former, the skeptic has no beliefs, according to the latter, he does.² Interpreters are also divided into several camps regarding the nature of skeptical suspension (ἐποχή). Some argue that the nature of the suspension is causal [Morison 2011; Thorsrud 2009; Williams 1988], so that, according to Sextus Empiricus, it follows the equipollence as “shadow after the body” (*PH* 1.25).³ Still, others assert that suspension is normative in nature [Woodruff 2009]. Nevertheless, there are many scholars who believe that suspension is both

This review was originally published in the Ukrainian journal *Sententiae* 41:2 (2022): 124-143. We thank the journal, Oleg Khoma, and Oleksandr Lukovyna for the authorization of this translation.

¹ Oleksiy Panych emphasizes the huge influence of skepticism on British philosophy: ‘the views of any English-speaking philosopher on the theory of knowledge cannot be understood without a detailed consideration of his attitude—approving, critical, or both—to the philosophy of skepticism. And vice versa: the attitude of any English-speaking philosopher to the philosophy of skepticism can be understood only by examining in detail the whole system of his epistemological views’ [Panych 2007: 10, italics in original]. At the same time, he notes the lack of fundamental research on skepticism in the “East Slavic” tradition [*ibid.*: 9]. As for the Ukrainian research context, in particular, “currently, there are no studies devoted to skepticism as a philosophical trend in general” [*ibid.*]. There is no indication that the situation has changed significantly since 2007 when Panych wrote this.

² This distinction was introduced by Jonathan Barnes: “My question is this: What is the scope of ἐποχή in Sextus’ Outlines of Pyrrhonism? what, if anything, may the Pyrrhonist of the Outlines believe? Two rival answers to that question define two types of Scepticism. The first type I shall call, following Galen, *rustic Pyrrhonism*. The rustic Pyrrhonist has no beliefs whatsoever: he directs ἐποχή towards every issue that may arise. The second type of Scepticism I shall call *urbane Pyrrhonism*. The urbane Pyrrhonist is happy to believe most of the things that ordinary people assent to in the ordinary course of events: he directs ἐποχή towards a specific target - roughly speaking, towards philosophical and scientific matters. Thus the rustics hotly reject everything, while the urbane coolly dismiss the rash claims of the *soi-disant* savants” [Barnes 1982: 2-3, italics in original]. Barnes relies on Galen, who called the Pyrrhonists peasants - “ἀγροικοπυρρωναίους” [Claudius Galenus 1824: 711; 1827: 628] or “Πυρρωναίων ἀγροικίων” [Claudius Galenus 1822: 727]. In Latin translations, the equivalent of ἀγροικός is most often *rusticus*, which has the same meaning: “rural”, but also “rustic, manly”.

³ Hereinafter references are made to the Greek original of the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (*PH*) edited by Robert Greg Bury [Sextus Empiricus 1933], with the book number (Arabic numeral) and Bekker’s additional pagination in parentheses, as reproduced by Bury and Zvonska [Sextus 2020]. The Ukrainian translation by Professor Lesia Zvonska, just mentioned, is usually used, sometimes with changes that are specifically explained in the notes.

normative and causal [see, for example, Perin 2010; Vogt 2011]. It is also worth mentioning the approaches according to which skepticism is a form of empiricism [Bolzani Filho 1990; Frede 1990; Smith 1995] or empiricism “without dogmas” [Porchat Pereira 2007b: 319]. This empiricism excludes the active inner self [Annas 1995: 358-359; 1998: 211; Annas and Barnes 1985: 169-170; Bett 2019: 159-161; Burnyeat 1998a: 51; 1998b: 112; Eichorn 2014: 140-141; Marcondes 1997: 58-59; Massie 2013: 212, 232; Striker 2004: 22]. This interpretation opens up a view of skepticism as an ability [Bett 2019; Morison 2011; Williams 1988] or as a restructuring of one’s own mind [Burnyeat 1998a: 36].

Thus, whoever seeks to present a “new image of Pyrrhonism” [Smith 2022: 3]⁴ should make a huge effort to develop his or her own original position. The interpretation Plínio Junqueira Smith proposes⁵ allows rejecting both rustic and urban approaches to Pyrrhonism (pp. 1-2, 99, 271, 273) as well as the division in causal and normative approaches to suspension of judgment (p. 193). This author invites the reader to look at Sextus’ neo-Pyrrhonism from the position of Sextus himself. Smith tries to follow what Myles Burnyeat called “the internal logic of Pyrrhonism” [Burnyeat 1998a: 52]. Smith also agrees with Michael Frede, who believes that “to base one’s interpretation of the author’s views mainly on those lines where he explicitly expresses them” is “methodologically sound” [Frede 1998a: 16]. According to Smith, this is a completely natural step, because many interpretations contain “hidden, implicit prejudices that are dogmatic” (p. 3).

2 The foundation of Smith’s interpretation: the unnoticed skeptical λόγος (Chapter 1)

The starting point of P. Smith’s interpretation is the rejection of the textually unreliable, in his opinion, division of the *PH* into paragraphs. After all, this division was introduced in manuscripts much older than the first edition of the Latin translation by Henri Etienne [Sextus Empiricus 1562].⁶ This approach allows P. Smith to develop an original interpretation of Sextus’ neo-Pyrrhonism and to look with a fresh eye at the misinterpretations caused by the erroneous, in his opinion, perception of the text of the *PH*.

For P. Smith’s interpretation, *PH 1.5* is very important, for it is there that Sextus lays out his own program for considering the characteristics of skepticism (τὸν χαρακτῆρα τῆς σκέψεως): its concept, principles, λόγοι,⁷ criterion, and goal. This passage sketches an outline of Sextus’ work:

⁴ In the following, references to [Smith 2022] are given with the page number after the abbreviation p., in parentheses and without the author’s name and year of publication.

⁵ Associate Professor of Philosophy at the Federal University of São Paulo. He is the editor of “Bayle and Pyrrhonism: Antinomy, Method and History” [Smith 2013a] and “Kantian Criticism and the Legacy of Modern Skepticism” [Smith 2013b]. He has held postdoctoral fellowships at the University of California (Berkeley) and Wolfson College (Oxford). After defending his PhD thesis on Humean skepticism [Smith 1995], he has been engaged, among other things, in ancient skepticism (Sextus in particular). Smith informs us about his twenty five years of “reading of Sextus”, after which it took another five years of work to reach a “more comprehensive interpretation” of Sextus’ Pyrrhonism. Ultimately, Smith now considers his interpretation still “not mature enough,” but because of the inexorable passage of time he feels obliged to write at least as good a book as he is capable of now (p. ix).

⁶ For more information about these manuscripts see: [Sextus Empiricus 1933: xliii].

⁷ Smith does not translate λόγος until the fifth chapter of the book. Following him, I also do not provide a translation in the corresponding part of my review. At this point, it is necessary to clarify the methodological direction in which the translator should move. After all, I strive, relying, where possible, on the national academic tradition (of Ukraine), to convey the meaning as well as flavor of Smith’s very

1. names used for the skeptical orientation (*PH* 1.7);
2. its conception (*PH* 1.8-11);
3. its principles (*PH* 1.12-15);
4. its λόγοι (*PH* 1.16-20);
5. its criterion (*PH* 1.21-24);
6. its goal (*PH* 1.25-30).

According to P. Smith, *PH* 1.7-30 is the most important among “all surviving texts” of the *PH*, and “the best way to begin to understand Sextus’ Pyrrhonism is to begin to understand this first part [of the *PH*]” (p. 5).

However, the division of the text of the *PH* into chapters was not done by Sextus himself (pp. 6, 102). In P. Smith’s view, this division only obscures Sextus’ thought. When it comes to the division of *PH* 1.16-20, it is, in general, “the worst mistake of the manuscripts’ division of chapters” (p. 103). Although Sextus speaks of skeptical λόγοι, in plural, P. Smith is going to develop his own interpretation: there is only one λογος, in singular, which has multiple sides and nuances (p. 100).

According to P. Smith, the poor division of the text also obscured the meaning of the two skeptical principles: the causal (αίτια) (*PH* 1.12) and the main (μάλιστα) (*PH* 1.12-15). As a result, one might think that the question of the beginnings is fully contained in *PH* 1.12, and then the question is whether the skeptic can dogmatize (p. 6). However, whether the skeptic has dogmas is not an open question: the skeptic has no dogmas (pp. 7, 103). Nevertheless, the skeptic has beliefs (πίστις) (p. 341).

After all, as P. Smith puts it, “there is an order of experience that leads from the talented person to the skeptic; and there is an order of experience, both in philosophy and everyday life, that is guided by this skeptical λόγος” (pp. 101-102).

Since the content of the book makes it possible to comprehend the sequence of steps P. Smith takes and to construct a complete image of Neo-Pyrrhonism, I give this content in full:

Chapter 1: Τὸν χαρακτηῖρα τῆς σκέψεως:⁸ The Distinctive Character of Skepticism (5)⁹

Chapter 2: Μεγαλοφυεῖς and ἀνομαλία: The Talented Person, Conflicts in Everyday Life, and the Attraction of Philosophy (6)

Chapter 3: Ζήτησις: The Initial Investigation of the φιλόσοφος¹⁰ (7)

idiosyncratic work. Usually, when dealing with §§ 1-13 of the *PH*, I use Lesia Zvonska’s translation [Sextus 2020], as the only currently available Ukrainian translation of the *PH*. I extrapolate the principles of this translation, where possible, to the translation of other passages from Sextus. Specifically, I take seriously the methodological requirement to avoid Latinisms when reproducing Greek terms in Ukrainian [Zvonska 2020: 93]. However, I, rather naturally, have to rely on Smith’s English translations in order to adequately convey the content of his book. Since Zvonska’s translation (λογος as “sense”) is based on a different interpretation than Smith’s, it cannot be used to reproduce the latter.

⁸ P. Smith transliterates Greek into Latin, but I consider it appropriate to use the Greek alphabet.

⁹ In parentheses, after the title of each chapter, I give the number of sections in that chapter.

¹⁰ A technical term introduced by Smith to denote someone who has begun a philosophical quest but has not yet taken sides (p. 24). See below, § 3.

Chapter 4. Αἱ ἀνωτάτω φιλοσοφίαι: The Results of Philosophical Investigation (7)

Chapter 5: Αἴρεσις and τί λόγος: The Skeptical Way of Reasoning (8)

Chapter 6: Μάλιστα ἀρχή and ζητητική ἀγωγή: The Skeptic as the Guardian of Investigation (5)

Chapter 7: Ἐννοια and δύναμις ἀντιθετική: The Plasticity of the Skeptical Ability (7)

Chapter 8: Συνάγωμεν εὐκτός ὅτι ἐπεχώμεν: The Rational Ability to Suspend Judgment (10)

Chapter 9: Τῶν σειρηνηῶν ὑποσχέσιν: The Dogmatic Attack on Everyday Life (5)

Chapter 10. Criterion I: φαινομένων: Living in the Natural and Social World (7)

Chapter 11. Criterion II: ἀλήθεια: Living with Belief¹¹ and Knowledge (8)

Chapter 12: Ἀταραξία and μετριοπάθεια: The Engaged Life of a Pyrrhonist (8)

2.1 The question of the traditional division of the *PH* into sections

According to P. Smith, the list of characteristic features of skepticism from *PH* 1.5 (concept, principles, ways of reasoning, criterion, and goal) should provide an adequate division of the text. Thus, P. Smith questions the established division of the *PH* into chapters, relying not on the analysis of available manuscripts, the earliest of which dates back to the late thirteenth century. All the mentioned manuscripts contain this division, but P. Smith, grounding his thinking not on historical and textual, but, as already noted, on “content” arguments (based on the analysis of Sextus’ initial guidelines for the presentation that followed), does not agree that it was introduced by Sextus himself (p. 6; see also p. 102.)

The erroneous, in P. Smith’s opinion, division of the text, which prevails in all editions, does not give a correct understanding of the principles of skepticism (p. 6), creates the illusion of an open question about whether a skeptic has dogmas (p. 7), and most importantly - does not allow to properly understand such an important subject as skeptical ways of reasoning (λόγοι), which is why skepticism is considered “an irrationalist or anti-rationalist position” (p. 8).

In the following presentation of P. Smith’s interpretation, I will follow the sequence of becoming a skeptic described by Sextus: from the perturbation by inconsistency in things and the first search caused by it - to the experience of equivalent dissonance, which is the reason for becoming a skeptic (HP I.6:12-7:13). The final theme should be the consideration of the social life of the skeptic, which is a directed skeptical λόγος (pp. 101-102). See on this below, § 3.3.

2.2 The weight of historical skepticism

¹¹ I coordinate my use of the ancient Greek Words with P. Smith, who translates πιστις as belief, δόγμα as philosophical theory (also thesis or tenet), and δόξα as opinion (p. 7).

P. Smith believes that the significance of historical skepticism is manifested in the validity of the division (*PH* I.1:1-3) of both ancient and modern philosophers into those who “think they have discovered the truth,” those who “have asserted that things cannot be known,” and those who are “still investigating” (p. 22). Since philosophy is a historical phenomenon, what we consider true today may not seem so in the future (*PH* I. 33- 34). In the philosophy of science, this argument, which has not lost its weight since antiquity, is known as “historical pessimism” (p. 135). Moreover, this argument is precisely skeptical, because it requires us to ask questions not about the nature of, say, philosophy, but about how it appears to us throughout history (p. 313). P. Smith, therefore, insists: “contemporary philosophers, ignoring what is historical skepticism, don’t know: what they claim is often skeptical” (p. 16). Thus, having become acquainted with historical skepticism, one could stop resisting an imaginary enemy or improving one’s own position by correcting some theses (*ibid.*).

2.3 The semantic direction of the book

P. Smith considers the essence of his book to be a defense of skepticism (p. 17). Its greatest achievement is the idea that the key to understanding Pyrrhonism is found in the five topics already mentioned in *PH* 1.5. Among them, the central one for P. Smith is the skeptical λόγος, even though, due to the inadequate division of the text, it has remained unnoticed by scholars (p. 16). Because of this neglect, P. Smith believes, most interpretations “fail to grasp Sextus’ skepticism as a whole, while they investigate with much care and depth particular issues with richness and depth” (p. 3). The book’s “new approach focuses on Sextus’s own character of skepticism” (*ibid.*). Therefore, in contrast to them, “the new image offered in this book focuses on the very nature of the skepticism shown by Sextus” (*ibid.*).

The main thesis of P. Smith’s book is this: “there is a skeptical rationale which correctly leads the skeptic both to suspension of judgment and to follow what appears in everyday life (*PH* 1.17)” (p. 318).

2.4 Methodology

According to P. Smith, Sextus has already provided the non-skeptic with all the instructions regarding skepticism (p. 3). P. Smith focuses on reproducing Sextus’ conception of what skepticism is (p. 3). To successfully achieve this goal, P. Smith applies Frede’s methodological requirement: “to base one’s own interpretation of the author’s view primarily on those passages where he explicitly sets them out” [Frede 1998a: 16]. After all, a dogmatically biased interpretation (see [Barnes 1982: 11, n. 17]) “betrays more our own ideas than clarify what skepticism is” (p. 3). Thus: “This book elaborates this new picture, describing it step by step, instead of discussing particular issues without bringing them into a well-structured doctrine.” (*ibid.*). P. Smith relies on Roger Eichorn’s “developmental model” (p. 10) [Eichorn 2020]. It reconstructs the progressive development of a person on the way to skepticism because a skeptical worldview is caused by specific life experiences. Although P. Smith modifies this approach, reducing it to explaining skepticism through understanding how *individual* intellectual experience creates a Pyrrhonist (p. 45).

In section 3, I review the content of the following chapters to illustrate the holistic image of neo-Pyrrhonism that P. Smith is trying to portray. This covers Part I of P. Smith’s book. In section 4, I explain how P. Smith interprets the rationale that

provides a structure for Sextus' neo-Pyrrhonism, according to the five topics of PH 1.5. That is Part II of his book.

3 Becoming a skeptic: *PH 1.12, 1.26, 1.29* (Part I, chapters 2-4)

According to P. Smith, understanding the path to skepticism is key to understanding who exactly the skeptic is. Therefore, P. Smith intends to begin by considering the initial conditions of a person who is to become a skeptic (p. 22).

Sextus laid out the path of the future skeptic in PH 1.12, 1.26, 1.29. He characterizes the initial beginning of the investigation and the main principle of the skeptical stance in PH 1.12, although the description of the skeptical stance here is rather vague. Much more detailed is the description of the achievement of imperturbability in PH 1.26, 1.29. According to P. Smith, these three segments are complementary, hence, they should be read together (p. 23).

Although P. Smith believes that both principles are present in the initial investigation as well as in the achieved skeptical standpoint, in the first part of the book he emphasizes the causal rather than the normative aspect of the *skeptical* principle. He does it because “only the skeptic arrives at imperturbability by suspending judgment” (p. 23).

In Chapter 2 P. Smith focuses on *PH 1.12*. He considers the first stage of the future skeptic's intellectual experience: being naturally gifted, he is perturbed by the irregularity he sees in everyday things (p. 23). This is the first stage of the causal principle and the first step on the path of skepticism. Since the naturally gifted person has been told that philosophers have examined and reasoned about these inconsistencies, he will begin to study philosophy in search of imperturbability.

In Chapter 3, P. Smith focuses on *PH 1.26*. The second stage of the causal principle concerns the future skeptic when he is just beginning his own investigation. P. Smith calls him the *φιλόσοφος*, for now, the naturally gifted one will engage in philosophy (p. 24). Having begun these pursuits, the *φιλόσοφος* may become a skeptic.

In Chapter 4, P. Smith focuses on *PH 1.29*, i.e., on what kind of intellectual experience can turn a *φιλόσοφος* into a skeptic (p. 24). This is the last stage of the causal principle and intellectual experience before this transformation into a skeptic is complete.

3.1 Μεγαλοφυεῖς and ἀνομαλία: The Talented Person, Conflicts in Everyday Life, and the Attraction of Philosophy (chapter 2)

He who will have become a skeptic is not yet a dogmatist, nor an Academic, nor even a skeptic (p. 24). There is a prejudice that skeptics “end by ceasing to dogmatize” that some commentators share (*ibid.*). But this is due to Bury's idiosyncratic translation of the passage *PH 1.12* [Sextus Empiricus 1933: 9].¹² P. Smith emphasizes that the skeptic does not “end by ceasing to dogmatize” (as if the

¹² Cf. Bury: “for we believe that as a consequence of this we end up by **ceasing to dogmatize**” (ἀπο γὰρ τούτων καταλλήγειν δοκοῦμεν εἰς τὸ μὴ δογματίζειν (the Ukrainian translation of this place agrees with R. Smith's interpretation: “бо внаслідок цього ми, як гадаємо, доходимо до **недогматизування**” [Sextus 2020: 129]).

initial position of the future skeptic were dogmatism), but “come not to dogmatize” (p. 25).

Sextus writes that those who are naturally gifted (μεγαλοφυεῖς) begin their philosophical explorations in order not to be perturbed (*PH* 1.12). But will each of them become a skeptic? In P. Smith’s opinion, no (p. 29). Moreover, there is no reason to divide the naturally gifted into those who will become dogmatists, Academics, or skeptics at the beginning of their philosophical investigations, because it is the intellectual experience, not the initial conditions, that plays the decisive role (*ibid.*).

At the very least, the naturally gifted person must be intelligent (*M* 9.63),¹³ “a truth-loving animal” (φιλαλήθης ζώον) (*M* VII:27), and should “love to learn” (*M* 1.42). After all, the Pyrrhonist has “a wider experience than other philosophers” (*M* 1.5), and perhaps, in addition, he has studied the liberal arts, like Nausiphanes (*M* 1.3-7), so he is well-educated. Certainly, he also possesses some moral qualities, such as being gentle (*M* 1.6) and not getting hot-tempered when listening to others (*PH* 1. 229-230, 2.13).

However, P. Smith notes that it is the natural giftedness that is crucial because it is the only condition that Sextus speaks about explicitly (p. 26). To demonstrate who Sextus is talking about, we should recall Apelles (*PH* 1.28). The latter was so talented that Alexander the Great allowed him—only him—to portray himself (p. 27). Of course, the emphasis on natural giftedness does not deny the need for either education or moral qualities, but if the φιλόσοφος did not have them at the beginning of the quest, he can acquire them during this quest (p. 29).

Sextus writes that the irregularity in things (ἀνομαλία) causes disturbance (*PH* 1.12). P. Smith emphasizes that Sextus always takes “irregularity” to mean something that happens in everyday life and never applies this notion to philosophical theories (*ibid.*). P. Smith shows that the irregularity in things is related to opposing perceptions or conceptions (p. 31) and refers to everyday life (p. 32). The irregularity of things in perception concerns the ethical realm, and the irregularity of things in conceptions concerns their being true or false (p. 37). By arguing against everyday beliefs about the evident, dogmatists undermine its clarity, because the non-evident is that about which there exists some disagreement (p. 238). Thus, dogmatists create disagreement in everyday things.

For Sextus, everyday life is full of irregularities (p. 34). Since the φιλόσοφος is perturbed by the irregularity he finds in things, which is an everyday phenomenon, he is one of “everyday people,” as are the dogmatists, even though they do not adhere to their own philosophical theories (p. 99). Still, φιλόσοφος is not a mediocre man (*ibid.*).

Noting that for Sextus, as a physician (*PH* 1.236), ἀνομαλία is indisposition, the connection between irregularity and perturbation is further clarified (pp. 30, 36). On one hand, the naturally gifted person strives to do everything perfectly, like Apelles, but finds himself in a situation of impasse (ἀπορέω), which is not usual for everyday people who simply follow one of the proposed paths (p. 37). On the other hand, the naturally gifted philosopher has neither dogmatic theories that would lead him beyond the impasse nor Academic denials of the knowability of truth (*ibid.*). Consequently, the φιλόσοφος is perturbed when he finds himself in a

¹³ Hereinafter the reference is made to the Greek original of “Against the Dogmatists” (M) according to [Sextus Empiricus 1933] with the number of the book (Arabic numeral) and pagination according to Becker (Arabic numeral after colon).

situation of impasse because he is unable to solve the problem of the irregularity in things' existence. This serves as evidence that there is a close connection between truth and happy life (p. 39). Therefore, naturally gifted people will study philosophy, hoping that it will help them in everyday life (p. 40).

3.2 Ζητήσις: The Initial Investigation of the φιλόσοφος (chapter 3)

The philosophical investigation can be divided into the search itself and its result (p. 44). Implicit here is another division, that between the initial investigation of the φιλόσοφος, before he becomes a Pyrrhonist, and the continued explorations that take place after he identifies with the skeptical doctrine. Accordingly, this chapter discusses the philosopher's initial investigation and chapter 4 its outcome.

Irregularity in things concerns everyday life and prompts the pursuit of philosophy (*PH* 1.12). Thus, "disagreement" is the basic philosophical experience of φιλόσοφος (*PH* 1.12:26) (pp. 47, 53).

The naturally gifted person, when feeling perplexity and perturbation, begins to study philosophy with the purpose of improving his everyday life. Having begun these studies, he becomes a φιλόσοφος. At this moment, he does not know about the division of philosophers into dogmatists, Academics, and skeptics (p. 53). He also has neither a method of studying philosophy nor an idea of its parts (physics, logic, ethics): studying Thales he will study physics, Xenophanes physics and logic, and so on (*ibid.*). So, the order of his philosophical studies will be, if not random, at least contingent (*ibid.*). Therefore, the primary experience of the φιλόσοφος after the beginning of philosophical explorations will be an encounter with the diversity of voices among philosophers (p. 54). His attitude to this diversity will eventually determine his position and the philosophical doctrine the φιλόσοφος will embrace (p. 55): it might be either the skeptical school (*PH* 1.17) or one of the dogmatic philosophical theories (*PH* 1.16) (p. 44). The future skeptic will think that all doctrines are equipollent, while a person who is inclined to become a dogmatist or an Academic will think that some doctrines are more convincing than others (p. 54).

Sextus gives two conditions for philosophical investigation. First, the seeker must be aware that he does not possess complete knowledge of what he seeks (p. 56). Instead, the belief of possessing complete knowledge is sufficient to hinder the investigation, even if the one who has such a belief does not possess complete knowledge (*PH* 1.12). Second, the seeker must have an idea of what is sought (pp. 56-57).

Both conditions of the philosophical investigation emphasize the disagreement, making it a pivotal aspect of the intellectual experience of the φιλόσοφος (p. 59). Firstly, the diversity of opinions among philosophies does not allow one to determine which of them is true, that is, which of them might be regarded as the source of complete knowledge (p. 57). Secondly, because of the diversity of opinions, the φιλόσοφος cannot get the one idea of what is sought, because philosophers give different definitions of seemingly obvious things (p. 58). Thus, what seems obvious in everyday life no longer holds this status in philosophy (*ibid.*). Both factors make disagreement the basic intellectual experience of the φιλόσοφος.

Philosophical investigation itself has a threefold structure (p. 59). It begins with what is known and ends with what is sought. Between these points, there is a mediating link, for example, an inference from the already known to what is not yet known or an indicative sign (*ibid.*). But "disagreement is so pervasive that the

φιλόσοφος, in his intellectual experience, will be in contact with many theories about the structure of philosophical investigation and how to investigate philosophically” (*ibid.*). For example, according to the Stoics, only a conclusion made with the help of an indicative sign is a philosophical conclusion, while a conclusion made with the help of a commemorative sign is an causal investigation (p. 61).

3.3 Αἱ ἀνωτάτω φιλοσοφίαι: The Results of Philosophical Investigation (chapter 4)

The search for truth has three results, namely becoming a dogmatist, a skeptic, or an Academic (p. 72). Becoming a dogmatist requires the acceptance of a certain philosophical theory, becoming an Academic implies the denial of the knowability of truth, and becoming a skeptic requires persistence in the search (*PH 1.3*). Although Sextus, according to P. Smith, never writes about the difference between the initial and continued investigation, some “skeptical result” of the initial investigation, according to the Brazilian scholar, must be present. Otherwise, it would not be possible to say that the φιλόσοφος has become a Pyrrhonist. She would remain in the status of φιλόσοφος for an indefinite time. At least, Pyrrhonism would not bring her the promised happy life (p. 73). According to P. Smith, the skeptical outcomes of one’s philosophical inquiry are suspension of judgment about everything, the ability to put forward equipollent counter-arguments, imperturbability, philanthropy, and self-identification with a skeptical orientation (*ibid.*).

Writing about the result of the investigation, Sextus refers to the passive condition “which, after the search, arises in the investigator” (*PH 1.7*). The result of the search is a suspension (*PH 1.29*). First, one might conclude that suspension is purely causal in nature: this is one of the interpretations I wrote about above. But P. Smith disagrees with this interpretation and argues for the double, causal as well as normative, nature of suspension in chapter 8. Second, the suspension must concern everything (p. 78). Suspension requires generality or “totality” (*ibid.*).

According to P. Smith, the skeptical conception of investigation raises two questions: 1) Is Sextus talking about a set of individual investigations or a philosophical investigation as a whole? 2) Is suspension a changeable passive condition or a stable (or even unchanging) trait of the skeptical character (p. 75)?

Regarding the first question. Sextus writes about the investigation in the singular and using the definite article (the), so he does not mean an abstract search (p. 77). Since the φιλόσοφος is not attached to any particular philosophy, he must complete his search on his own (p. 79). In antiquity, philosophy had clearly defined boundaries and a relatively small list of topics, so it was easy to understand what its main questions were. If the φιλόσοφος could study it in a disordered and unsystematic way, the skeptic should be inclined to employ the “ordered and systematic” research approach, because he should suspend from judging *all* philosophical questions *without exception* (*ibid.*). Accordingly, Sextus writes about the comprehension of all three parts of philosophy and their appropriate topics (p. 80). Hence, before becoming a Pyrrhonist, the φιλόσοφος must investigate all parts of philosophy (p. 84).

P. Smith then answers the second question (p. 85). After his own philosophical investigation, under the influence of his own intellectual experience, the φιλόσοφος becomes a skeptic (p. 92). For even if the dispute between dogmatists cannot be resolved, this does not apply to the dispute between skepticism and

dogmatism (*ibid.*). Paradoxically, P. Smith writes, “the fact that the philosophos was not able to overcome the conflict of philosophies (skepticism included) turned him into a Pyrrhonist. It cannot triumph in the sense of revealing the truth about non-evident objects, but it is the philosophy that best expresses the impasse in which the φιλόσοφος is in” (*ibid.*). He never wanted or planned to become a skeptic, but it “just happened” to him. After all, he “was forced to acknowledge that skepticism is the best position in the face of unsolved, perhaps unsolvable, disagreement” (*ibid.*).

4 The result of philosophical investigation and the normativity of skeptical λόγος (Part I, chapters 5-12)

In chapter 4, P. Smith discussed the result of the philosophical investigation the φιλόσοφος conducts. Although both the normative and the causal aspects are present in the initial investigation, the Brazilian researcher separates one from the other, emphasizing in the first part of the book precisely the causal component of one’s intellectual experience on the way to philosophy. Chapter 6 deals with the continued investigation, chapter 7 describes the complexity of the skeptical ability to make equipollent oppositions, and Chapter 8 discusses the causal as well as the normative aspects of the skeptical way of reasoning. Thus, in general, chapters 6-8 describe the continued philosophical investigation that proceeds along the lines that skeptical reasoning prescribes. In other words, taken together, they analyze in detail the Pyrrhonist’s intellectual experience.

After chapter 8, P. Smith interprets the skeptical life in society, namely the skeptical defense of everyday life from epistemic (chapter 9) and practical¹⁴ (chapter 12) perspectives, as well as the criteria for one’s action (chapter 10) and truth (chapter 11). That is, P. Smith explains how it is possible to achieve a happy life through skeptical reasoning (p. 101).

The importance of chapter 5 for P. Smith’s whole interpretation is evidenced by this short but eloquent characterization: “This chapter is the heart of the book. It presents the fundamental, and often neglected, notion of a skeptical way of reasoning and how it articulates the whole Pyrrhonian doctrine.” (p. 97).

4.1 Αἵρεσις and τί λόγος: The Skeptical Way of Reasoning (chapter 5)

As a result of the suspension of judgment, the skeptic rejects dogmatic reasoning (*PH* 1.16) and explains the skeptical way of reasoning (*PH* 1.17), which consists of two normative aspects: the ability to make equipollent oppositions (*PH* 1.18) and living in accordance with what appears (*PH* 1.19-20). At the same time, it should be understood that normativity does not mean dogmatism (p. 120). When the φιλόσοφος learns that he is a skeptic, “the skeptical λόγος is no longer something merely descriptive *ex post facto*, but it helps to constitute the future skeptical experience” (p. 118).

The first effect of suspension is to reject dogmatic reasoning, making the latter inaccessible to the skeptic (p. 105). According to P. Smith, Sextus defines dogmatic teaching by two features (p. 106). First, the theses of dogmatic doctrine must be connected to each other through argumentation (*ibid.*). Second, the dogmatic doctrine of the evident and the non-evident must be coherent (p. 107). Accordingly,

¹⁴ Smith owes the division into epistemic and practical destruction of everyday life to [Thorsrud 2019: 27].

Sextus denies that the distinctive characteristics of the skeptical way of reasoning are related to each other through argumentation (*ibid.*) and, secondly, Sextus does not appeal to the non-evident to explain the apparent, nor does he attempt to explain away the irregularities in things (p. 108).

The second impact of suspension is to have found a skeptical way of reasoning. P. Smith argues that according to *PH* 1.16, while having a doctrine, the skeptic must adhere to a certain way of reasoning (p. 108). The skeptical way of reasoning has two aspects (*ibid.*). The first aspect leads to the right actions that are in accordance with what appears (p. 109). The second aspect, on the other hand, guides the ability to set up equipollent oppositions for the sake of suspension (*ibid.*).

4.2 Μάλιστα ἀρχὴ and ζητητικὴ ἀγωγή: The Skeptic as the Guardian of Investigation (chapter 6)

Since the φιλόσοφος has already attained suspension and imperturbability, he no longer needs to prolong his investigation in order not to be disturbed – he should simply maintain the imperturbability achieved (p. 132). Since truth is connected with a good life (p. 39), the skeptic can continue to seek it despite having attained imperturbability (*ibid.*). Of course, he is expected to do so while being in a tranquil state of mind, because it ensures the thoroughness of the investigation (p. 136). Although Sextus does not explain how the knowledge of truth affects the human condition, he never rejects the idea that truth brings imperturbability. Therefore, it is quite reasonable to assume that the knowledge of the truth should give a person a permanent state of imperturbability (p. 133).

Thus, “the skeptic sees himself as the guardian of philosophical investigation” (p. 155). To support the idea that the skeptic is a philosopher, P. Smith quotes Pascal Massie: “by stressing from the beginning the literal meaning of σκεπτικός, Sextus provides a reason why it [skepticism], more than any form of Dogmatism, should deserve the name of φιλο-σοφία” [Massie 2013: 215]. Since P. Smith insists that Pyrrhonism is a philosophy, suspension (p. 132) and imperturbability (p. 135) are the conditions of philosophical investigation.

Since the skeptical investigation is normatively guided by the skeptical way of reasoning, the investigation has a method and rhythm. First of all, a few words about the method. Sextus accuses Clitomachus of petty counter-argumentation (*M* 9.1), which is difficult (περισκελεῖ), unmethodical (ἀμεθοδον), and impossible (αδύνατον) (*M* 1.39). That is why Sextus, instead of analyzing each detail separately, seeks to destroy the foundations of what is looked for all at once so that the superstructure also collapses (*PH* 2.84; *M* 9.2).

Next, the rhythm. Sextus speaks of the completion of the dogmatic investigation as terminus (πέρας) (*PH* 2.11; 2:224). After the completion of the search, the dogmatist no longer seeks anything (*PH* 1.1–4). But the skeptic does not find the truth during his investigations, so these investigations have no end. Yet, his search may have pauses because the skeptic has to stop in order to produce a suspension. Therefore, the interpretation of the rhythm in which the skeptic conducts his investigation must take these two aspects into account (p. 151).

In other words, the skeptic’s investigation has temporary interruptions but not the end proper (p. 153). As P. Smith explains, “the Pyrrhonist interrupts his investigation about *p*, both to keep the investigation about *p* open and to move on to investigate *q*, where *p* and *q* are dogmatic statements about something non-evident” (*ibid.*). But how does the skeptic detect the precise moment when the investigation should be temporarily interrupted? The moment has come when he

achieves the equipollence between each item set up to opposition (*ibid.*). Hence, he uses his time and energy to match opposing arguments in favor of *p* and against *p*, sets up the balance of arguments and counter-arguments, temporarily interrupts this phase of philosophical research, and then moves on to investigate *q*.

In addition, Sextus formulates two criteria that can be used to resolve the debate between skepticism and dogmatism as to which of these philosophies is more helpful in everyday life (*M* 7.27). These two criteria are rashness and refusal to destroy everyday beliefs. They correspond to the negative (searching) and positive (practical) aspects of the skeptical way of reasoning (p. 97, 124). The first criterion is discussed in chapter 6, and the second in chapter 9.

4.3 Ἐννοια and δύναμις ἀντιθετική: The Plasticity of the Skeptical Ability (chapter 7)

Sextus defines the searching philosophy (ἡ σκεπτική)¹⁵ as an ability (δύναμις) (*PH* 1.8; *M* 7.1). This ability may refer to skepticism as a whole (*M* 7:1) or only to its investigative element, i.e. to the ability to set up equipollent oppositions, ἰσοσθένειαν ἀντιθετική (*PH* 1.8). P. Smith argues that the skeptic does not simply mirror, or mimic, dogmatic arguments, but must be able to do many other things to be a good skeptic (p. 160). After all, the skeptical custom is to argue for both sides (*M* 7.443, 10.6). Sextus distinguishes between the “more exegetical” and “more aporetic” parts in his philosophical investigation (*M* 7.28), which correspond to the positive and negative sides of skepticism, respectively (p. 169).

The exegetical part requires constructing the “whole chains of arguments derived from all sorts of dogmatic doctrines” (p. 170). The skeptic groups these arguments by theme, e.g., the arguments for the existence of God (*M* 9.60–163). The arguments may differ by the doctrine they belong to, by their conceptions of God, or by their structure but they match a certain general theme. All in all, they can and should be thematized.

The aporetic part requires a different set of abilities. Though Sextus can use arguments from the exegetical part for his counterattacks (Sextus call such arguments “more dogmatic”), he still can invent his own arguments (he calls such arguments “more skeptic”) (p. 172). Sextus writes about “more dogmatic” and “more aporetic” arguments, respectively (*ibid.*). Thus, the skeptic has a certain creative orientation because, as P. Smith writes, “there are no mechanical rules for the invention of the new arguments” (p. 173). Hence, P. Smith does not generalize all types of skeptical arguments, but mentions five kinds of arguments Sextus employs in his counterattack: (1) the Five Modes of Agrippa; (2) destructive hypothetical syllogisms; (3) arguments based on dogmatic doctrines; (4) arguments based on facts of life or what is manifest; and (5) arguments from bare possibility. Within each of these five types, there are additional subspecies of counter-argumentation.

Hence, even if the skeptic can play a historian of philosophy (p. 170) or a chronicler of disagreement (p. 169, n. 4), it does not restrict his capacities in counter-argumentation towards merely using available knowledge but lets him invent his own arguments.

¹⁵ For example Lesia Zvonska translated the Greek ἡ σκεπτική as “скептичний” (Ukr. “skeptical”) [Sextus Empiricus 2020: 127]. Smith insists that the translation of ἡ σκεπτική by the Grecizing term “skepticism” diminishes the weight Pyrrhonism imposes on the notion of search. This is why Smith prefers to translate ἡ σκεπτική more literally by the adjective “investigative” (p. 129).

4.4 **Συνάγωμεν ευκτος ὅτι ἐπεχώμεν: The Rational Ability to Suspend Judgment (chapter 8)**

This chapter deals with the relationship between the causal (*PH 1.12*) and the main (*PH 1.12-15*) principles of skepticism. Since scholars have ignored the existence of a skeptical way of reasoning, they have not noticed that the skeptical position (*συστάσεως σκεπτικῆς*) is not only causal but also normative (p. 193). P. Smith shares this interpretation with Casey Perin and Katja Vogt [Perin 2010; Vogt 2011]. As I have already noted, skepticism is a kind of empiricism, i.e., the skeptic may cite causal arguments that call for suspension (*ibid.*). P. Smith shares this interpretation with Porchat Pereira and Alan Bailey [Porchat 2007a; Bailey 2002].

In chapter 8, P. Smith discusses the following issues: 1) whether skeptical arguments are demonstrative or rhetorical; 2) whether they are dialectical or skeptical, properly speaking; 3) whether the skeptic uses a dogmatic or properly skeptical notion of argumentation (p. 194). Obviously, these three questions are parts of the bigger problem: whether there exists a proper skeptical way of reasoning that distinguishes a skeptic from a dogmatist.

First of all, Sextus writes that the conclusion is evident to him, which means that inferences appear to him (*PH 1.129, 1.140*) (p. 207). Moreover, the intellect suspends his judgment (*PH 1.10, 1.196*) and so, rational and psychological aspects are intertwined in the skeptic's producing inferences. They, in fact, constitute a single whole (p. 209). Hence, skeptical arguments do not necessarily trade on dogmatic logic (p. 207).

Secondly, not all arguments employed by Sextus are dialectical, but some at least are skeptical in the proper sense of the word. P. Smith argues that the skeptic experiences the causal link between equipollent opposition and suspension of intellect so often, that he can get used to suspending judgment every time an equipollent opposition appears to him (p. 208). This leads to the conclusion that the skeptic makes no use of logically valid form (p. 207) but is unaware of even whether The Ten Modes are sound or not (*PH 1.35*).

Lastly, since commentators ignored the existence of a skeptical way of reasoning, they did not notice that in the opposition of the two dogmatic reasonings, there is the third – the skeptical one, which rises above both (p. 211). P. Smith draws attention to the fact that the equipollence of dogmatic reasoning is formed because skeptical reasoning directs them in this way (p. 228). Thus, P. Smith answers in the affirmative to the question about the skeptic's own way of reasoning. Hence, there *is* skeptical argumentation.

P. Smith's interpretation holds that any correct interpretation must be both causal and normative since each aspect corresponds to one of the skeptical principles. Most interpretations tend to separate these two principles: the causal refers only to the "proto-skeptic" and the main one to the "mature skeptic".

With this, we come to an end of the exposition of P. Smith's chapters on philosophical investigation, where he tries to show that the dogmatists are hasty in their reasoning whereas the skeptics are not. Next, he moves to the other criterion of his dispute with the dogmatist: who respects everyday beliefs? Thus, we move to the second aspect of the skeptical way of life, which concerns the best available life.

4.5 **Τῶν σειρηνων ὑποσχέσιν: The Dogmatic Attack on Everyday Life (chapter 9)**

First of all, it is worth noting that the dogmatists are not satisfied with everyday beliefs about the apparent (p. 241). So, they propose the invention of an indicative sign (ἐνδεικτικὸν σημεῖον) as opposed to a commemorative sign (ὑπομνηστικὸν σημεῖον) by which the truth of everyday ideas is to be revealed (p. 237). For dogmatists tend to attack everyday life, even those among them who seek to defend it (p. 242). They claim that there is a need to justify the everyday state of affairs. Instead, the carriers of everyday consciousness do not argue in favor of this or that explanation of the existing state of affairs, but simply accept it (p. 244).

Of course, the dogmatic attack on everyday life is frustrating both for its initiators and for those against whom it is directed. Therefore, the Pyrrhonist seeks to help dogmatists out of his philanthropy (φιλανθρωπία), but the treatment requires an effort equivalent to that of the dogmatist when makes his attack. That is why the skeptic can cure dogmatists only by knowing a great deal (p. 182).

First of all, dogmatism is a critique of everyday life (p. 235). Dogmatists invented the indicative sign to infer non-evident things (p. 237). Thus, by undermining everyday beliefs about what appears, they also undermine what appears itself, because the non-evident is that about which there is disagreement (p. 238). Dogmatists deduce the existence of a supposed reality beyond the manifest, while everyday people do not need to justify what appears, because they simply accept it (p. 244). Therefore, by criticizing the dogmatic attack on ordinary beliefs, the skeptic stands in defense of everyday life.

4.6 Criterion I: φαινομένων: Living in the Natural and Social World (chapter 10)

P. Smith rejects both the urbane and the rustic interpretations of Pyrrhonism (p. 271). Both implicitly assume that the distinction between what appears and the non-evident corresponds to the distinction between everyday life and philosophy (p. 270). However, according to P. Smith, this is not the case for several reasons. First of all, the actual dichotomy between philosophy and everyday life is false, because, according to the natural guidance, the skeptic is also involved in the arts (p. 264). Thus, the apparent and the non-evident can be present in each of the three spheres (p. 271). Thirdly, it is not only that the dichotomy between everyday life and philosophy that corresponds to the dichotomy between what appears and the non-evident division is impossible; it is also false to say that what appears and the non-evident are present in a certain place but are not present in the other (pp. 272-273). So, the skeptic holds some beliefs not simply because they are “everyday” but because they are consistent with what appears (*ibid.*). At the same time, the skeptic may hold certain philosophical positions, because philosophy is a historical phenomenon - see above, § 2.2 (p. 272). Though the skeptic suspends judgment about philosophical issues concerning the non-evident, he can hold beliefs about philosophy *as it appears*.

Thus, since the division between what appears and the non-evident does not coincide with the division between everyday life and philosophy, but takes place in everyday life, in the arts, and in philosophy, the position of the skeptic is much more nuanced (p. 272). If so, P. Smith’s interpretation is different from both the urbane and the rustic interpretations. This new interpretation will be further explored in the next section.

4.7 Criterion II: ἀλήθεια: Living with Belief and Knowledge (chapter 11)

According to P. Smith, Sextus distinguishes three criteria of truth: the everyday natural criterion, the everyday technical criterion, and the dogmatic (logical) criterion (p. 288). P. Smith will argue that the skeptic sticks to the everyday natural (and technical) criterion of truth in his philosophy, so that he may have beliefs about what appears (p. 289). The skeptic has a context-dependent criterion of action and truth (*M* 1.232-233) (p. 303). The dogmatist—not the skeptic—treats what appears as something actually existing but not really existing, that is, not as something real, of which we have experience, but as the non-evident which needs to be inferred by indicative signs (p. 302).

Assent can be about what appears or about the non-evident. The difference between skeptical and dogmatic belief is in the content, not in the attitude to the content (p. 290). In particular, what appears can cause the skeptic to assent to it, but the Academics, like Carneades, assent strongly to appearances. Nevertheless, neither the Pyrrhonist nor the Academic assent to the non-evident (p. 291). The dogmatist, however, assents to the non-evident after searching, i.e., because he has a dogma; everyday people assent to the non-evident without searching, i.e., as a result of education or because of mere prejudice. Thus, we have four kinds of belief. Therefore, the skeptic has mild beliefs only about what appears (*PH* 1.17).

P. Smith goes further: not only the Pyrrhonist may have beliefs, but these beliefs are true. For, if suspension concerns only the logical criterion of truth, the skeptic has an everyday criterion of truth concerning what appears. He goes as far as to say that the Pyrrhonist has knowledge about what appears, though not about the non-evident. Finally, commemorative signs allow him to justify some of his beliefs about what appears.

4.8 Ἀταραξία and μετριοπάθεια: The Engaged Life of the Pyrrhonist (Chapter 12)

The skeptic's criteria for action and truth are considered by P. Smith in chapters 10 and 11, respectively. The skeptical defense of everyday life from the epistemic point of view is treated in chapter 9. If P. Smith's interpretation is correct, the famous objection that the skeptic cannot act, for he supposedly has no belief whatsoever, loses its validity immediately. That is why P. Smith does not even bother to consider it. In Chapter 12, P. Smith addresses two questions about the skeptic's everyday life from a practical point of view, namely, regarding happiness. The first is formulated as follows: can a skeptic have a good life (p. 318)? And since the φιλόσοφος begins to engage in philosophy to find support for his daily life (p. 40), the second question is: which philosophy, skeptical or dogmatic, is more helpful in everyday life (p. 318)?

Skepticism is sometimes interpreted as a rejection of the active inner self. As such, it is associated with a boring life [Striker 2004: 22]. The state of imperturbability itself is sometimes referred to as boring [Burnyeat 1998b: 112], and the skeptical life is considered unattractive [Bett 2019: 162]. But P. Smith criticizes this view and offers a different interpretation: "Sextus not only notes that the skeptical life is possible; he notes that it is the best human life" (p. 114).

The skeptic lives peacefully (p. 327) because he is aware of the different contexts in which people live. Thus, the skeptic's stance is characterized by moral relativity. Since the skeptic acts according to what appears, "skepticism consists in an immersion in socially instituted values" (p. 346). Consequently, the skeptic does not try to build general theories about social behavior, because "what to do in each circumstance is a burden one cannot afford to transfer to a philosophical theory" (p. 346). Therefore, the skeptic has his own understanding of ethics, which shows his

awareness of the responsibility he has for his actions (p. 347), which is the view opposed to the theory of the separated inner self [Annas 1995: 358-359; 1998: 211; Annas and Barnes 1985: 169-170; Bett 2019: 159-161; Burnyeat 1998a: 51; 1998b: 112; Eichorn 2014: 140-141; Marcondes 1997: 58-59; Massie 2013: 212, 232; Striker 2004: 22].

Recalling the skeptical struggle against the destruction of conventional ideas, one should see that skepticism protects us from imaginary values and gives us our context of life back (pp. 344-345). To conclude, I would like to cite P. Smith's metaphor from the realm of painting: the skeptic has authentic experiences, cleansed of acquired opinions and impurities of choice; these experiences are similar to a painting that, after restoration, is perceived as it was immediately after the artist painted it (p. 334).

5 Bates' unmotivated distortion of the value of academia

P. Smith's book was noticed as soon as it was published. I have to draw the reader's attention to a review written by Douglas Bates [Bates 2022]. Bates highly appreciates P. Smith's work: "Smith's book is a tour de force of systematic cataloging of all the major misinterpretations and patient exposition of how to properly interpret Sextus Empiricus" [*ibid.*]. Bates implicitly appeals to some authorities in the field and criticizes many scholarly interpretations of skeptical thought. In fact, he thinks that only those who practice Pyrrhonism could understand it. By emphasizing the practical aspect of Pyrrhonism, he downplays the academic aspect of its interpretation. He associates the academic community of skepticism researchers with the not-so-flattering image of "stinking miasms", among which P. Smith's book is "a breath of fresh air" [*ibid.*]. This openly biased "oh-so-bright" alternative obviously puts the author of the book I review against the academic mainstream.

Bates' position becomes clearer when he offers another image. According to his view, descriptions of Pyrrhonism that have prevailed in the Western academic literature are deficient. They speak about Pyrrhonism in the same way the people who analyze the contents of a bicycle assembly manual but have never ridden a bicycle, never seen a bicycle being ridden, and never talked to someone who has ridden a bicycle talk about actually riding a bicycle [*ibid.*]. In Bates' opinion, it is a practice that helps to better understand the technical places of Sextus' works that are difficult to translate [*ibid.*]. After all, what kind of "Pyrrhonism" is it if all its technical (!) aspects are too hard to understand?

However, Bates goes too far both in his criticism of academic interpretations and in the idea that practice of the Pyrrhonian techniques is necessary to understand it. First, if Bates thinks that P. Smith's interpretation is the proper one, he needs to back it up with an analysis of the texts. After all, P. Smith does not at all demand automatic agreement with his interpretation, but merely offers a rationale, like any sane academic researcher (p. 122). Nor does he expect the majority to agree with his interpretation (p. 17). This reviewer should have noticed that P. Smith (1) does not criticize his opponents with some devaluing universalist claims, but, instead, engages them rationally, giving a clear basis for "misinterpretations" which, in his opinion, are grounded in the textual distortion of Sextus Empiricus's works, and being open to others' counterarguments (p. 103). Also, as I have already written, (2) P. Smith's interpretation originated in a milieu that for Bates is immediately associated with "stinking miasma", but for P. Smith is the object of numerous commendations (pp. viii-viii). P. Smith himself is a prominent representative of this mainstream (see above, note 5), owes much to the

fruitful cooperation with colleagues (pp. viii-ix), and directly shares some of the existing interpretations, in particular the important ideas of Perin, Vogt, Porchat Pereira, and Bailey (pp. 193). And, of course, P. Smith's own views were not always like "a breath of fresh air", rather they were subject to change (pp. viii & 326, n. 6). No wonder P. Smith is absolutely correct in his communication with academic researchers.

Next, Bates does not substantiate his rhetoric about Pyrrhonism as a practice that seems to require that the interpreter should necessarily be a practitioner. He asks, what sort of understanding of a method can be offered by those "who have never practiced that method?" [Bates 2022]. This is a very strange and short-sighted thesis, in my opinion. I wonder: does the author think that only the dead have the moral right to talk about death? This thesis is not only extravagant, but also simply false. Understanding Pyrrhonism does not demand practicing it, as much as understanding Stoicism, or any other philosophical doctrine, does not entail full adherence to it. Sextus himself argued for this point (*PH* 2.1-11).

I find Bates's response to be in stark contrast to the technical sophistication and interpretive depth of P. Smith's book. The latter's work is actually a product of extensive networks of academic communication, long theoretical work, and wide erudition.

6 A note on Smith's style

P. Smith's style deserves special attention. Bates wrote that his style is simple and devoid of academic complexity [Bates 2022]. I think that this simplicity is intentional. Nonetheless, language proficiency is not an issue here. P. Smith is almost a polyglot, speaking Portuguese, Spanish, English, German, and French to varying degrees; not to mention that he is able to read Italian and ancient Greek, at least to some degree (pp. 102, 296). Moreover, his book is written "with the soul:" each chapter is accompanied by a motto from Wittgenstein, Hume, or Montaigne. This author impresses his readers with the breadth of his philosophical erudition, drawing also on studies in logic, epistemology, and metaphysics (see, for example: [Austin 1964; Quine 1992; Davidson 2001; Strawson 2006; McDowell 2009]). In addition, he does not ignore poets, namely William Shakespeare (p. 332, n. 8), and João Cabral de Melo Neto (p. 345, n. 23).

7 Conclusion: the significance of Smith's work to historians of philosophy

P. Smith's work is important primarily because it emphasizes the need for a reliable study of the primary texts for projects of historical-philosophical research. It also highlights the necessity to have a good knowledge of critical sources. Besides, the number of interpretations the author engages to clarify the sources of erroneously formulated questions cannot but command respect. The book is written by a qualified professional philosopher, and this is evident both in the scholarly style of writing and in the literary perfection of the work. The book under review, I am not afraid to say, can be read even for the sake of aesthetic pleasure as the reader might seriously enjoy the scheme of development of a naturally gifted person to the level of an erudite Pyrrhonist that P. Smith describes. P. Smith's analysis of philosophical issues is thorough, allowing the reader to instantly grasp the essence of each topic or question. At the same time, one cannot say that P. Smith oversimplifies complex issues. The only step towards a more "general audience" is the Latin transliteration of Greek terms.

Also, P. Smith's interpretation of Sextus Empiricus offers some significant translation decisions that, in my opinion, are difficult to ignore. When selecting Ukrainian (or English) equivalents for Sextus' terms, one should definitely take into account P. Smith's approach. After all, it is impossible to translate individual words without understanding the meaning of the work as a whole: by translating, we inevitably claim understanding.

Finally, it should be noted that P. Smith's work can serve as exemplary research. His book shows how much one needs to know to be a good specialist in the history of philosophy. What is required is the command of several languages, a wide range of related philosophical doctrines (Montaigne, Malebranche, Hume, Hegel, Wittgenstein, e.a.), professional literature that is not directly related to the interpreted texts (logic, epistemology, metaphysics, etc.), a wide circle of academic peers and, and, last but not least, wide erudition and remarkable abilities: to read poetry (Shakespeare, Melo Neto), to play tennis (p. 160), and to know the historical context of the philosopher one studies.

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