Protagoras is the first relativist. He claimed, “*Anthropos* (man, human beings) is the measure of all things” (pg. 65). Our minds constantly evaluate and analyze our environment to form judgments. This is a subjective process that yields diverse conclusions. As such, different people will have different perspectives on the same topic. “There are two mutually opposed arguments on any subject” (pg. 65). Duality is ubiquitous and especially prevalent in moral issues. Abortion is morally wrong to Catholics, but liberals believe in humanity’s right to choose. So, Protagoras could also have meant, ‘Human beings, as they exist in communities, are the measure of all things.’ Values are relative to communities and justifiable to those that hold them.

The Sophist Thrasymachus would have agreed with Protagoras. He expanded relativism to the realm of justice and claimed, “Justice is nothing other than what is advantageous for the stronger” (p. 242, 338b). This means that it is just to obey the ruling party, no matter the form it takes. They establish laws for their benefit so it is unjust to break them. By this definition, justice is relative to the regime/convention.

Socrates refutes this belief through three steps. First, he clarifies that *the* *stronger* means the political regime in power. Next, he gets Thrasymachus to acknowledge that rulers are liable to error. Finally, he delivers the counterexample. Since humans are prone to mistakes, a ruler can mistakenly make a law that is disadvantageous to themselves. However, since justice is to obey the ruling party, it would be just to obey that law. Now, the people are justifiably behaving disadvantageously to the ruler – an internal contradiction. Therefore, it can’t be just to both follow the laws and behave advantageously to the stronger. For example, in WW2 Hitler declared war, ultimately causing the country to collapse and Hitler to commit suicide. It also inflicted the German people into a moral impasse. By fighting for their country, they behaved disadvantageously for their ruler, which is unjust. By fleeing their country, they opposed a law that their ruler believed to be advantageous, which is unjust. Whether the German people obeyed and fought or disobeyed and fled, their actions would be considered unjust by Thrasymachus’s definition.

If justice is to behave advantageously to the stronger, and rulers make decisions with their advantage in mind, then it is just for the people to obey their rulers. However, it is human nature to make mistakes. If a political regime prescribes a law that is disadvantageous to themselves, then it is unjust to follow it and unjust to disobey it. This internal contradiction renders Thrasymachus’s definition of justice is invalid.