

Position paper essay



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Protagoras of Abdera was one of several fifth century Greek thinkers collectively known as the Older Sophists, a group of travelling teachers or intellectuals who were experts in rhetoric (the science of oratory) and related subjects. His famous saying is: “ Man is the measure of all things: of things which are, that they are, and of things which are not, that they are not. ” He believes that everything in this earth or the reason for all the things that has made is all because of man for man is the absolute criterion of truth.

Do you think that man is really the measure of all things? That human is the centre of the earth? Well, I can say that his thoughts about man were wrong! The position taken in this paper is that Protagoras’ philosophical thesis on human nature is not true. In particular, I will argue that man is not the measure of all things or the reason for everything. The purpose of this paper is to explain the sense of man’s existence, and to have a clear understanding that God alone is the measure of all things. The main parts of this paper are as follows:

First for explication, this is to strain Protagoras philosophy that cues him to conclude that, “ man is the measure of all things” because what he meant by his doctrine, as applied to our sense experiences, for example, if honey seems sweet to some people but bitter to others then it is sweet to the former and is bitter to the latter. There cannot be therefore be any objective knowledge or truth concerning what things is ‘ really’ like, which is knowledge which is the same for everybody and opens to all. All qualities are attributable to convention and not to ‘ nature’.

For counter argument; this includes my argument and reasons for those doubts, withstanding Protagoras idea that “ Man is the measure of all things”, are the following arguments; was he referring to societies rather than to individual men? Did he intend to apply it in ethics as well as to knowledge? If man is the measure of all things, and man is said to be the absolute criterion of truth, why is it that whatever man does, there will be the time that man needs help? Why does man still have this rebellious feeling and the feeling of dissatisfaction that they want to fill in?

Like there'll still lacking something and want to have anybody with them? Protagoras claimed that the universe was based on something objective, outside the human influence. These are just sample arguments that I had established in my position paper for you to prospect what information's were inside this paper will provide. Protagoras of Abdera is most famous for his claim that “ Of all things the measure is Man, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not” usually rendered simply as “ Man is the Measure of All Things”.

In maintaining this stance he pre-figures the existential relativism of writers like Luigi Pirandello (“ It is so if you think so”) by some two thousand plus years. It is curious to consider, then, how a man who claimed that what was true to each of his listeners was in fact true, including the idea that no one could know the gods' will objectively could come to be the most highly paid Sophist in ancient Greece.

The Sophists were educated men who, for a price, would teach the youth the art of rhetoric or politics and the trappings of culture Furthermore,

Protagoras really insists that “ If what each man believes to be true through sensation is true for him – and no man can judge of another’s experience better than the man himself, and no man is in a better position to consider whether another’s opinion is true or false than the man himself, but... each man is to have his own opinions for himself alone, and all of them are to be right and true”.

Then how was he so wise that he should consider himself worthy to teach others and for huge fees? And how are the youth so ignorant that they should go to school to him, if each of them is the measure of his own wisdom? Well, what Protagoras seems to be saying, however, is that the apprehension of Truth is relative to the individual perception and what one recognizes as ‘ true’ will be True to that individual despite any evidence to the contrary. Nevertheless, how come that Protagoras ends his philosophical speculation to this without making any resolution to what’s happening to his surroundings?

Are these an excuse or not? Protagoras was perhaps the greatest of the Sophists, and, despite the alleged errors of his thought, was admired greatly by Plato. While there can be no doubt that Protagoras said that man is the measure of all things, there has been considerable argument as to whether (1) he was referring to societies rather than to individual men, and (2) he intended it to apply in ethics as well as to knowledge. A reasonable compromise position would be that in his epistemology it is indeed the individual man who is the measure but in his ethics it is the society which sets the standard.

His ethical relativism, however, is consistent with objectivism in so far as a particular relativist standard is shared by all individual members of that community; and it may therefore be called ‘cultural’ relativism. Protagoras was thus actually rather traditional, stressing the need for commitment to the values and beliefs of one’s own society. Therefore, his doctrine is false and consequently not consistent on his way of living. As we can see, he, himself cannot follow or support what he said when his some activities also contradicts his theory on human nature.

Nevertheless, while individual relativism in perception might be compatible with communal or cultural relativism in ethics, there could still be a tension if his statement about the possibility of ‘contrary arguments’ on every topic were taken literally. And lastly, if man really is the measure of all things and the centre of the earth, then why it is that man cannot live all alone? I believe in the saying that no man is an island. Why? Without God, it is impossible for us humans to live. Man cannot survive without his creator, which is why we need him so badly.

Because I truly believe that God exists and he is the one and the only one who is the measure of all things. Example of proof is to know the thomistic ways that prove that God exists. First here is argument from motion. From a common observation that an object which is in motion by some other objects or force; there must have been an Unmoved Mover who first put things in motion. Second is the argument on the subordination of efficient causes. Ultimately, there must have been an Uncaused Cause (go) who began the chain of existence for all things.

Third is the argument on the contingency of the created beings. The existence of the contingent beings would ultimately necessitate a being which must exist or all of the contingent beings to exist. Fourth is the argument on the graduation of beings. From any given quality like goodness, beauty, knowledge, there must be a perfect standard by which all such qualities are measured. And lastly is the argument from intelligent design. Common sense tells us that the universe works in such a way, that one can conclude that it was designed by an intelligent designer, God.