

Sextus Empiricus on the Goal of Skepticism

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In the twelfth chapter of the first book of his *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (PH i 25-30), Sextus Empiricus discusses the goal (τέλος) of Skepticism. He begins as follows:

Goal is that for the sake of which everything is done or considered, while it is not itself done or considered for the sake of anything else. Or: a goal is the final object of desire. Up to now we say the goal of the Skeptic is tranquillity (ἀταραξία) in matters of belief and moderation of feeling in matters forced upon us.¹ (i 25)

Sextus' insistence on tranquility is not surprising, given the prominence of this notion in the Pyrrhonian tradition since its beginning.² What is less clear, however, is the very idea that the Skeptics have a goal and that Skepticism can be characterized as a goal-directed philosophy.³ For, given some of the basic features of Skepticism as presented in the first book of the *Outlines*, there are at least three groups of reasons why one can question the very idea that the Skeptics have a goal.

To begin with, the manner in which Sextus introduces this idea is in several respects problematic. The word τέλος, as it is used by other philosophers, standardly denotes something which is believed to be objectively good, choiceworthy, self-sufficient, etc. Since the Skeptics claim that they suspend judgment as to whether there is anything that is by nature such and such, one would expect that Sextus will offer an alternative account of the goal which would fit into their general position. However, he does not give such an account. More to the point, the two definitions of goal given in the passage above are standard among philosophers whom he describes as Dogmatists, and they are found in various reports on the Stoic, Peripatetic, and Epicurean views on the good and the goal of life.⁴ Although Sextus does not give any further comment on these definitions, this does not by itself mean that he wants to suggest that Skepticism has a goal in the same sense as these schools. However, it is not immediately clear how can he

¹ Throughout I use the translation of *PH* by Annas and Barnes 1994, occasionally with minor modifications. For passages from *M xi* I use the translation by Bett 1997.

² I will not discuss the second component of the goal, moderation of feeling, since it is just an accompaniment of tranquillity, which is my primary concern here.

³ I use 'Skeptic' and 'Pyrrhonist' interchangeably.

⁴ Annas and Barnes 1994, 10n1, refer to Cicero, *De fin.* i 12, Arius in Stobaeus, *Ecl.* ii 76.21-24, 77.16-17, 131.2-4, and Alexander, *De an.* 150.20-21, 162.34.

unqualifiedly use dogmatic definitions to specify the goal of Skepticism. In addition, it is not quite clear what it is about tranquility that makes it the object of the Skeptics' pursuit, i.e., that for the sake of which everything is done or considered, or the final object of desire. Unfortunately, Sextus does not say much about tranquility, neither in the chapter on the goal nor in the whole 'general' account of Skepticism, the first book of the *Outlines*. All he gives there is the short and uninformative remark that tranquility is 'freedom from disturbance (ἀσκλησία) or calmness (γαληνότης) of soul' (i 10). The same holds for his discussions against the ethicists in the third book of the *Outlines* and in *Against the Ethicists*, where we can learn much about the state of the disturbed person and about the causes of her disturbance but practically nothing about the state of the undisturbed person (see esp. *PH* iii 183, 237 with i 27-28 and *M* xi 112-161). What we get are mostly quotations from the early Pyrrhonists describing the desirability and extraordinary character of Pyrrho's tranquility (see *M* xi 1, 141; *M* xi 164 and Bett 1997, 47 and 162).

A further problem is raised if we survey some of the most important steps that the Skeptics have to take along their path towards the goal. Sextus' account may seem to suggest the following picture. Right from the beginning of the *Outlines* he insists that Skepticism is essentially an inquiring activity. While other groups of philosophers—Dogmatists and Academics, in his classification—have announced that they have found the truth (Dogmatists) or that the truth cannot be found (Academics), the Skeptics are 'still investigating' (i 3). Even though Sextus is not explicit about what it is that the Skeptics keep investigating, the context suggests that he wants to imply that they, like all other philosophers, are searching for truth. And the reason why they are searching for truth is not the truth itself, but tranquility, since they suppose that finding the truth will bring about tranquility. As it turns out, the Skeptics do achieve tranquility, but not by finding the truth. Rather, they suspend judgment about whether the truth can be found, and the suspension is naturally followed by tranquility. Suspension of judgment, as Sextus describes it, is the result of a constraint, i.e., it is a mental state which is forcibly and involuntarily imposed upon the Skeptics because of the equipollence of the opposed appearances and thoughts.⁵ It is not a state voluntarily chosen after balancing the reasons pro and contra a certain proposition. Thus, since the Skeptics are forced to suspend their judgment, they cannot be said to do that for the sake of achieving tranquility.

It seems, then, that the Skeptics (a) engage in inquiry into truth for the sake of achieving tranquility and (b) achieve it by suspending judgment; yet (c) the achievement of tranquility is a by-product of the inquiry, since the Skeptics do not suspend judgment in order to achieve tranquility. However, it is not clear how Sextus thinks he can reconcile such an account of the Skeptics' activities with their description as perpetual inquirers. We might be inclined to think that

⁵ For the passivity of the Skeptic's ἐποχή, see *PH* i 121, 128, 129 and Burnyeat 1997, 46 and n38.

all he has to do is to add that (d) they repeat such a process over and over again, and that this is why they may properly be called perpetual inquirers. But (a)-(d) make up a strange position, to say the least, and I will show in section 3 that this is not the position that we have to ascribe to the Skeptics. Alternatively, we might say that the Skeptics, after having spotted the regular connection between suspension and tranquility, deliberately engage in the activity of bringing about suspension. In that case, however, we should abandon the idea that the object of the Skeptics' inquiries is truth. This is the interpretation that I will try to defend in section 4.

Finally, it is not quite clear what exactly is Sextus' point in the chapter on the goal, since his discussion is fairly disorganized. The main body of the chapter is devoted to the story of how the proto-Skeptics began their inquiries aiming at tranquility and how they achieved it. The story is interrupted by remarks, written in the present tense, about those who, unlike the Skeptics, believe that there is something good or bad by nature. Such a composition may suggest one of the following two scenarios. It may suggest (1) that it is only the Pyrrhonists in the past, at the very beginning of the Pyrrhonian movement, that aimed at a goal, while the activities of the mature Skeptics are not amenable to the description in terms of a *τέλος*. Or it may suggest (2) that the inquiries of the mature Skeptics are goal-directed in the same sense as their ancestors'. However, as I will show in section 3, neither of these suggestions is tenable. In addition, at the end of the chapter, Sextus says, without further comment, that 'some eminent Skeptics have added suspension of judgment in investigations to these [sc., to tranquility in matters of belief and moderation of feeling in matters forced upon us]' (i 30). This is also puzzling, for we would like to know not only who these eminent Skeptics were, but also what is Sextus' attitude towards their position.

I shall take a closer look at Sextus' arguments in *PH* i 25-30 and try to make sense of his account of Skepticism as a goal-directed endeavor. I do not, except incidentally, deal with the more general and more often discussed questions, such as why are we supposed to accept that tranquility is a source of happiness, or whether Sextus succeeds in persuading us that only the Skeptics can lead the happy life, etc. (see Annas 1993, 351-363; Nussbaum 1994, 280-315; Striker 1996). My immediate purpose is rather modest. I take seriously Sextus' insistence that the Skeptics have a final goal and try to provide a charitable interpretation of the way in which they pursue it. I first address the problem of the status of Sextus' definitions of the goal (section 1). Then I consider Sextus' speculative history of Skepticism (i 26-29) to see why, and in what way, the progenitors of Pyrrhonism, according to this history, aimed at tranquility (section 2). I suggest that this historical explanation cannot apply to the activities of mature Skeptics (section 3) and provide what appears to me to be the most reasonable alternative account of their pursuit of a goal (section 4). Finally, I draw some more general conclusions and point to some aspects in which the preceding interpretation is, after all, too charitable (section 5).

Sextus does not find it necessary to warn the readers of the dogmatic provenance of the definitions he uses in his discussion of the Skeptics' goal. Hence a question naturally arises about the very status of his account. There are two ways in which we may take Sextus' position, depending on how we understand these definitions. On the one hand, we may assume that Sextus has no problem with the dogmatic origin of these definitions and that he is ready to accept that Skepticism has a goal in exactly the senses given in these definitions. On the other hand, maybe we should take Sextus as tacitly assuming that the readers will recognize these definitions as something about which one must suspend judgment. Accordingly, perhaps we must take them as a kind of hint to the readers that what follows should not be taken literally.

We can distinguish two versions of the latter interpretation. According to the first, more extreme version, Sextus not only does not commit himself to the truth of the definitions of the goal; in fact, he is not discussing the *Skeptics'* goal, the goal that is *inherent* to the Skeptics' activities, at all. It is the Dogmatists who take the goal to be that for the sake of which everything is done or considered, or the final object of desire, and it is they who pursue tranquility as such a goal. The Skeptics, on the other hand, are just perpetual inquirers, and their inquiry shows, among other things, that such a goal is not achievable by dogmatic means, but only by suspending judgment about everything. The Dogmatists are patients who need a cure, and the Skeptics act as their doctors who demonstrate that the only effective cure is the abandonment of all beliefs.⁶ Thus, in a sense, tranquility *is* the Skeptics' goal (health is the doctor's goal), but not the goal they seek for *themselves* (it is the patient's health that the doctor strives for). To be sure, by abandoning all beliefs they actually achieve tranquility themselves, but thereby they do not have to cease their inquiry.

Yet while it is true that a great deal of the Skeptics' efforts is directed towards demonstrating to the Dogmatists the only way of achieving tranquility, it is also true that Sextus' statements strongly suggest that tranquility is the goal that is inherent to the activities of the Pyrrhonists themselves. He repeatedly and unambiguously stresses the intention of the Pyrrhonists' inquiries. For instance, he says that the Pyrrhonists study natural science 'in order to be able to oppose to every account (λόγος) an equal account, *and* for the sake of tranquillity', and that the same holds for their approach to logical and ethical parts of philosophy (i 18). He certainly does not want to say that the ability to oppose to every account an equal account is the intrinsic goal of the Pyrrhonists' investigations, while tranquility is not. What is more important, he never ascribes to the Dogmatic schools the view that tranquility is the goal; in fact, he rarely discusses the views about the goal proposed by other philosophers. When he does, he stresses that the

⁶ On the Skeptics as doctors, see the famous remark near the end of the *Outlines*: 'Skeptics are philanthropic and wish to cure by argument, as far as they can, the conceit and rashness of the Dogmatists' (iii 280).

Pyrrhonists' goal is different.⁷ Therefore, the definitions of the goal should not be dismissed as irrelevant to the Skeptics' own activities.

According to the second version of the view that the Skeptics do not commit themselves to the truth of the given definitions, we should interpret Sextus as trying to tailor the account of Skepticism to meet the expectations of his dogmatic readers. That is to say, we should suppose that he wants to describe Skepticism as Dogmatists would describe it. If there were such a thing as a goal and if it should be defined, as the Dogmatists think, in the specified way, then it would be appropriate to say that Skepticism has a goal. The Skeptics, of course, suspend judgment about whether the goal exists and what it is. However, it might be appropriate, for various reasons, to set out the character of Skepticism in dogmatic terms.

It is highly implausible to suppose that this is Sextus' intention, however, since this interpretation cannot be squared with Sextus' standard procedures in the first book of the *Outlines*. Right from the beginning of the book he insists that he writes like a chronicler (ἱστορικῶς, i 4), revealing what appears to him—his own affections and dispositions with regard to the subject matter he is discussing at the moment—and there is no reason to suppose that his discussion of the goal would be any exception to this manner of exposition. Even though he does not say 'It appears to me that the goal is tranquility', he uses the qualification 'up to now' (ἄχρι νῦν), which has much the same force as the appearance-terms (for this qualification, see *PH* i 200, iii 70; *M* viii 177, 257, 401, 428). Thereby he makes clear that he does not affirm with certainty that the goal is tranquility, but that the observations of the Skeptics' actions entitle him to say only that, up to now, it turns out that the goal is tranquility.

In short, I think that we should take Sextus' remarks about the goal of Skepticism literally: he accepts the definitions of the goal and wants to argue that Skepticism has a goal in exactly these senses. And this is precisely what we might expect, given Sextus' procedure in the first book of the *Outlines*. In his characterizations of Skepticism in the first part of *PH* i he freely uses various expressions that are either of dogmatic origin or at least have a strong theoretical tone, such as 'causal principle' (ἀρχὴ αἰτιώδης) and 'constitutive principle' (ἀρχὴ συστάσεως, i 12), without giving any warning of their dogmatic origin. In other cases, with regard to the expressions such as 'dogma' (13-15), 'school' (αἵρεσις, 16-17) or 'criterion' (21-24), he distinguishes the sense that is applicable to the Skeptics and the sense that is not. When he says, for instance, that, in one sense of the term 'school', the Skeptics do belong to a school, then he is not characterizing Skepticism as Dogmatists would characterize it. Rather, he is just pointing to the fact that there is a perfectly appropriate sense of the term 'school' that can be used in setting out what appears to be one of the general characteristics of Skepticism.

⁷ See, for instance, *PH* i 215 where he opposes the Pyrrhonists' goal to the Cyrenaics', or i 232, where he stresses the difference between the Pyrrhonists and Arcesilaus.

The same holds for the definitions of the goal. These are the definitions that apply to the Sceptics, so that the Sceptics can be said to do everything they do in order to achieve tranquility, which is the final object of their desire. Sextus, however, does not give any alternative definitions that would not be appropriate for the Sceptics, as is the case with ‘school’, ‘dogma’, or ‘criterion’. Presumably, such definitions would state that the goal is the final good and imply that there is something that is good by nature. By contrast, the definitions Sextus is using do not commit the person who accepts them to the belief that there is something good or bad by nature, which is, according to Sextus, the main source of disturbance. Sextus’ definitions just state the formal conditions that something has to fulfill to be called a goal, and thus they are not incompatible with taking the Sceptical position. The question is whether, and why, tranquility can be understood as such a goal.

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It seems that the idea that Scepticism has a goal in the senses given in the introductory definitions is in an important way qualified in the text that follows. For, this text suggests that to say that the Sceptics do everything they do for the sake of tranquility is true only as far as it applies to the Sceptics in the past, at the very beginning of their enterprise. More importantly, it applies to the Sceptics at the time when they have not yet formed a separate *αἵρεσις* but were engaged, with all the other philosophers, in search for truth:

For Sceptics began to do philosophy in order to decide among appearances and to apprehend which are true and which false, so as to become tranquil; but they came upon equipollent dispute, and being unable to decide this they suspended judgement. And when they suspended judgement, tranquillity in matters of belief followed fortuitously...⁸ A story told of the painter Apelles applies to the Sceptics. They say that he was painting a horse and wanted to represent in his picture the lather on the horse’s mouth; but he was so unsuccessful that he gave up, took the sponge on which he had been wiping off the colours from his brush, and flung it at the picture. And when it hit the picture, it produced a representation of the horse’s lather. Now the Sceptics were hoping to acquire tranquillity by deciding the anomalies in what appears and is thought of, and being unable to do this they suspended judgement. But when

⁸ The omitted text runs as follows: ‘For those who hold the belief that things are good or bad by nature are perpetually troubled. When they lack what they believe to be good, they take themselves to be persecuted by natural evils and they pursue what (so they think) is good. And when they have acquired these things, they experience more troubles; for they are elated beyond reason and measure, and in fear of change they do anything so as not to lose what they believe to be good. But those who make no determination about what is good and bad by nature neither avoid nor pursue anything with intensity; and hence they are tranquil.’

they suspended judgement, tranquillity followed as it were fortuitously, as a shadow follows a body. (i 26-29)

This is the only explanation of the idea that the goal of Skepticism is tranquility that can be found in Sextus.⁹ It says, roughly speaking, that Skepticism can be said to aim at tranquility as its goal because tranquility was the original goal for the sake of which the proto-Skeptics began their inquiry. What it does not say, however, is whether Sextus is ready to apply the same account to the activities of the mature Skeptics, in particular, whether it applies to the Skeptical inquiry as is presented in his own writings. Do the mature Skeptics engage in their inquiries for the sake of just the same goal as did the proto-Skeptics? And if they do, do they hope to achieve the goal using the same method? To answer these questions, first we should take a closer look at the original situation of the proto-Skeptics before they engaged in search for truth, and consider what exactly they hoped to achieve by it. Given the conciseness of Sextus' account, the interpretation that follows is bound to be somewhat speculative. However, Sextus' account is itself speculative. He is not offering a real history of Skepticism, but his own reconstruction of it, fashioned to fit his own views about what Skepticism is.

A little earlier in the *Outlines* Sextus also refers to the original desire for tranquility:

The causal principle of Scepticism we say is the hope of becoming tranquil. Men of talent, disturbed by the anomaly in things and puzzled as to which of them they should rather assent to, came to investigate what in things is true and what false, thinking that by deciding these issues they would become tranquil. (i 12)

What Sextus is describing here is not just the causal principle of Skepticism but the causal principle, or origin, of philosophy in general. Accordingly, 'men of talent' were not only proto-Skeptics but philosophers in general, at the time before the differentiation into Dogmatists, Academics, and Pyrrhonists.¹⁰ These persons were *μεγαλοφυεῖς* because they tried to find the way out of the unbearable situation caused by the anomaly in things, i.e., by the fact that things appeared in conflicting ways. The reason why they began to philosophize was not the intellectual curiosity or simply a desire to understand the world. Rather, their puzzlement as to which of the conflicting appearances one should accept as true was preceded by the *disturbance* caused by the fact that one and the same

⁹ There are several references to the discussion on the goal (*PH* i 10, 215, *M* xi 144, 167). Bett 1997, 164, 180 argues that the references in *M* xi are not to *PH* i 25-30 but to the lost part of the work which preceded *M* vii-xi. This seems to be true, since Sextus says in *M* xi 167 that he has discussed the ἀπραξία argument 'more precisely in the lectures on the sceptical goal (ἐν τοῖς περὶ τοῦ σκεπτικοῦ τέλους σχολασθεῖσι)', but in *PH* i 25-30 there is no such discussion.

¹⁰ Sextus is not very clear here, and the text might be taken to mean that 'men of talent' were the early Pyrrhonists only, not philosophers in general. In this case, however, Sextus' insistence that the Dogmatists fail to attain tranquility (and consequently happiness) would miss the point. He certainly thinks that a desire for tranquility is common to all people, since disturbance is the main source of unhappiness (*M* xi 112).

thing appears in conflicting ways. The conflict of appearances was primarily existentially, and only then intellectually, frustrating.

What was so disturbing in the original, pre-philosophical, state? This is an important question, since much in Sextus' account of the goal depends on this. Unfortunately, he is not very clear on this point, and the text is somewhat misleading. Sextus says, first, that people were disturbed by the anomaly in things, i.e., by the conflict of appearances (i 12, 29). But he also says that 'those who hold the belief that things are good or bad by nature are perpetually troubled' (i 27).¹¹ Thus we have two accounts of the cause of disturbance—anomaly and beliefs—but neither is fully satisfactory. To begin with, the anomaly in things, by itself, cannot be the source of disturbance. The later Skeptics readily resign to the fact that things appear in conflicting ways, and it is just this resignation that is, according to them, the basis of tranquility. The fact that the same thing appears as having conflicting properties can be the cause of disturbance only if it is accompanied by belief that one of the conflicting appearances is true and another false. For, such a belief, in turn, according to Sextus, leads to intense pursuing or avoiding the thing which is believed to have the property in question. For instance, unless we are devout Kantians, we may grant that lying for the most part appears as wrong, but that there are situations (when a tyrant orders you to do some unspeakable deed or when a lunatic with an ax in his hands threatens to kill your friend, etc.) when it appears as a right thing to do. The Skeptics would insist that such a conflict of appearances would disturb you only if you hold a belief that lying is, say, by nature wrong, so that you must avoid lying in any situation you may find yourself. Yet people in pre-philosophical situation could not have had beliefs that things possessed some definite properties. Rather, they have hoped that forming such beliefs would help to overcome disturbance, and this was the reason why some of them came to investigate which of the appearances are true and which false. Hence, the explanation in i 27, that those who hold the belief that things are good or bad by nature are perpetually troubled, does not apply to people in the pre-philosophical state, but to those 'men of talent' who have become Dogmatists, i.e., who ended their inquiry by forming a set of beliefs. It also applies to 'ordinary people' (ιδιωται), whose perspective is strongly influenced by the results of Dogmatists' inquiries. Thus, Sextus apparently wants to explain the proto-Skeptics' motivation by appealing to his own independent understanding of the sources of disturbance. The problem is that such an understanding is not suitable for the pre-philosophical state.

There is another way, however, in which we may take the explanation in i 27. We may take it to mean 'those who hold the belief that things are (or: must be) good or bad by nature, but do not hold the belief as to which things are good and which are bad'. It must be admitted that this is not the meaning Sextus has in mind in i 27. In addition, it seems that he never makes a clear distinction between

¹¹ Notice the use of γάρ at the beginning of i 27, which suggests that this sentence is intended as an explanation of the proto-Skeptic's disturbance.

(1) 'I believe that x is F and not not- F ' and (2) 'I believe that x is F or not- F '.¹² However, I think that this distinction should be made if we want to understand what might have caused disturbance in the pre-philosophical state. That is to say, even though in the pre-philosophical state people could not have had beliefs that *these* appearances are true and *those* are false—for they began to do philosophy in order to form such beliefs—they did believe that appearances must be true or false, and it is this combination of being faced with conflicting appearances *and* having the belief that one of them must be true that was the source of disturbance.

Take the case of lying again. If a person has formed a belief that lying is wrong, or that it is wrong in certain precisely specified circumstances, or that it is an indifferent dispreferred thing, or if she has come to hold any other belief formed by means of dogmatic inquiry, then Sextus would argue that such a person must be disturbed. But he could argue that she would be equally disturbed even before forming any doctrinal belief, if she only believes that lying is by nature right or wrong, even though she has no clear idea about what exactly lying is by nature. For, every time she tells a lie she may find herself thinking about the possibility that it is in the nature of things that one should never lie, regardless of circumstances, or that a given circumstance is specified as the circumstance in which one should not tell a lie. For the same reason, she may be disturbed when thinking of the past lies she has told, as well as about the possibility that in the future she may find herself in a situation in which she will not be able to decide what is the right thing to do. And even if she has never told a lie, she may have an uncomfortable feeling that there were situations in which she should have done so.

An attempt to decide which of the conflicting appearances are true and which are false was a reasonable response to such a situation. Men of talent reasonably supposed that developing a set of beliefs will provide humankind with a secure basis on which they could lead their lives untroubled by anomaly. Generally speaking, however, they could have had only a fairly minimalistic conception of the goal and of the means necessary for achieving it. First, they could not have known how much inquiry would be needed. Initially they had hoped that they would get rid of the disturbance just by becoming able to decide which appearances are true and which are false, but they could not have known what is involved in such an ability. Nor could they have supposed that any of the appearances would be shown to be true, for that matter. Second, and more importantly, they could not have had any definite conception of what they were striving for. They could not have had a clear idea of whether life without disturbance should be accompanied with some other states, that is to say, whether tranquility is pos-

¹² Notice, however, *PH* iii 237: 'Those who hypothesize (ὑποθέμενος) that something is good or bad'—this seems to refer to (2), while 'confidence that these things are by nature good and those bad (ἡ πεποιθήσις τοῦ τάδε μὲν εἶναι φύσει ἀγαθὰ, τάδε δὲ κακὰ) produces troubles' (238) refers to (1). Both (1) and (2) are sources of disturbance: 'to hypothesize and be convinced that anything is bad or good in its nature is a bad thing and to be avoided' (238). The same distinction between (1) and (2) is perhaps found in *M* xi 113.

sible only if it is accompanied by, say, the absence of physical pain, or with the absence of passions, etc. Since they have had no firmly settled beliefs, let alone doctrinal ones, they could have conceived of tranquility merely as a name for a highly indeterminate goal, the absence of disturbance. They could not have conceived of it as something that is by nature good, but only as something that, given the unbearable state they have found themselves in, appears good.

The inquiry of those ‘men of talent’ who have become the Dogmatists ends up in forming quite a complicated set of doctrinal beliefs, in some cases even suggesting that a life without disturbance requires nothing less than an ‘art of living’. Equally, some of them insist that the absence of disturbance is possible only if it is accompanied with some other states. However, those of the ‘men of talent’ who have become Pyrrhonists retained their original minimalistic conception of the goal. They insist that their inquiry has demonstrated that the achievement of the goal does not require holding any beliefs at all, let alone the complicated set of beliefs such as the Dogmatists’ ‘art of living’. In addition, they insist that tranquility does not include any further state—such as pleasure, absence of passions, consistency, etc.—but that it consists simply in living without beliefs that things must have determinate properties.

Even though the proto-Skeptics began their inquiry to achieve tranquility, its achievement was not the result of a goal-directed process, but of a constraint. This is implied in the Apelles story. For, in a sense, Apelles both did and did not have a goal. He had a goal *qua* painter, that is, *qua* person who used painting techniques in order to bring about a certain effect, i.e., the representation of the lather on the horse’s mouth. But *qua* someone who gave up and took the sponge, Apelles did not have a goal, for he did not take the sponge in order to bring about the desired artistic effect. Likewise, the proto-Skeptics had a goal *qua* philosophers, ‘men of talent’, who used standard philosophical methods—deciding the truth of appearances—in order to achieve tranquility. What distinguished them from other early philosophers is the fact that they gave up using standard philosophical methods because they found themselves forced to suspend judgment. At that moment, they became Pyrrhonists, that is, Suspenders of judgment (ἐφεκτικοί). *Qua* Suspenders of judgment, they did not have a goal, for they did not suspend judgment in order to achieve tranquility. Tranquility was the unintended result of the suspension.

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It turns out, then, that Skepticism has a goal, in the senses of the term τέλος explained in the introductory definitions, insofar as philosophy in general emerged for the sake of a goal, viz., achieving tranquility. This historical explanation of the Skeptics’ goal is, as I said, the only one we can find in Sextus. What interests us is the sense in which the inquiries of the mature Skeptics and, in particular, Sextus’ own inquiries as presented in the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* and *Adversus Mathematicos*, can be said to be goal-directed.

An initial interpretation might be that the Skeptics have a goal *only* insofar as

their progenitors, at the time when they were not separated off from other philosophers, aimed at a goal. Perhaps the activities of the mature Sceptics do not admit of a description in terms of striving for a goal. Such a description belongs to the history of Skepticism, and this is the only reason why it is a part of the general account of Skepticism in the first book of the *Outlines*. This is also the reason why Sextus does not mention it in the so-called special account, i.e., in his arguments against the Dogmatists. I believe, however, that we can discard this assumption at once. Sextus repeatedly stresses that Skepticism has a goal and that the Sceptics aim at achieving tranquility.

Yet one may insist that Sextus' speculative history of Pyrrhonism provides a clue to understand the activities of the subsequent Sceptics and that the same story he has told about the early Pyrrhonists' experience can be told about their descendants. Perhaps this is the reason why Sextus is satisfied with a historical account only. Thus, one may argue that, just as in the case of the proto-Sceptics, the mature Sceptics have a goal, the discovery of truth, which they share with other philosophers. Also, as with the proto-Sceptics, they consider truth not as a goal in itself but only as a means to the final goal, the achievement of tranquility. Due to their persistence in inquiry, the Sceptics are repeatedly discovering that whatever appearance or thought they consider, they are forced to suspend judgment about its truth or falsity. And again and again, they are fortuitously finding out that suspension is followed by tranquility, repeatedly experiencing what the proto-Sceptics experienced a long time ago. Thus, in a sense, the Sceptics are going through the same experience that is described in Sextus' speculative history. And, like the proto-Sceptics, they have a goal only *qua* Inquirers but not *qua* Suspenders of judgment.

If we accept such an interpretation, then one may ask, quite naturally, what prompts the Sceptics to engage in inquiry over and over again. For, having convinced themselves that suspension of judgment is regularly followed by tranquility, would it not be more reasonable if they just abandon all beliefs without engaging in a long and possibly troublesome process of inspecting conflicting considerations? To this the Sceptics can reply that they want to avoid rashness (*προπέτεια*), the most serious illness of the Dogmatists. For, after the Sceptics found themselves forced to suspend judgment about *p*, it would be rash to stop their inquiries at that point. They must be open to the possibility that they have not considered all the arguments in favor of *p* or not-*p* that exist or might exist. And it would be a sign of serious dogmatism to suppose that suspension, and thus tranquility, with regard to *p* implies anything about *q* or any other case. Even if they consider all cases of conflicting thoughts and appearances they know of, this still does not mean that they can stop searching for truth. For, it is always possible that there are some problems and arguments which have not yet been propounded by anyone but which are likely to be propounded. Since the Sceptics are searching for truth, they must always be open to the possibility that truth can indeed be found, and this prompts them persistently to inquire further (such an interpretation is implied in Sedley 1983, 22).

There are several problems with this account. The most serious problem concerns the manner in which a Skeptic, according to it, reaches the state of tranquility. It assumes that the acquisition of tranquility is a cumulative process, in which a person is becoming undisturbed as she is gradually abandoning her beliefs that things by nature have determinate properties. However, the Skeptics cannot recommend such a strategy for two reasons. First, and more importantly, since there are possibly infinitely many sources of disturbance, i.e., thoughts and appearances that a Skeptic has to consider, even the most persistent Skeptic would always be far away from her goal. Tranquility she may be experiencing after abandoning beliefs in all matters that she has considered thus far, in all branches of philosophy and life, would bound to be unstable and temporary. Second, it is questionable whether the state she would reach by such a process would be tranquility at all. For, if a Skeptic suspends judgment about p , announces that she has reached tranquility, and yet continues with inquiry, this implies that she grants that she has achieved some desirable state which she may call ἀταραξία but also admits that it is not the state she has hoped for. However, when the Skeptics say that they have achieved tranquility, they do not give any qualification.

Sextus' text at times suggests, however, that the Skeptics' goal is tranquility that allegedly accompanies suspension regarding a particular question. It suggests, in other words, that the tranquility in which the Skeptics are interested is the last member in the series *opposing p and q —equipollence—suspension—tranquility*. Now, if a person is disturbed over the question whether it is the case that p , then it makes sense to say that the Skeptical method proceeding from setting out oppositions to suspension is a method of eliminating disturbance over that particular question. But the Skeptical goal is not undisturbedness over whether it is the case that p , and their final goal is not attainable by accumulation of such particular instances of undisturbedness. Rather, Sextus' point is quite general: what interests him is how to bring about a state of mind in which a person is not disturbed over *any* matter of belief. To be sure, the early Pyrrhonists were going through particular cases gradually becoming aware that they are unable to decide the truth of appearances and thoughts. However, their suspension was general, and it was followed by tranquility regarding beliefs as such, not regarding those questions they have considered. Accordingly, Sextus says that to attain tranquility, a Skeptic must suspend judgment about everything (see *PH* i 31, 205). Hence, we must suppose that the real achievement of the proto-Skeptics, and the expected achievement of the mature Skeptics, is the development of the ability or disposition in virtue of which they are able to eliminate any belief that things by nature have determinate properties. Tranquility is the outcome of their having this disposition, and not of the particular act of suspension about some particular problem. In short, the nature of the Skeptics' tranquility is all-or-nothing.

There are two further reasons why the story that Sextus has told about the early Pyrrhonists' experience does not apply to the subsequent Pyrrhonists. First, the subsequent Pyrrhonists must have a different conception of philosophy. If they

do everything they do in order to achieve tranquility, they cannot view philosophy as a matter of finding the truth, since the proto-Skeptics' experience has shown that truth and search for it has nothing whatever to do with the goal.¹³ To be sure, even though truth has nothing to do with the goal, it has everything to do with disturbance, since the Skeptics insist that people are disturbed just because they take some appearances as true. But the mature Skeptics' intention in eliminating beliefs is not to show that they are false, but that, if one wants to achieve tranquility, one has to abandon thinking about truth and falsity. Thus, insofar as philosophy is a matter of thinking about truth and falsity, the mature Pyrrhonists' inquiry is not philosophy (see on this Striker 2001, esp. 117-118). But how then are we to understand the fact that Sextus does call Skepticism a kind of philosophy?¹⁴ Obviously, his reason for that is not only the Skeptics' use of argument and reasoning characteristic of philosophy but the fact that it is, as it was for the 'men of talent', a means for attaining the goal.

Furthermore, the subsequent Pyrrhonists must have a different conception of the goal. According to my charitable reading of Sextus' story, the concept of the goal which 'men of talent' had in mind when they started their inquiry must be taken quite minimalistically: 'tranquility' designated just the absence of the sort of distress which they felt because of the conflict among appearances and belief that one of them must be true. When they embarked on a search for truth they could not know exactly what kind of state they could expect if their inquiry turned out successful. Since the abandonment of inquiry led them to tranquility, the proto-Skeptics discovered that the real source of disturbance was not conflict among appearances, but holding beliefs. The original goal thus receives the content: the goal is no longer just 'tranquility', but the state without beliefs, and, from now on, everything the Skeptics do, they do for the sake of attaining that state.

4

At first glance, it may seem that to attain such a state, it is sufficient to accept the result of the inquiry of the proto-Skeptics and to resign oneself to the conflicting appearances. That is to say, it may seem that all the Skeptics have to do is to live following the ways in which things appear without holding beliefs that things must by nature be as they appear: to return to the pre-philosophical state, as it were, endowed with a new perspective on the inevitable conflict among appearances. Sextus insists that attending to the ways in which things appear is compatible with living in accordance with everyday observances, which consists in guidance by nature, necessitation by feelings, handing down of laws and customs, and teaching of kinds of expertise (cf. *PH* i 23-24, 237-238). Thus, it seems that it is sufficient for the Skeptics to live in such a way, and that living in such a

¹³ For arguments against the view that the Pyrrhonists' are searching for truth, see Palmer 2000.

¹⁴ Cf. *PH* i 4, 5, 11, 236, ii 6, 9; *M* vii 30, viii 191. Dogmatic philosophy is sometimes qualified as 'so-called' (καλουμένη, λεγομένη; cf. *PH* i 6, 18, ii 1, 12, 205, iii 1, 278), regularly with reference to its parts.

way is a means of securing the attainment of the goal, life without beliefs. This appears to be clearly implied in Sextus' remark in *PH* i 231:

We also differ from the New Academy with regard to what leads to the goal. For those who profess to belong to the Academy make use of the plausible in their lives, while we follow laws and customs and natural feelings, and so live without holding beliefs.

Sextus is using the distinction between the goal and what leads to the goal (πρὸς τὸ τέλος) to point to one of the differences between the Pyrrhonists and the members of the New Academy.¹⁵ In his account, although Carneades denied the existence of the criterion of truth, he was forced to frame a philosophical theory to show how to live and attain happiness. Carneades' theory discussed a special kind of impression, namely, one which is plausible, irreversible, and tested, and proposed that in matters of special importance, which are immediately relevant to the attainment of the goal, we should use such impressions (see *M* vii 166-189; *PH* i 227-229). But the Pyrrhonists do not need any philosophical theory. To attain their goal, life without beliefs, they just have to follow laws, customs, and natural feelings, and attending to appearances is sufficient for that.

However, a person who accepts the outcome of the proto-Skeptics' inquiry and who agrees that a tranquil life amounts to life without beliefs is not thereby immune to holding beliefs. Some of the things surrounding her suggest that she should nevertheless believe that they are by nature such and such. In addition, a Skeptic lives in a community whose members are not Skeptics, who hold various kinds of beliefs, and who in their actions and speeches tend to persuade a Skeptic that she should believe that things are by nature such and such. Most importantly, the outcome of the inquiry of those talented people who became Believers (δογματικοί) was that a tranquil life requires holding various kinds of beliefs. Some of them insisted that it requires holding a complicated set of logical, physical, and ethical beliefs, and especially beliefs that constitute the so-called 'art of living'. Many of these doctrinal beliefs tend to permeate life, not only of philosophers but of ordinary people as well. In addition, the arguments that can be put forward in favor of these beliefs are so strong and persuasive that even those who agreed to follow a life attending to appearances may find it very difficult to resist them.

Those who accept the Pyrrhonian proposal are therefore bound to develop a means which would allow them to live just by following appearances and not to fall into the temptation to take these appearances as true or false. They have to master the argumentative patterns by means of which every possible belief can be scrutinized and rejected. More importantly, they have to develop an ability or disposition that would allow them to apply these argumentative patterns whenever necessary. Indeed, Sextus defines Skepticism as an ability:

¹⁵ For this distinction, see e.g. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* iii 2.1111b26-29, vi 13.1145a5-6; Plutarch, *On Common Conceptions* 1070D.

Scepticism is an ability to set out oppositions among things which appear and are thought of in any way at all, an ability by which, because of the equipollence in the opposed objects and accounts, we come first to suspension of judgement and afterwards to tranquillity. (*PH* i 8)

As Martha Nussbaum has noticed, there are two ways in which we may take this definition. On the one hand, we may take it to mean that Skepticism is just an ability to set out oppositions (*δύναμις ἀντιθετική*), and that it just so happens that equipollence, suspension, and tranquillity are its results. On the other hand, we may take these results as themselves parts of the definition, so that Skepticism is not just an ability to set out oppositions but a particular kind of that ability, namely, one that has tranquillity as its result.¹⁶

According to the first understanding, it follows that Sextus implies that Skepticism differs from all other kinds of philosophy by using a method, or an ability, of setting out oppositions. But this is highly controversial, since the Academics' arguments can also be said to be based on *δύναμις ἀντιθετική*, and there is no reason why this ability, suitably understood, should not be ascribed to other philosophers as well. And even if we grant that the Pyrrhonists alone possess this ability, this interpretation would commit Sextus to accept the possibility that the outcome of setting out oppositions may not be equipollence and suspension. That is to say, this would imply that he should be ready to accept that it is open what will follow from setting out oppositions: the outcome can be equipollence, but it can also be prevalence of one set of considerations, which can, in turn, make us accept as true one of the opposing thoughts or appearances.

Such an interpretation has no support in Sextus' texts, however, since in the Sceptics' inquiries setting out oppositions regularly leads to suspension. Moreover, setting out oppositions and equipollence are conceptually inseparable, that is, there is no clear distinction in Sextus between 'to oppose' and 'to oppose to every account an equal account'. 'To set out oppositions' in Sextus is not used in the ordinary sense, in which we put *p* against not-*p* to see which one of them we should assent to because it is more persuasive. Rather, 'an ability to set out oppositions' implicitly means 'an ability to suspend judgment', so that we should accept the second interpretation of the definition and assume that what distinguishes a Sceptic from other philosophers is not just a possession of *δύναμις ἀντιθετική* but a possession of a particular kind of *δύναμις ἀντιθετική*, one that has as its results suspension and tranquillity.¹⁷

Due to the possession of such an ability, a Sceptic is able to refute every belief or argument in favor of it. Suspension does not require actual exercise of this ability on each occasion; a mere ability, given that it is stable and 'perfect', may

¹⁶ See Nussbaum 1994, 286. According to her, 'Sextus wants and needs to claim the first understanding but is forced continually toward the second'.

¹⁷ This, of course, means that Sextus is committed in advance to the result (cf. Sedley 1983, 21; Nussbaum 1994, 300-306). We might call this a kind of dogmatism, but this is not dogmatism in Sextus' sense of the word.

be sufficient.¹⁸ Consider, for instance, Sextus' claim in *PH* i 33-34 (cf. also iii 233-234): if someone propounds p and if there is a good possibility that an argument in favor of not- p might occur, even if it has not yet occurred, the Skeptic has sufficient reason to suspend judgment about p . This sounds like dogmatism: we might expect that a Skeptic should be open to the possibility that an argument in favor of not- p will never occur or that it cannot occur; at any rate, we might expect that he would suspend his suspension for a while. But Sextus should be accused for dogmatism only if we assume that the Skeptics are interested in truth. However, as I argued, they are not concerned with truth at all. If tranquility is the final object of the Skeptics' pursuit, then there is no need for any inquiry into truth and, consequently, no need for any inquiry that would establish not- p . On many other occasions, of course, for instance in their arguments against the Dogmatists, the Skeptics will engage in establishing not- p , to convince their opponents that they should suspend judgment themselves.

If this is the sense in which the Skeptics' activities can be said to be goal-directed, then we can understand how Sextus can hold that the Skeptics are perpetual inquirers and at the same time insist that they aim at, and actually achieve, a goal. These two characterizations would be incompatible only if we supposed that the object of the Skeptics' inquiry is truth and that tranquility is the outcome of their failure to find the truth. In Sextus' account, the Dogmatists and the Academics believe that the attainment of the goal requires taking an attitude toward truth. Having announced that they have found the truth or that the truth cannot be found, they have ended their inquiry. The Skeptics, on the other hand, have to inquire further, that is, exercise their disposition of setting out oppositions to remove all beliefs. In fact, the Skeptics cannot claim that they follow appearances and live a tranquil life without being constantly involved in setting out oppositions among thoughts and appearances. Since they do not live in a community of Skeptics, they cannot claim to follow laws, customs, and natural feelings without persistently withholding their assent to beliefs that what these laws, customs and natural feelings suggest really is such and such. And the only way in which a Skeptic can remove a belief is to put it in opposition to some other belief. As a result of the opposition, a Skeptic will be forced to suspend judgment, so that it can be said that a state without belief is the outcome of a constraint. But the constraint is, as it were, induced; the Skeptics force themselves into suspension, which is not a chance result of their pursuit of some other goal.

Suppose that a Skeptic receives an order from a tyrant to do an unspeakable deed, say, to murder his parents. Sextus insists that in a situation like this, a Skeptic will act 'by the preconception which accords with his ancestral laws and customs' (*M* xi 166) and that his decision will not be based on any belief about how things are by nature. Thus, if a Skeptic is raised according to laws and customs which prohibit murdering one's parents, he will probably not obey a tyrant's order. He will add that his decision is not based on any dogmatic presupposition

¹⁸ For the 'perfect' Skeptical disposition, see *M* xi 1 and below.

but that he just attends to the way things appear to him. This, however, cannot be all that he has to say to justify his act. For, since laws and customs are themselves based on beliefs, how can he avoid the objection that he is already involved in dogmatic commitments by his very upbringing (see also Bett 1997, 177)? After all, a non-Skeptic may also say that he just follows laws and customs. Obviously, the difference between a Skeptic and a non-Skeptic must lie in the fact that even though these laws and customs are expressions of some belief, the Skeptic does not accept them *qua* expressions of belief but only *qua* laws and customs. And he can do this only if he is disposed in such a way that to every belief, even the belief that is a part of his upbringing, oppose another belief. This, of course, does not mean that before every act he will engage in Skeptical inquiry and say: 'Laws and customs order me not to murder my parents; but it is possible that some people (unknown to me at the moment) permit such an act; and some philosophers say that your parents' life is an indifferent thing; thus, I have to suspend belief as to whether killing my parents is right or wrong.' However, he must have developed a disposition to argue along these lines and be constantly prepared to exercise it.

5

At the end of the chapter on the goal, Sextus remarks that 'some eminent Sceptics have added suspension of judgment in investigations to these [sc., to tranquillity in matters of belief and moderation of feeling in matters forced upon us]' (i 30). It is impossible to be certain about what exactly he has in mind by this cryptic remark.¹⁹ However, a brief consideration of it can reveal some of the more basic problems in Sextus' argument.

As it stands, this remark is amenable to two interpretations. On the one hand, it may be taken as pointing to the fact that the Skeptical goal has two components. The first, and more important, component is tranquillity, which is achieved by suspension of judgment about whether there is anything that is by nature good or bad. This is supposed to be the original goal of the Pyrrhonists. To be sure, Sextus has no clear idea why the early Pyrrhonists chose tranquillity as the goal of life and philosophy, but he has independent arguments which, in his view, show that

¹⁹ According to a report in Diogenes Laertius, the Sceptics who proposed *ἐποχή* as the goal were Timon and Aenesidemus (ix 107). (See Bury 1933, 20 n. a; Annas and Barnes 1994, 11n55. Pellegrin 1997, 73n1 is more cautious.) However, Diogenes' report is too indecisive and omits the important qualification 'in investigations'. A better candidate seems to be Arcesilaus. At the beginning of the *Outlines*, Arcesilaus is not mentioned among the Academics who have announced that the truth cannot be found (as is stressed by Cooper 2004, 99). Moreover, Sextus says in i 232 that Arcesilaus' position is almost the same as the Pyrrhonists' and as a point of similarity cites Arcesilaus' view about the goal: 'And he says that the goal is suspension of judgement, which, we said, is accompanied by tranquillity'. Although he goes on arguing that there are important dogmatic elements in Arcesilaus' philosophy, we may safely conclude that, at least as far as the *Outlines* are concerned, Sextus is ready to admit that the Pyrrhonian and Arcesilean views have much in common, so that it is at least possible that Arcesilaus is among the 'eminent Sceptics' referred to here. (For more on *PH* i 232-235, see Cooper 2004, 98-103 and Striker 2001, 125-128.)

a person who believes that something is good or bad by nature is always disturbed, and cites these arguments in support of the idea that tranquility is the goal. Of course, Sextan Skepticism is much more than that. His works exhibit a vast amount of arguments, assembled from various Pyrrhonian sources, in various branches of philosophy and sciences, which all end up in suspension of judgment. Suspension in these non-ethical inquiries can be seen as the second component of the Skeptical goal, added by some ‘eminent Sceptics’.²⁰

This two-component view of the Skeptical goal seems to provide a good explanation of the Sceptics’ actual practice as presented in Sextus’ works. Thus, while non-ethical inquiries lead to equipollence and suspension, inquiries about good and bad lead not only to suspension, but to the removal of disturbance and attainment of tranquility. In addition, the idea that the goal of the Sceptics’ endeavor is actually twofold seems to provide some explanation of the fact that Sextus, as we shall see, does not clarify the nature of the connection between suspension about non-ethical issues and tranquility. On the other hand, however, it is obvious that Sextus is strongly committed to the view that Skepticism has a *single* goal. He obviously takes tranquility very broadly, as non-disturbance in matters of belief in general, which, in his view, requires suspension of judgment about everything, not just about ethical issues (see *PH* i 12, 18, 26, 29-31, 205). Thus, there is no basis for drawing a distinction between an ethical and non-ethical goal of Skepticism: Skepticism has a single ultimate goal, and the remark about ‘eminent Sceptics’ should be taken just as pointing to the fact that there have been Sceptics who have not approached Skepticism with a view to attaining a practical goal.

To justify the claim that tranquility is a single ultimate goal of Skepticism, Sextus has to show that it is that to which all Skeptical inquiries are directed. In other words, if he wants to explain the motivation for his wide-ranging investigations, he has to provide some reasons why he thinks that achievement of tranquility requires the removal of *all* beliefs, and not only ethical ones. So, what does it mean to say that tranquility follows upon suspension about everything? More specifically, in what manner exactly does suspension in non-ethical inquiries contribute to tranquility, if, as Sextus argues, the real source of disturbance are beliefs about what is good or bad, and tranquility is freedom from such beliefs?²¹ As I argued in section 3, the Sceptics’ tranquility is not a matter of accumulation

²⁰ ἐν ταῖς ζητήσεσιν ἐποχή can also mean ‘suspension of inquiries’ (as noted by Pellegrin 1997, 73n1). However, it is hardly possible that this is the right meaning here, for why would Sextus call the proponents of such a goal σκεπτικοί?

²¹ In the chapter on the concept of Skepticism (*PH* i 8-10), Sextus says that the explanation of how tranquility accompanies suspension is provided in the chapter on the goal (i 10). However, the only explanation found there is the account of the reasons why those who hold beliefs about what is good and bad by nature are always disturbed, as opposed to those who do not hold such beliefs (i 27-28). The explanation cannot be the remark that tranquility followed fortuitously (i 26), since ‘fortuitously’ refers to the manner in which the proto-Sceptics discovered that suspension is followed by tranquility, and a fortuitous discovery cannot be repeated. Finally, the phrase ‘as a shadow follows a body’ (i 29; cf. *DL* ix 107) is highly uninformative; besides, Sextus could have used it in i 10 without referring to the chapter on the goal.

of particular instances of suspension, but it depends on a disposition by means of which a Skeptic is able to remove every belief. Thus, the proper question is not how the removal of a particular non-ethical belief—say, the belief that honey is by nature sweet—may lead to tranquility. Rather, the question is why a person who wants to achieve tranquility has to bring herself to a state in which she has absolutely no beliefs. Unfortunately, Sextus does not provide an answer to that question.

One way in which we may try to account for the fact that tranquility requires more than the removal of ethical beliefs only is to insist that ethical beliefs are not independent from other beliefs (see Bett 1997, 131). Thus, the belief that there is something that is good by nature somehow depends on the belief that something objectively exists, i.e., that it is possible to make assertions about the objective world. It also depends on the belief that there is a criterion by means of which it is possible to provide conviction about the reality or unreality of things. Due to the interdependence of all beliefs, we may argue that the removal of non-ethical beliefs is necessary if one wants to get rid of the immediate sources of disturbance, so that all of the Skeptics' actions are, in a sense, directed toward tranquility. However, in the logical and physical sections of Sextus' writings there is no mention of tranquility. More importantly, he does not hold any specific view about the interdependence of beliefs. But it may be argued that since the Dogmatists, especially the Stoics, insist on such a view, this is sufficient reason why Sextus must go through all branches of philosophy: to demonstrate to the dogmatists that they have to get rid of all beliefs if they want to become tranquil. However, this would imply that Sextus' extensive inquiries in logic and physics are not directed toward the Skeptics' *own* tranquility; but he explicitly says that they are (see *PH* i 18).

Furthermore, one might argue that the Skeptics should engage in logical and physical inquiries because the development and exercise of the Skeptical disposition, in virtue of which they are able to remove every belief, requires a lot of effort and engaging in various kinds of reasoning. For instance, one may argue that when the Skeptics claim that we must suspend judgment about the existence of the criterion of truth, they are doing this for the sake of tranquility, because this contributes to the development of the Skeptical disposition. As for the Skeptics who already possess this disposition, engaging in such an argument may be necessary to 'prevent them from being seduced by the Dogmatists into abandoning their investigation and thus through rashness missing the tranquillity...which...they deem to supervene on suspension of judgement about everything' (*PH* i 205). However, as in the former case, this implies that you cannot be disposed to remove ethical beliefs without being disposed to remove beliefs in general, that is, you cannot be an ethical skeptic without being a global skeptic. Such an idea seems to be implied at the beginning of *Against the Ethicists*, where Sextus argues that a person can live a tranquil life only if she, having passed through all three branches of philosophy, takes on 'the perfect—that is, Skeptical—disposition' (τελεία καὶ σκεπτικὴ διάθεσις, *M* xi 1). As in the for-

mer case, however, Sextus offers no reasons why we should accept this. The sources of disturbance, as presented in *M xi*, concern a very limited set of beliefs, and it seems unsupported to insist that such a wide-ranging inquiry as is the one found in Sextus is needed to develop and maintain the disposition for their elimination.

Obviously, then, there has to be more to the account of the sources of disturbance and of tranquility to justify the claim that global suspension is needed if one wants to become tranquil. Without such an account, Sextus' Skeptical inquiries can be seen merely as an attempt to convince us that suspension of judgment is an achievement worthy in itself. But this is not how he conceives of them.²²

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