

Infinitism in epistemology

Post by “Pacatus” of June 26, 2026 at 3:03 PM

In another thread, about infinite regress needing to be terminated in the concept of a causal god, [Cassius](#) said: “While not exclusively Zeno-derived, various thinkers used infinite regress arguments to argue for a divine unmoved mover. *Epicurus rejected the premise structure*: he held that matter and motion are eternal and self-sufficient, requiring no external initiator. The infinite past of atomic motion is simply given — there is *no logical compulsion to terminate a causal chain* at a god.” [My italics]

This intrigued me, and I thought maybe it could be expanded to a discussion of infinitism in epistemology from an Epicurean perspective (if anyone’s interested).

There are generally three major epistemological schools: foundationalism, coherentism and infinitism. The latter is partly an attempt to eliminate defeat by elements of Agrippa’s Trilemma: infinite regress, circularity and arbitrary assertion.

Foundationalism is subject to logical criticism from infinite regress and arbitrary assertion/truncation.

Coherentism is subject to logical criticism from circularity and question-begging.

Infinitism accepts infinite regress as nonproblematic, and is not subject to the other two criticisms.

Agrippa’s Trilemma (part of Agrippa’s “five modes”) has been employed extensively by Pyrrhonian Skeptics (beginning with Sextus Empiricus). I’ve never really considered infinitism, but – stirred by Cassius’ remarks – I’m now wondering if it is a viable alternative from an Epicurean viewpoint.

Here is an article on epistemological infinitism: <https://iep.utm.edu/inf-epis/>