

## Echoes of Sextus Empiricus in Nietzsche?

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Some years ago I wrote a paper on Nietzsche and ancient skepticism, exploring both the extent of Nietzsche's knowledge of, and interest in, the subject, and the extent to which his engagement with ancient skepticism might have colored his own philosophy<sup>1</sup>. That paper worked with a rather general conception of ancient skepticism, and did not have much to say about Sextus Empiricus individually. In addition, it was not focused specially on epistemology, as this volume is. And so, although on many questions I have not changed my mind since writing that paper, I hope to have something new to offer in this one. There is the question whether Nietzsche can plausibly be seen as influenced by Sextus, and there is the question whether Nietzsche and Sextus can fruitfully be seen as philosophical allies; the answer to the second question could be yes even if the answer to the first question was no. I shall try to say something about both questions. An obvious starting-point for the first question is to look at what Nietzsche actually says about Sextus<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Bett, "Nietzsche on the Sceptics and Nietzsche as Sceptic", *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 82 (2000), 62-86.

<sup>2</sup> Translations from Greek are my own. For quotations from Nietzsche's works I use the following translations (and, in some cases, abbreviations): *Human, All too Human* trans. R.J. Hollingdale, intro. Richard Schacht (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986/1996); *Daybreak* ed. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); *The Gay Science* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974) (*GS*); *Beyond Good and Evil* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1966) (*BGE*); *On the Genealogy of Morality* trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen, intro. Maudemarie Clark (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 1998) (*GM*); *Twilight of the Idols* trans. Richard Polt, intro. Tracy Strong (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 1997) (*TI*); *The Antichrist* trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968 –

## I

A look at the index of Colli and Montinari's 15-volume edition of Nietzsche's works, *Kritische Studienausgabe* or *KSA* for short<sup>3</sup>, is disappointing. There is not a single mention of Sextus Empiricus by name. But *KSA* is not an absolutely complete compilation of Nietzsche's writings; it does not include many of his early scholarly writings. These can be found in the complete *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (abbreviated *KGW*), on which *KSA* is based<sup>4</sup>; a good proportion of the unpublished writings, often in the form of short notes, can also be found in the 5-volume *Frühe Schriften* (*FS*)<sup>5</sup>.

In notes from between the summer of 1867 and early 1869, there are numerous references to Sextus. Some of these use him as a source for details concerning earlier Greek philosophy. For example, he contrasts the atomists Epicurus and Democritus, citing Epicurus' view that everything the senses show us is true and pointing out that Democritus had serious doubts about our ability to know the truth at all; in confirmation of the latter point he quotes a passage of Sextus' *Against the Logicians* that specifically refers to sensory appearances as failing to give us the truth (*M* 7.135) (*FS* v.3, 328). This passage and its surrounding context in Sextus are among the best sources of evidence for Democritus' epistemology, including numerous fragments from Democritus' own written works. In an era when the prodigious efforts of scholars such as Hermann Diels, the original

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with *TI* in the same volume); *Ecce Homo* trans. Walter Kaufmann in *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Random House, 1966).

<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Samtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Einzelbänden*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1967ff.).

<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Frühe Schriften*, ed. Hans Joachim Mette, Karl Schlechta and Carl Koch (München: C.H. Beck, 1994).

editor of what is still the most regularly cited collection of fragments of the Presocratic philosophers, were only just getting started, Nietzsche would have had to have a direct familiarity with the text of Sextus to dig up this passage. The same is true of his observation that Democritus was said to have learned his atomism from a Phoenician named Mochus (*M* 9.363) (*FS* v.3, 262), his reflections on possible links between Democritus and Pythagorean thinkers (*PH* 3.30, *M* 9.361) (*FS* v.3, 273), and – to shift away from Democritus – his speculations about poets before Homer, to which a remark in Sextus' *Against the Grammarians* gives some encouragement (*M* 1.204) (*FS* v.4, 16-17). The passages of Sextus cited in these various places span all three of his surviving works.

Sextus' testimony on Democritus is also referred to in Nietzsche's three substantial published essays on Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*; Sextus' account of Democritus' views on the origin of our belief in gods (*M* 9.24) is cited as confirmation and explication of a remark quoted by Diogenes on a similar theme (*KGW* II/1, 223). Diogenes' life of Democritus is the one that gets the most attention in these essays. But there are also occasional references to Diogenes' treatment of the Pyrrhonists, especially the lives of Pyrrho and his follower Timon in book 9, and here Sextus makes a few other appearances. One is in the context of Diogenes' source for these lives, and especially for the parts of it that summarize a developed form of skepticism considerably later than Pyrrho and Timon themselves (*KGW* II/1, 206-7). Nietzsche correctly observes that the chronological list of skeptics at the end of the life of Timon (9.115-16) extends to one Saturninus, named as a student of Sextus. He goes on to note that the summary of the Ten Modes is also

later than Sextus, as well as Favorinus, since it mentions ordering these Modes differently from them (9.87). He argues that the source of this material is probably Theodosius, an obscure skeptic to whom Diogenes ascribes a *Skeptical Summary* (*skeptika kephalaia*, 9.70) in which he is said to have denied that Pyrrhonism should bear that name – first (though Nietzsche does not mention this), because we cannot know what was in Pyrrho’s mind, and second, because Pyrrho was not the first to advocate skepticism and did not propound any doctrine<sup>6</sup>, both of which might seem to be implied by the use of his name in a school label. Nietzsche takes Theodosius to be here responding to Sextus’ treatment of the term “Pyrrhonian” at *PH* 1.7, and therefore to be later than Sextus. He also conjectures a correction to a nonsensical manuscript text at *DL* 9.79 that would have Theodosius explicitly named as the source for the Ten Modes. Most of these points can also be found in his scholarly notes (*FS* v.5, 41-3, 131, 260), although here, interestingly, he flirts with the idea that the author Diogenes is drawing on for the Modes is Saturninus (*FS* v.5, 41) – a conclusion recently argued for by David Sedley<sup>7</sup> – before settling on Theodosius.

As Jonathan Barnes has pointed out<sup>8</sup>, Nietzsche is probably wrong to see Theodosius as responding to Sextus; more likely it is the other way around. In his

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<sup>6</sup> Or perhaps, was not the *first* not to propound any doctrine; this is how Elizabeth Scharffenberger and Katja Maria Vogt read it in their translation in *Pyrrhonian Skepticism in Diogenes Laertius: Introduction, Text, Translation, Commentary and Interpretative Essays*, ed. Katja Maria Vogt (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015). But Nietzsche reads it as I have summarized it above (“Pyrrho sei nicht der Urheber der Skepsis und habe kein Dogma”), and the Greek can at least as naturally be read in this way.

<sup>7</sup> David Sedley, “Diogenes Laertius on the Ten Pyrrhonist Modes”, in *Pyrrhonian Skepticism in Diogenes Laertius* (see the previous note) 171-85.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Barnes, “Diogenes Laertius IX 61-116: The Philosophy of Pyrrhonism”, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.36.6 (1992), 4241-4301, at 4283-6.

explanation of the label “Pyrrhonian”, Sextus is careful not to imply that Pyrrho held any doctrines, to couch the claim of priority in terms of a difference of degree, and to speak about what Pyrrho *appears to have done* rather than claiming any special insight into his state of mind; these look like deliberate attempts to avoid the kinds of suspicion voiced by Theodosius. Nevertheless, Nietzsche’s remarks about Diogenes’ lives of Pyrrho and Timon, brief as they are, show considerable knowledge of the history of Pyrrhonism, and his knowledge of Sextus is clearly one facet of this.

What we do not seem to find in Nietzsche’s references to Sextus is any interest in Sextus’ actual philosophy. With the exception of a couple of incidental mentions (*FS* v.4, 390, *KGW* II/1, 178), I have cited all the places I have been able to find in his scholarly notes or in his essays on Diogenes in which Sextus’ name appears; Sextus figures as a source for earlier thought, or as a member of the Pyrrhonist tradition, but his ideas themselves are never directly addressed. In fact, Nietzsche’s apparent misunderstanding of the relations between Sextus’ and Theodosius’ comments on the name “Pyrrhonian” might suggest a rather superficial grasp of what the Pyrrhonist outlook, at least in Sextus’ hands, actually was. The subtlety with which Sextus presents his skepticism in a truly skeptical register – that is, so as to avoid potentially self-refuting intellectual commitments – is one of the more notable features of his work, and the passage just mentioned is a good example; in taking Theodosius to be responding to Sextus, rather than vice versa, Nietzsche seems somewhat oblivious to this dimension of his writing. This might be because he has a conception of Sextus’ philosophy that most scholars today would

regard as inadequate, or it might be because he has just not thought about Sextus' philosophy at all. Since this is the *only* mention of Sextus in Nietzsche that even potentially has implications concerning the specifics of Sextus' own thinking, we cannot exclude the latter hypothesis.

It is also notable that references to Pyrrho or to Pyrrhonians in general are considerably more frequent in Nietzsche's early scholarly work than references to Sextus in particular. And here there is at least some evidence of engagement with the philosophy. In one of the Diogenes essays Nietzsche refers (without mentioning Sextus) to Diogenes' discussion, during his various classifications of philosophical schools at the beginning of the work, of whether Pyrrhonism should be called a school (1.20), pointing out that the Pyrrhonians determined nothing and were not wedded to any opinion (*KGW* II/1, 179). This does not take us much further than Theodosius' point that Pyrrho did not put forward any doctrine. But there are also a number of unpublished remarks about philosophical links between Pyrrho and Democritus, and here we get a little more concrete. (Once again, it is when Democritus is involved that Nietzsche is at his most philosophically focused.) Democritus is said to have been an inspiration for the Pyrrhonists' ethical ideal of *ataraxia*, and also, at one point, for their attitude towards knowledge (*FS* v.3, 332)<sup>9</sup>. This comes immediately after a mention of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, which Democritus is said to have shared with Locke – a fair interpretation of Democritus's famous saying “by convention [*nomôî*] color [etc.], in

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<sup>9</sup> This is an important element in the argument for a connection between Nietzsche and Pyrrhonism in Jessica Berry, *Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), on which more later.

reality atoms and void” (DK 68B 9, 117, 125 – the precise list of secondary qualities varies in the three sources, one of which is Sextus, *M* 7.135). There is room for considerable debate about how far the Pyrrhonists actually followed Democritus here. But Diogenes does attribute to Pyrrho the idea that “nothing is the case in reality, but human beings do everything by convention [*nomôi*] and habit; for each thing is no more this than that” (9.61), which at least incorporates the Democritean contrast between how things really are and the “convention” by which human beings operate, including the idea that a great deal of human experience and behavior (Pyrrho would apparently say, all) is cut off from any grasp of the former. And this much, whatever one may think about shifts and developments within Pyrrhonism, from Pyrrho himself to Sextus, seems to be a common thread throughout that long and discontinuous tradition.

So what do we have so far? Nietzsche understands, at a rather general level, what Pyrrhonism is. He has inquired in detail into the history of the Pyrrhonian tradition, in terms of the historical relations among its various figures, as presented particularly in Diogenes’ lives of Pyrrho and Timon. And he has an extensive knowledge of Sextus’ text, as shown by his casual references to passages of Sextus on a number of different topics. But it is not clear that he has paid any serious attention to Sextus’s works as exemplars of the Pyrrhonian outlook, even though they are by far the most articulate and sophisticated version of Pyrrhonism we have from antiquity – far more so than the frequently garbled version in Diogenes’ lives, which we know were a focus of Nietzsche’s study. On the basis of Nietzsche’s early scholarship, then, we might well be hesitant to propose a direct influence on his

philosophy from Sextus' philosophy, simply because there is absolutely no direct proof that he even noticed Sextus as a philosopher.

Now, the early scholarship may not be the only relevant evidence on this subject. There are periodic references to skepticism in Nietzsche's work. But in general they are historically unspecific. One exception is a passage of *Ecce Homo* ("Why I am so Clever", 3) in which he reports having read the recently published book *Les sceptiques grecs* by Victor Brochard<sup>10</sup>, expressing great enthusiasm both for the book and for the skeptics themselves – presumably the ancient skeptics discussed in the book, although this is not absolutely explicit. But *Ecce Homo* was Nietzsche's last work – one of the flurry of short books he produced in 1888, his last year of sanity – and he must have read Brochard quite recently; he says it was "half a year" ago, and this cannot be far off, since the book was only published in 1887. *The Antichrist*, also published in 1888, expresses an unusually clear and unusually positive attitude towards skepticism; the skeptics are referred to as "the decent type in the history of philosophy" (12). This is no doubt connected with the interest inspired by Brochard; there is also evidence of such interest in the unpublished notes of the same period.

But, first, as already noted, there is no mention here of Sextus Empiricus; it is Pyrrho who seems to catch Nietzsche's attention. Indeed, we cannot even be sure that Nietzsche made it all the way through Brochard's long study. He does not claim to have read the whole book; instead, he speaks, with reference to Brochard, of "catching myself with a book in my hand" – and the chapters on Sextus are at the

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<sup>10</sup> Reissued as a Livre de Poche in 2002 (Paris: Librairie Général Française); it remains of interest to scholars today.



end. Second, the unpublished notes, where Pyrrho is mentioned with some frequency, are by no means so uniformly complimentary to skepticism as the published references. Pyrrho is lumped together with many other Greek philosophers as decadent and nihilistic; this is primarily for his ethical orientation, namely his pursuit of *ataraxia*, but it includes the idea of his launching an attack on *knowledge* in favor of this (as Nietzsche sees it) contemptible practical goal (*KSA* 13.14[141]). Here again, then, we find no clear indication that Nietzsche either felt a kinship with, or gave serious attention to, Sextus' particular version of the Pyrrhonian outlook. Finally, even if there had been such indications, Nietzsche's encounter with Brochard's work occurs at the very end of his career, so that this would not by itself guarantee to shed light on his philosophy as a whole.

Someone might reply that his discussion of other philosophers is typically broad-brushed; Sextus is in this respect not a special case. Once he has stopped being a professional philologist, detailed analysis of the texts of others is just not his style. But this line of thinking does not survive even a cursory inspection of Nietzsche's works. In fact it is easy to find cases where, even if he does not give chapter and verse, we can see what specific parts of a previous philosopher's work he has in mind. When he challenges the Stoics for wanting to live according to nature (*BGE* 9), he is clearly alluding to the various formulations of the *telos* attributed to Zeno, Cleanthes and Chrysippus in the summaries of Stoic ethics in Diogenes Laertius and Stobaeus. When he singles out Heraclitus as a rare and welcome exception to the tendency of philosophers to privilege the changeless over the changing (*TI*, "Reason" in Philosophy 2), he clearly has in mind the various

fragments that emphasize flux. And when he compares Plato unfavorably with Thucydides and laments that we do not have a good grasp of the culture of the Sophists – “for now we suspect that it must have been a very immoral culture, since a Plato and all the Socratic schools fought against it” (*Daybreak* 168) – one naturally thinks of Calicles in the *Gorgias* and Thrasymachus in *Republic* I as prime examples of what he has in mind; Nietzsche would no doubt challenge Plato’s portrayal of them, as well as the canons of morality that might lead us to react to them (as so portrayed) in this way, but his awareness of the texts and their implications are not in question. Yet there is simply nothing comparable to this in the case of Sextus.

Our problem, then, is not due to Nietzsche being generally incapable of discussing the philosophies of the past in a clearly focused way; at least as far as ancient Greek philosophy is concerned, he can be both knowledgeable and insightful. The issue has to do specifically with his relation to Sextus. Not once in his writings can he be seen to extend this kind of focused attention – or in fact, any attention at all – to the philosophy of Sextus.

A necessary condition of philosophical influence, I take it, is that the influenced philosopher have read and taken account of the philosophy of the influencer. It is not clear that this condition is satisfied in the case of Nietzsche and Sextus. We know that Nietzsche read Sextus. But we do not know that he took any interest in Sextus as a philosopher, rather than as a figure of purely antiquarian interest. To repeat, there is no unequivocal indication whatsoever that he did so. In this circumstance, it seems to me that the most one could ever say about Sextus’

influence on Nietzsche is “possible, but unproven”<sup>11</sup>. And the verdict of “possible”, to which I shall return, will of course have to be based on philosophical similarities between the two, not on anything Nietzsche says about Sextus. So it is now time to open the second question that I raised at the beginning.

## II

The matter has been put in a very interesting new light by Jessica Berry’s recent book *Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition*<sup>12</sup>. As the title suggests, this book deals not with Sextus in particular, but with the whole tradition to which he belonged. But since Sextus is an important part of the evidence to which Berry appeals, her conclusions are obviously of interest for our more narrowly focused investigation of Nietzsche and Sextus in epistemologically-related areas<sup>13</sup>. Berry argues for very considerable common ground between Nietzsche and ancient

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<sup>11</sup> These remarks naturally raise questions about how one is to determine influence. Berry (cf. n.9, pp.22-4) in a related context considers five criteria of influence. Given what I have said about Nietzsche’s explicit references to Sextus, it seems to me that, as applied to the present case, two of these criteria – that “[Nietzsche] [sh]ould be shown to have a high degree of familiarity with and perhaps a preference or proclivity for the relevant works of [Sextus]”, and that “the probability of the similarity being random should be very low” – cannot possibly be shown to have been met. Or rather, the only way this could be shown would be if there were verbal reminiscences of Sextus in Nietzsche’s philosophical writings so close that he must have had Sextus’ text memorized or in front of him as he was writing; absent explicit indications that Nietzsche thought about the Pyrrhonism of Sextus, I do not see what else could do the trick. (See also n.20 and accompanying text.)

<sup>12</sup> Cf. n.9.

<sup>13</sup> I understand these to include not just questions concerning the nature of knowledge and what kinds of things we can know, but also questions concerning the kinds of subjects on which assertions can legitimately be made. Thus Nietzsche’s willingness or unwillingness to commit himself to views in metaphysics, or to views about the existence or non-existence of a objective moral order, fall within the scope of this discussion.

Pyrrhonism. Three areas in particular are worth emphasizing<sup>14</sup>. First, Berry argues that, to the extent that “naturalism” ought to be attributed to Nietzsche (as it often is), it consists in “a rejection of a priori methods of reasoning in favor of those that emulate the methods employed successfully in the natural sciences and a refusal to accept that human beings can claim any pride of place within the natural world” (88), and that all of this fits very nicely with a skeptical refusal to make any claims one way or the other about the ultimate nature of reality. Second, she reads Nietzsche’s perspectivism as an epistemological rather than a metaphysical stance; it is not intended to deny that there is any way the world is absolutely, but to undermine claims to have *discovered* the absolute nature of things by emphasizing that all knowledge is “situated” (112, 116). And this, she argues, is strikingly similar to the approach we find in Pyrrhonism – even if Nietzsche has a further account of the impulse to this objectivity as symptomatic of the ascetic ideal, something for which there is no counterpart in Pyrrhonism. Finally, she takes Nietzsche’s self-proclaimed “immoralism” as a questioning, but not a flat-out rejection, of the existence of any purported underlying moral reality, and, again, a suspicion of any conception of human beings as special and above the natural world; here too, then, we find a suspensive attitude akin to that of the Pyrrhonists, rather than a dogmatic negation of the moralist’s claims.

There is much in this reading of Nietzsche that I find very attractive – and the similarities in question apply at least as much to Sextus as to any other

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<sup>14</sup> Given our topic, I leave aside the theme of *ataraxia*, to which Berry also devotes a chapter; for a somewhat different view on this, see my “Nietzsche on the Skeptics and Nietzsche as Skeptic” (cf. n.1).

representative of the Pyrrhonist tradition. When he says, in a famous passage of *On the Genealogy of Morality* (3.12) that “there is only a perspectival seeing, only a perspectival ‘knowing’”, he can indeed come across as echoing the Pyrrhonist Modes, especially the Ten Modes attributed by Sextus to Aenesidemus (*M* 7.345); we saw him alluding to these Modes in his scholarly work on Diogenes, but they are developed at much greater length in Sextus (*PH* 1.35-163) than in Diogenes himself (9.79-88). The whole point of the Ten Modes is that we do not have a perspective-free vantage point. The restriction to a particular perspective is due sometimes to features of ourselves, and sometimes to features of our environment<sup>15</sup>; but there is no such thing as an observation of the world as it is in itself, rather than as mediated by some combination of these factors.

When Nietzsche pursues a similar line of thought in the first part of *Beyond Good and Evil* – called “On the Prejudices of Philosophers”, a title that would surely have struck a chord with Sextus – the mediating features in which he is interested tend to take the form of unacknowledged needs or desires, or pre-existing values. The following passage encapsulates the idea as well as any: “Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir; also that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constituted the real germ of life from which the whole plant had grown” (*BGE* 6). There is a proto-Freudian dimension here that would not, I think, have occurred to Sextus; the ancients do not

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<sup>15</sup> Sextus’ Mode 8, the mode from relativity, is difficult to interpret and does not obviously fall under either of these two headings. But one way to read it, encouraged by Sextus himself (*PH* 1.39), is as a catch-all mode encompassing all the others – in which case its theme is relativity to perspective in general.

seem to have an explicit and developed conception of the unconscious. Indeed, the idea that a whole system of belief may be a product of underlying needs or evaluative stances (whether conscious or not) also seems to be distinctively modern. But this updating of the picture, as we might think of it, does not in itself<sup>16</sup> cast doubt on the basic similarity between Nietzsche's perspectivism and the Ten Modes. There is in principle no limit to the sorts of factors that can constitute barriers to a perspective-free vision, and Sextus himself agrees that the list of Modes could be extended beyond the ten that he enumerates (*PH* 1.35).

Here, then, is a notable rapprochement between Nietzsche and Sextus. Now, Nietzsche's periodic admiration for the natural sciences may seem to cut against this; for Sextus goes after each of the three major divisions of philosophy recognized in his day, and his critique of physics is just as trenchant as his critiques of logic and ethics. However, a closer look suggests that this divergence is of no great significance. When Nietzsche speaks highly of the sciences, it is frequently by contrast with philosophy or metaphysics. The latter attempts to plumb the depths of reality, and proceeds from underlying needs that are themselves open to question, whereas the former amasses mundane truths, often successfully (e.g., *Human, All Too Human* 1.6, 8). If the physicist presumes to have achieved a perspective-free description of things, Nietzsche will subject this to just the same sort of critique as he does for philosophy, and "On the Prejudices of Philosophy" twice rehearses this line of thought (*BGE* 12, 22). But the suggestion seems to be that one can do science

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<sup>16</sup> I say "in itself" because Nietzsche's interest in people's motivations for believing what they believe does seem to me to open up a line of inquiry very different from anything in Sextus; more on this at the end of this section.

quite well without any such grandiose fantasies. Sextus does not contemplate this possibility because, as he conceives it, physics (that is, natural science) as such claims to discover the underlying nature of things. But Sextus is eager to explain how the skeptic can live by following the appearances (*PH* 1.21-4). And these appearances can include various forms of expertise (*technai*), such as Sextus' own, medicine (itself understood in a suitably non-grandiose way), or such as astronomy, where that is taken to be a practical observation of the sky for predictive purposes (and is contrasted with astrology, *M* 5.1-2). Allowing for the fact that Sextus, along with ancient Greek philosophy generally, conceives of physics in robustly realist terms, whereas Nietzsche is not confined to this conception of science, Nietzsche's qualified approval of the sciences may be read as fundamentally consistent with Sextus' strategy of following the appearances – and also, of course, with his own perspectivism.

The fact that Nietzsche repeatedly speaks of the sciences, as well as certain humanistic fields falling within the scope of the German *Wissenschaft*, as achieving *knowledge* may also seem to drive a wedge between them. In the passage of *Human, All Too Human* cited above, he announces that in science “one seeks knowledge and nothing further – and does in fact acquire it” (1.6). In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, even in decrying the idea of a perspective-free knowledge, he emphasizes that a multiplicity of perspectives and of “affective interpretations” is itself “useful for knowledge” (3.12) and claims this as an insight afforded to himself and kindred spirits “particularly as knowers”. And in the *Antichrist* he contrasts the theologian with the practitioner of “philology”, which he defines as “the art of reading well – of

being able to read off a fact without falsifying it by interpretation, without losing caution, patience, subtlety in the desire for understanding” (52). I have selected passages from early to late in Nietzsche’s philosophical career, and although the expression differs from one to another, they have in common the idea that scholarly or scientific research has value and results in a kind of cognitive achievement. By contrast, it might be said, Sextus treats the intrusion of perspective as a disqualification for knowledge; for him, the idea of perspectival knowledge would be a contradiction in terms.

But here too, the differences mask a fundamental similarity. Just as Sextus conceives of physics in robustly realist terms<sup>17</sup>, so too he conceives of knowledge<sup>18</sup> as the grasping of how things are, undistorted by perspective (and does not allow that we have any such thing). In assuming this picture of what it *would* be like to have knowledge, he is simply a product of his time. The idea that science, or knowledge more generally, might be shaped from the start by human sensibilities – where this is a *condition* on our having any understanding, rather than an obstacle to it – is another distinctively modern idea that could not have occurred to Sextus. But now, if we follow Nietzsche in embracing this idea, and cease to conceive of

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<sup>17</sup> I have discussed this further in “On Pyrrhonism, Stances, and Believing What You Want”, *International Journal of Skeptical Studies* 5 (2015), 126-44, especially section 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Epistêmê*, regularly translated “knowledge”, is used by the Stoics (to whom Sextus devotes a great deal of attention) to describe a comprehensive grasp of the nature of things, attained only by the sage. But the Stoics also posit (and Sextus also questions the possibility of) a lesser state, *katalêpsis*, “apprehension” or “cognition”, the requirements for which put it in close company with knowledge understood as justified true belief, or whatever permutation of that one might wish to settle on post-Gettier. Someone who has *katalêpsis* grasps some state of affairs as it is – that is, as it is independently of the subject’s perspective – and cannot be wrong about it.



knowledge in such absolute terms, then it seems as if the findings of the skeptic's own *technai*, and of the observation-based astronomy of which he approves, might very well count as forms of knowledge. It is true that Sextus' own medical *technê* is concerned with healing people, not with understanding how the body works. The Empiric school of medicine, to which Sextus' title shows he belonged, avoided all claims about the nature of the body and confined themselves to developing reliable routines that experience has shown to be effective in curing diseases, fixing broken bones, and so on<sup>19</sup>. Similarly, the astronomy of which he approves is for the practical purpose of predicting certain meteorological phenomena; it does not aspire to understand the workings of the heavens. But none of this prevents these mundane studies, which Sextus would not claim to be free of perspective, from yielding results that, in Nietzsche's less elevated conception, would qualify as knowledge.

Nietzsche himself gestures at the elevated conception that Sextus takes for granted, when he places the word "knowing" in quotation marks in the statement "there is only a perspectival 'knowing'" – as if something merely perspectival could not count as genuine knowledge. But this is not consistently adhered to, even in the same passage, and certainly not elsewhere; its appearance here is probably due to the fact that he has just introduced the idea of an absolute, philosophical "knowledge in itself". But that idea, of course, is mentioned only in order to be shot down, and one of the reasons why "knowledge in itself" is ruled impossible is that it would "eliminate the will altogether" and "disconnect the affects one and all" (*GM*

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<sup>19</sup> At least in Sextus' own presentation of it, the same was true of the Methodic school, which in a puzzling chapter of *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* he argues to be closer to skepticism than is the Empiric school (*PH* 1.236-41).

3:12). An important feature of the perspectival knowledge that Nietzsche applauds, then, is its practical or goal-directed character; and this too, as we have just seen, puts it in the same territory as the *technai* that Sextus' skeptic is comfortable practising.

So there are significant areas of overlap between Nietzsche and Sextus, specifically on issues having to do with our epistemic situation. While the background assumptions of the two thinkers sometimes differ considerably – as one would expect, given that they are more than a millennium and a half apart – their attitudes and approaches in this area show a number of key features in common. Moreover, at least as regards the notion of a mundane, practically oriented, appearance-based science or knowledge, Nietzsche has much more in common with Sextus than with any other source concerning Pyrrhonism; although the idea of the skeptic living by the appearances is mentioned in Diogenes Laertius' life of Pyrrho (9.104-5) and elsewhere, nowhere but in Sextus is it developed in any detail. This perhaps brings us back to the question of influence. But whether Nietzsche developed these ideas in part as a result of his scholarly encounter with Sextus – so that we could speak of an influence rather than just an interesting similarity – remains, it seems to me, unanswerable. To return to a point from the previous section, he never acknowledges any debt to or affinity with Sextus, and there is not a single conclusive indication that he even paid any attention to Sextus as a philosopher, rather than as a source of historical evidence. And ideas can be

reinvented independently in different eras<sup>20</sup>. Still, we know that Nietzsche did read Sextus. And it is a familiar experience that ideas acquired through reading can come to be embedded in one's thinking without one noticing, so that they seem simply to have sprung out of one's own head. So possibly Sextus did influence Nietzsche.

Earlier I said that this was the strongest verdict one could hope for on the matter of influence; in light of the common ground between them, I now suggest that it is the correct verdict.

There is, however, an important difference between the two, as I have already hinted. Besides drawing attention to the perspectival character of all knowledge, Nietzsche shows an abiding interest in *why* people believe the things they do (including, why they accept a non-perspectival conception of knowledge itself). For Nietzsche, the truth or otherwise of someone's beliefs is never the only question; there is always the further question, what is it about that person that makes them want to hold that belief? Sextus draws attention to perspective as one of his many devices to induce suspension of judgement (and hence *ataraxia*), and for him, that is the end of the matter; the fact that people's judgements are shaped (distorted, he would say) by their perspectives has no further interest for him beyond its effect in subverting our confidence in those judgements. He may think we have a tendency to jump to conclusions or to assent too rashly to theories; he may also think that dogmatism in general, with its promise of putting our questions to

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<sup>20</sup> This makes Berry's criterion of influence c) (cf. n.11), that the probability of a similarity being random should be very low, hard to apply except in conjunction with clear evidence that the later philosopher reflected on the ideas of the earlier philosopher. (I get the impression that Berry agrees on this point; see *Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition*, 23.)

rest, has a certain inherent appeal. But he shows absolutely no interest in why we might have these psychological tendencies. For Nietzsche, by contrast, the epistemological common ground that he shares with Sextus is only one part of his agenda. Once we see that people's judgements are shaped by their perspectives, this opens up a further, psychological investigation into those perspectives themselves. And this is why topics such as the ascetic ideal, or more generally (to borrow from one of his titles) questions concerning the *genealogy* of some of our deepest beliefs, loom so large in his writings.

There is nothing in this interest in human psychology that is necessarily inconsistent with the suspensive attitudes that we have seen Nietzsche and Sextus to share. Of course, if Nietzsche had a fully developed theory of the unconscious, it would be different. But the explorations that he conducts into the motivations and needs behind people's beliefs might well be understood as falling within the kinds of science or knowledge that he permits. My point in raising this topic is simply to stress that there is a whole dimension of Nietzsche's thinking, closely connected with the matters on which he overlaps with Sextus, that has no counterpart in Sextus himself.

### III

In this final section of the paper, without taking back anything in the picture I have just proposed, I want to complicate it with two extra elements. First, I have pointed out that Sextus, typically for his time, assumes a strongly realist conception of what

science would be like if it were successful<sup>21</sup>. Now one consequence of this is that it never occurred to Sextus to raise doubts about the very concept of the real nature of things. The question, for him, is never whether we can even make sense of the idea of a world independent of our perspectives; the question is whether our perspective-bound relation to this world can give us any purchase on what it is in reality like (and the answer is “no, at least to judge by anything we have experienced so far”). This is just one facet of what Myles Burnyeat has called the “unquestioned, unquestioning *assumption* of realism” (his emphasis) in ancient Greek philosophy<sup>22</sup>. But Nietzsche does periodically question the very idea of an absolute reality, and this gives an interesting new aspect to the comparison between them<sup>23</sup>.

A famous passage of an early essay, “On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense”, includes the following words: “correct perception – which would mean the adequate expression of an object in the subject – seems to me a self-contradictory

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<sup>21</sup> I do not mean to imply that he is here committed to some *theory*, such as the correspondence theory of truth. My point is just that the range of conceivable alternatives on some topic can vary widely in different times and places, and that given the time and place in which he lived, Sextus did not have available for consideration any alternative to the realist picture.

<sup>22</sup> Myles Burnyeat, “Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes Saw and Berkeley Missed”, *Philosophical Review* 91 (1982), 3-40, at 33.

<sup>23</sup> A quick clarification: my interest here is not in the question of the *existence* of an “external world”, which has been central in discussions of skepticism since Descartes (and is a focus of the article cited in the previous note). Nietzsche has no interest in this question either. What I am placing in contrast to realism here is the idea that human sensibilities in some way *contribute* to how the world actually is, in the only sense we can make of that notion – that we cannot even conceive of a “world from no point of view”. (Among the positions incorporating this idea, certain kinds of relativism would be obvious examples.)

absurdity”<sup>24</sup>. The context of the passage is the impossibility of getting outside our own perceptions, and the passage itself of course contributes to that theme; but at the same time, it opens up a deeper issue. It is one thing to say that it is absurd to imagine one can attain a view of things from no perspective; it is another to say that the whole idea of correct perception is “self-contradictory”, which raises the question whether we can even *conceive* of a world independent of our perceptions, a world that those perceptions might or might not get right. And this deeper issue is one to which Nietzsche returns.

Another passage often quoted on this topic, from *Human, All too Human* (1.9), reads “It is true, there might be a metaphysical world; the absolute possibility of it can hardly be disputed. We behold all things through the human head and cannot cut off this head; while the question nonetheless remains what of the world would still be there if one had cut it off”. A world independent of any perspective is here admitted to be a possibility, but so is its non-existence; and the last part, in particular, seems to raise the question whether the idea of such a world is even coherent. Again, the thought is not pursued; the opening of *Human, All too Human*, in which this section belongs, has to do with the success of the kind of mundane science mentioned in my previous section, and the contrasting pointlessness of metaphysics. But this does not prevent Nietzsche from raising a provocative metaphysical question along the way.

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<sup>24</sup> I quote from the translation in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Writings from the Early Notebooks*, ed. Raymond Geuss and Alexander Nehamas, trans. Ladislaus Lob (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.260.

In *Beyond Good and Evil* (16) he declares that “‘absolute knowledge’ and the ‘thing in itself’ involve a *contradictio in adjecto*”. The first part, on absolute knowledge, can be understood in purely epistemological terms; but the second part appears to be saying we cannot make sense of the very idea of things in themselves – and it sounds more definitive about this than the passages previously mentioned. Now, the statement comes in a passage challenging the idea of immediate certainties, and his main interest here is in the absurdity of anyone claiming to *know* “the thing in itself”. But while it is possible to read the quoted words as a slightly loose way of making that very point, they also at least permit a metaphysical reading in which the very notion of a “thing in itself” is labeled as self-contradictory. In *The Gay Science* (54) he says “What is ‘appearance’ for me now? Certainly not the opposite of some essence: what could I say about any essence except to name the attributes of its appearance?” Again, the impossibility of escaping one’s perspective is part of the point; but, particularly in the dismissive phrase “some essence [irgend eines Wesens]” Nietzsche is also questioning the validity of the appearance/reality distinction itself. Finally, in *On the Genealogy of Morality* (3.24), when he exposes science as one more representative of the ascetic ideal, this is said to be because scientists “still believe in truth”, where “truth” is understood as perspective-free. This is in part to say that they fool themselves into thinking they can attain (or have already attained) truths of this kind; but it is also to question what a perspective-free truth would even mean.

Expressions of distrust in the very idea of an absolute reality are also easy to find in the *Nachlass*<sup>25</sup>. Now, I have drawn a contrast between Nietzsche and Sextus in this respect. But I do not mean to suggest that this indicates a basic difference of aim; on the contrary, this is another case where different background assumptions coexist with a more fundamental similarity. For while in fact it did not occur to Sextus to question the idea of a reality entirely independent of us, this is not essential to anything in his skeptical program. The method of opposition, of juxtaposing opposing arguments and views so as to yield suspension of judgement, could just as well have been applied to the metaphysical question whether an absolute reality is conceivable as to all the many issues Sextus does address. And so by raising these questions, Nietzsche can be understood as *extending* the approach that, in a broad sense, they share to an area beyond what Sextus could have imagined. In raising questions about the very conceivability of an absolute reality, he is simply taking his explorations of our perspectival condition a step further. And raising questions is what the passages I have drawn attention to are doing; he is not assuming the role of a metaphysician, but posing a significant series of challenges for metaphysics – with an opposing position, that of much traditional philosophy, clearly in mind. The wording in the *Nachlass* is sometimes more outspoken, but whenever he broaches this issue in the published works, he is careful – just as Sextus is careful – not to commit himself to any firm conclusions, but instead to set up an opposition.

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<sup>25</sup> E.g., pp.63, 90, 139 in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, ed. Rüdiger Bittner, trans. Kate Sturge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).



The other place where I want to complicate the picture does involve firm conclusions – and this is the one significant point on which my reading of Nietzsche and Sextus is at odds with Berry’s understanding of Nietzsche’s relation to Pyrrhonism. One of Nietzsche’s favorite subjects is morality, and here too he takes on the question whether there is an extra-human or supra-human reality. But here his answer is anything but non-committal; he actively denies that there is any moral reality. One of the clearest examples is in *Twilight of the Idols*, in the first section of “Those who ‘Improve’ Humanity”, where moral judgement is called an “illusion” and is said to “believe in realities that are unreal”, and where Nietzsche asserts (in italics, or in the spaced-out type that is the German equivalent) that “*there are no moral facts at all*” (1). A person’s or culture’s morality may be of great interest as revealing things about them; here again we see Nietzsche’s concern with underlying motivations. But moral judgements, which, as Nietzsche sees, purport to assert truths about something other than the speaker’s psychology, “can never be taken literally”, since they obviously do no such thing. Morality, then, “is just an interpretation of certain phenomena, or speaking more precisely, a *misinterpretation*”; the truth is that nothing is inherently either good or bad, right or wrong.

An earlier and equally clear example is in *Daybreak* (103), where Nietzsche distinguishes two different ways of “denying morality”. One would be to deny that people’s actual motives are as moral as they claim them to be; the other would be “to deny that moral judgements are based on truths”. While he expresses considerable sympathy for the first of these, it is the second of which he says “This is

my point of view” (emphasis in the original), and he adds in explanation, “Thus I deny morality as I deny alchemy”. And while the issue of moral truths or facts is not an explicit focus in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, his position is clearly the same here. The goal is to understand how moral values originated, and the place to look is in the attitudes of various evaluating groups; the idea that these evaluations might correspond to some independent moral reality is dismissed from the start, when Nietzsche asks “under what conditions did man *invent* those value judgments good and evil” (Preface 3, my emphasis).

Now, how does this moral anti-realism<sup>26</sup>, as we need not hesitate to call it, line up with what we find in Sextus? Sextus’ main concern in ethics is with a closely related question: whether anything is good or bad “by nature”, or in reality, as any dogmatic ethicist in antiquity would have held. And one would expect his response to this question to be to suspend judgement about it, which would be very different from the view we have just seen Nietzsche express. But in fact the story is more complicated than that. What we find in Sextus’ works are two different and incompatible responses to the question. In book 3 of *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, after an extended series of observations mainly centered around ethical disagreement, he does indeed arrive at the expected outcome: suspension of judgement on whether anything is by nature good or bad (*PH* 3.235). But in *Against the Ethicists*, while ethical disagreement is again a central consideration, he instead arrives at the definite conclusion that *there is nothing* by nature either good or bad (*M* 11.78, 89,

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<sup>26</sup> Note that here the denial of realism does have to do with the *existence* of a certain (supposed) class of entities, not with the issue of (in)conceivability outside the human perspective; compare n.23.

95). And, while the route to this conclusion may be rather different from Nietzsche's line of thinking, the conclusion itself is obviously much closer than the stance of *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* is to Nietzsche's moral anti-realism.

Many scholars have insisted that in *Against the Ethicists* Sextus cannot really be endorsing the conclusion that nothing is by nature good or bad. The most common way to try to rescue him from this is to suggest that he means us to balance these negative arguments with positive ethical views supplied by other philosophers, with suspension of judgement as the intended result as usual<sup>27</sup>. And if one can do this with Sextus, one might try to do it with Nietzsche as well<sup>28</sup>. But, to speak first of Sextus, while this kind of interpretive strategy is often convincing in cases where Sextus seems to be arguing in a one-sided, non-skeptical way, it will not work in the case of *Against the Ethicists*. Not only does he never let on that this is what he is doing (as he frequently does elsewhere). The crucial point is that he derives the skeptical goal of *ataraxia* directly from *acceptance* of the conclusion that nothing is good or bad by nature – *not* from suspension of judgement about that conclusion. "When *reason has established* [*logou de parastêsantos*] that none of these things is by nature good or by nature bad", he says, "there will be a release from disturbance and a peaceful life will await us" (*M* 11.130; cf. 140, 118)<sup>29</sup>. As for

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<sup>27</sup> For a recent example, see Benjamin Morison, "Sextus Empiricus", in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sextus-empiricus/>), 2014, section 4.2.

<sup>28</sup> This is Berry's approach, appealing to the similarity between Nietzsche and *Against the Ethicists* (and also Diogenes Laertius 9.101, on which more below) and arguing that the appearance of dogmatism is *only* an appearance; see *Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition*, 189-97.

<sup>29</sup> I use the translation in Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Ethicists*, translated with an introduction and commentary by Richard Bett (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

Nietzsche, *Daybreak's* comment that the denial of moral truth "is *my* point of view" (103), and a comparable comment in the *Twilight* passage, that the non-existence of moral facts is "an insight which was formulated for the first time by me" (*TI*, "Those who 'Improve' Humanity" 1), stand in the way of any attempt to downplay this as his intellectual commitment; he is proudly claiming it as a definite position of his own.

This leaves us in a peculiar position. In Nietzsche's moral anti-realism and Sextus' assertion that nothing is by nature good or bad, we have found another significant point of contact between the two. Yet this is very different from, and at least at first sight appears inconsistent with, the area of common ground that we identified in the previous section, which had to do precisely with a reluctance to commit oneself on matters concerning the ultimate nature of things. The case of Sextus raises large questions concerning the history and development of Pyrrhonism. I have argued elsewhere that Sextus' denial that anything is by nature good or bad belongs to a form of skepticism surviving from a phase of Pyrrhonism earlier than Sextus himself, and consisting in a refusal to offer any *positive* specification of the nature of things<sup>30</sup>. But this form of skepticism is not the same as the one apparent in all Sextus' other surviving writings besides *Against the Ethicists*, and by their standards, it would indeed qualify as negative dogmatism. The prospects for avoiding a dogmatic reading of Nietzsche seem even dimmer. I have already alluded to the wording in which he seems to go out of his way to flag his

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1997); the interpretation offered here is argued for in more detail in this volume's commentary.

<sup>30</sup> See the introduction to my translation of *Against the Ethicists* (see the previous note), especially sections 2-3; also my *Pyrrho, his Antecedents, and his Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), chapter 4.

commitment to a definite position. And when he calls morality an illusion, one that believes in “realities that are unreal”, and compares it to alchemy, he makes it sound as if this is a position about the nature of reality independent of our perspectives – in other words, a metaphysical position.

Whether the similar conclusions of Nietzsche and Sextus’ *Against the Ethicists* are a coincidence, or a case of Sextus rubbing off on Nietzsche, is, I think, just as unanswerable as were the questions of influence that we considered earlier. Nietzsche’s claim in *Twilight of the Idols* that the non-existence of moral facts was “an insight which was first formulated” by himself suggests that he had not seen it anywhere in his reading. But there is one place where he surely did read it. The argument that there is nothing good or bad by nature – in a more abbreviated form than in *Against the Ethicists*, but recognizably drawing on the same material as Sextus<sup>31</sup> – appears in Diogenes Laertius’ life of Pyrrho (9.101). And while he never cites any passage of *Against the Ethicists*<sup>32</sup>, it is likely enough, given his general knowledge of Sextus, that he read this too; if so, the combination of the two similar arguments may have lodged in his mind and had some effect on the growth of his moral anti-realism. On the other hand, it is also possible that he did think of it on his own; though the claim that he was the first to have the insight is plainly false, he might still be truthful about not having derived it from anyone else. Given his interest in the hidden motivations behind people’s beliefs, including their moral

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<sup>31</sup> On the correspondence between the two, see my commentary on *Against the Ethicists*, pp.258-60; also the introduction, section 4.

<sup>32</sup> Berry (cf. n.9) says that *Against the Ethicists* is “an indispensable source for evidence about Democritus (on whom Nietzsche worked for so many years)” (191). But *Against the Ethicists* never mentions Democritus.

beliefs – an interest that, as I suggested, goes beyond anything he could have found in Sextus – it would not be much of a stretch to reach the conclusion that these beliefs are *just* products of those hidden motivations and do not correspond to anything in reality (even though, as he frequently reminds us, their practical effects may be real and serious).

Is Nietzsche's moral anti-realism in the end consistent with the generally suspensive attitude, and especially the avoidance of metaphysical commitments that we have seen him to share with Sextus? I said just now that the appearances were against this; but I do not rule out their being shown to be compatible. Now this touches on the larger question whether we should expect all of Nietzsche's views to fit together into a single consistent package. Many scholars have worked hard to make them do so, and perhaps they are right. But it is also possible that Nietzsche is just not that kind of writer or thinker; indeed, we may find him much more interesting if we think of him as refusing to be pinned down to any consistent outlook. In this case the conflict between his suspensive side and his dogmatic anti-realism about morality (supposing that it is a conflict) will be just par for the course. There may be other subjects where the same kind of question arises. One that bears upon the issues we have considered here is Nietzsche's periodic tendency to speak of our conceptions as *falsifying* reality<sup>33</sup>; does this not imply some kind of grasp of what reality is like independent of those conceptions, and would that not fly in the face of his insistence on the perspectival character of knowledge? Again, much has

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<sup>33</sup> E.g., *GS* 57, 107, *BGE* 4, 21.

been written about this<sup>34</sup>; and again, there is the question whether we should be worried if the inconsistency does prove to real and ineliminable<sup>35</sup>.

These issues are far beyond the scope of the present paper. What we can say is that there is an important aspect of Nietzsche's thinking (the one centered around our dependence on perspective) that is Sextus-like, and another aspect (the moral anti-realism) that is also Sextus-like, but in a very different way, and that these resemblances between the two thinkers may not be coincidental. These are limited conclusions, to be sure. But much of the interest in both Sextus and Nietzsche stems from the challenges they pose to philosophy as traditionally practised; both are, as we might say, spoilers in the history of philosophy. Given this broadly shared role, it is worth trying to be as clear as possible about just where, how, and why they line up with one another<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> See, most recently, Neil Sinhababu, "Nietzschean Pragmatism", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 48 (2017), 56-70; another recent essay, which gets more to the heart of the matter and does more to cite previous studies, is Joshua Andresen, "Nietzsche, Naturalism, and Falsification", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 44 (2013), 469-81.

<sup>35</sup> If it is ineliminable, we might even think of this as a sort of second-order counterpart of Sextus' procedure of assembling opposing positions. But of course, it would be quite another question whether the point of this was suspension of judgement about the various conflicting stances involved.

<sup>36</sup> I thank Katja Vogt and Justin Vlasits for inviting me to the Berkeley workshop that was one of the starting-points for this volume, and for some very helpful written comments. I also thank the numerous other participants at the workshop for their thoughtful input, from which the paper has greatly benefited. A special thanks is due to Jessica Berry, who was not only one of the most active contributors to the discussion, but also sent me very extensive written comments. In more than 30 years of academic publishing, I have never before received this level of feedback, and I am profoundly grateful to her. It has prompted very substantial clarifications and modifications of my position; although all the words in the text come from me, and although I certainly do not expect her to agree with everything I say, it is not far from the truth to call this a jointly authored paper. And so, for me at least, the

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workshop was a distinct success; the paper really needed some work, and it got it – with Jessica as the leading co-worker.