

>>>The following passages are about the so called "five modes / tropes / grounds of doubt" of Agrippa. Now, can you find ways to eliminate / obliterate these objections? (And if ever you think you can't, write about the reasons.)

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you may think about these:

1. is it certain that any kind of agreement on political, or philosophical issues will not ever be possible amongst humans? what kind of agreement? (what is agreement anyway?)
2. how can you prove an opinion? what is "proof"? (has mathematics ever been a good model for thinking?)(can mathematics produce knowledge?) set the standards for thinking, on what conditions will you be content with a piece of knowledge? (how is it acquired? how is it developed? how is it evaluated? set the plane of consistency, establish your side)

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## 1. Agrippa the Sceptic, wikipedia, ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agrippa\\_the\\_Sceptic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agrippa_the_Sceptic), 01.009)

**Agrippa** ([Greek](#): Ἀγρίππας) was a [Sceptic philosopher](#) who probably lived towards the end of the 1st century AD.<sup>[1]</sup> He is regarded as the author of "five grounds of doubt" or *tropes* ([Greek](#): τρόποι), which are purported to establish the impossibility of certain knowledge.

### The Five Tropes

These tropes are given by [Sextus Empiricus](#), in his Outlines of Pyrrhonism. According to Sextus, they are attributed only "to the more recent skeptics" and it is by [Diogenes Laertius](#) that we attribute them to Agrippa.<sup>[2]</sup> The tropes are:

\_ **Dissent** - The uncertainty of the rules of common life, and of the opinions of philosophers.

\_ **Progress *ad infinitum*** - All proof requires some further proof, and so on to infinity.

\_ **Relation** - All things are changed as their relations become changed, or, as we look upon them from different points of view.

\_ **Assumption** - The truth asserted is merely an hypothesis.

\_ **Circularity** - The truth asserted involves a vicious circle.

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## 2. Ancient Skepticism, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, First published Tue Nov 4, 1997; substantive revision Fri Jan 11, 2008 (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/skepticism-ancient/>, 01.009)

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Later Pyrrhonian modes more clearly isolate the basic epistemological issues which are raised by the traditional ten modes. The five modes of Agrippa (whose date is unknown, though he is later than Aenesidemus) focus, as Barnes has shown, on some of the underlying epistemological concerns that motivate skeptical conclusions.

Sextus presents them at PH 1.164–77, where he says that they promote the suspension of judgment by invoking:

— **disagreement**, for among philosophers and ordinary people there is interminable disagreement;

— **regress *ad infinitum***, for the skeptic asks for a proof of a claim, a proof of the reliability of this proof, and so on *ad infinitum*;

— **relativity**, for things are relative to both one's subjective nature and the concepts one employs in judging them;

— **hypothesis**, for the skeptic does not allow us to take as our starting point something which is taken for granted;

— **circular reasoning**, for the skeptic rejects proofs that are circular, as when sense impressions are used to establish the veracity of the senses.

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