



Epistemic relativism and the problem of the criterion

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Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between scepticism and epistemic relativism in the context of recent history and philosophy of science. More specifically, it seeks to show that significant treatments of epistemic relativism by influential figures in the history and philosophy of science draw upon the Pyrrhonian problem of the criterion. The paper begins with a presentation of the problem of the criterion as it occurs in the work of Sextus Empiricus. It is then shown that significant treatments of epistemic relativism in recent history and philosophy of science (critical rationalism, historical philosophy of science and the strong programme) draw upon the problem of the criterion. It is briefly suggested that a particularist response to the problem of the criterion may be put to good use against epistemic relativism.

Keywords

epistemic relativism Pyrrhonian scepticism problem of the criterion particularism

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