

In Greek philosophy, **skepticism** refers to a philosophical tradition that emerged in ancient Greece, particularly during the Hellenistic period. The most notable school of skepticism was the Pyrrhonist school, named after Pyrrho of Elis (c. 360–c. 270 BCE). Pyrrho emphasized suspension of judgment (epoché) in response to the uncertainty and relativity of human perceptions and beliefs. Pyrrhonists argued that since different individuals perceive the world differently and since there is no absolute criterion for distinguishing truth from falsehood, one should refrain from making claims about the nature of reality.

Another important figure in Greek skepticism was Sextus Empiricus (2nd to 3rd century CE), who systematized Pyrrhonist ideas in his works, particularly in "Outlines of Pyrrhonism." Sextus outlined ten modes of skepticism, or ways in which our beliefs can be challenged, including arguments based on disagreement, the relativity of perceptions, and the limitations of human cognition.

Greek skepticism influenced later philosophical traditions, including early modern philosophy, where thinkers like René Descartes engaged with skeptical arguments as part of their exploration of epistemology and metaphysics. Overall, Greek skepticism remains a significant part of the philosophical discourse on knowledge, truth, and the limits of human understanding.

The ten modes of skepticism, as outlined by Sextus Empiricus, are:

1. Mode of disagreement: Different people hold conflicting beliefs about the same subject matter, suggesting that truth is uncertain.
2. Mode of relativity: Perceptions and judgments vary depending on the observer's circumstances, undermining claims of absolute truth.
3. Mode of regress ad infinitum: Any justification offered for a belief can be questioned, leading to an endless chain of justification without reaching a secure foundation.
4. Mode of hypothesis: Beliefs are based on unproven assumptions or hypotheses, which themselves require justification.
5. Mode of circularity: Justifications for beliefs often rely on the very beliefs they are meant to justify, creating a circular argument.
6. Mode of the criterion: There is no reliable criterion for determining truth from falsehood, leaving beliefs unsupported.
7. Mode of infinite regression: Any attempt to establish a criterion for truth leads to an infinite regress of criteria, none of which can provide certainty.
8. Mode of relativity with respect to customs: What is considered true or acceptable varies across cultures and societies, suggesting the absence of universal truths.
9. Mode of appearances: Perceptions can be misleading or deceptive, making it difficult to discern truth from appearances.
10. Mode of the continuum: There is a continuum of qualities or properties between different objects, making precise distinctions and definitions challenging.

These modes are used to illustrate the challenges and limitations of human knowledge and to advocate for suspension of judgment in the absence of conclusive evidence.

**Pyrrho of Elis** (c. 360–c. 270 BCE) was a Greek philosopher known for founding the school of skepticism. His philosophical teachings revolved around the notion of suspending judgment and achieving tranquility (ataraxia) through the recognition of the limitations of human knowledge.

Here are some key teachings associated with Pyrrho:

1. **Suspension of Judgment (Epoché):** Pyrrho argued that human beings cannot attain true knowledge about the nature of reality. He believed that since our senses can be deceived, it is impossible to distinguish truth from appearance. Therefore, he advocated for the suspension of judgment on all matters, leading to a state of mental tranquility.
2. **Apathy (Apatheia):** Pyrrho taught that by suspending judgment and recognizing the uncertainty of all beliefs, individuals could achieve a state of ataraxia, or freedom from disturbance. This state of mind, characterized by emotional tranquility and equanimity, was to be sought after as the ultimate goal of life.
3. **Relativity of Perception:** Pyrrho emphasized that human perceptions are subjective and relative. He argued that what appears to one person as beautiful or good may not appear so to another. Therefore, he urged people to withhold judgment and refrain from making absolute claims about the nature of reality.
4. **Pyrrhonism:** Pyrrho's philosophical approach gave rise to Pyrrhonism, a school of skepticism that continued to develop after his death. Pyrrhonism influenced later thinkers such as Sextus Empiricus and Michel de Montaigne.
5. **Methods of Doubt:** Pyrrho employed various methods to induce doubt and challenge dogmatic beliefs. These methods included the use of arguments such as the "Ten Modes of Aenesidemus," which highlighted the relativity of perception, the limitations of human understanding, and the contradictory nature of beliefs.

Overall, Pyrrho's teachings were aimed at cultivating a mindset of skepticism and humility regarding human knowledge. By embracing doubt and suspending judgment, he believed individuals could attain mental tranquility and live a more contented life free from the disturbances caused by dogmatic beliefs and desires.