

How a pyrrhonian skeptic might respond to academic skepticism

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The paper "How a Pyrrhonian Skeptic Might Respond to Academic Skepticism" is a wonderful example of an article on philosophy. In his article "How a Pyrrhonian Skeptic Might Respond to Academic Skepticism", Peter Klein argues that reasoning can never provide a definitive response. "The question is whether reasoning – the process of producing reasons for our beliefs – is ever such that further, as yet unused, reasons cannot be legitimately required" (8). In making this argument, the author is careful to illustrate that it doesn't matter if this reasoning is justified, true or defeasible, only that reasoning, once employed, can be traced backward along a never-ending line of reasons leading to the conclusion. His first argument is based on the concept of circular logic, in which statements are considered to be true because they contain within them the 'proof' of their origins. However, he also introduces the possibility of arguments that don't depend upon circular logic and through this discussion defines a Pyrrhonian Skeptic as one who neither believes nor disbelieves that we have knowledge. This is distinguished from Academic Skepticism in that Academic Skeptics are said to believe we cannot have any knowledge or justified beliefs. In attempting to illustrate how the Pyrrhonian Skeptic is different from the Academic, the author gets into the complicated analysis of argument structures, illustrating how the Academic skeptic argues that no knowledge can be had and why the author disagrees with this statement. At the same time, he doesn't try to prove that knowledge can be had either, simply that if one cannot know for certain that knowledge can't be known, then it also cannot be known for certain that it can. The argument seems strongly complicated by the detail and equational statements.