

Review

I. Anaximander's new idea:

- a. idea of natural law/cosmic moderation (moral necessity that binds opposites to remain in balance, or pay penance for failure to do so) (p. 10)

II. Xenophanes

4 Major Contributions:

- 1. Direct attack on mythopoetic expl.:
idea of a nonanthro, all-k, all-p, all-g single God
- 2. Scepticism on h-k (p. 14)
- 3. Distinction between true belief/statement and knowledge (p.14)
- 4. These concerns, made explicitly, make Xeno. the Father of Epistemology

III. Major unresolved problem from the Speculative period of Pre-Socratic

Philosophy:

Problem of the One and the Many

how can reality, which seems 'many/multiple' be explained/caused by something single, like the boundless, water, or a single god? How can it be both a unity and a multiplicity?

IV. Heraclitus--obsessed with accounting for change in the world

a. Ideas of Heracl. that dominate later thinking:

"nature ... likes to hide itself"

"human nature has no insights....divine nature [logos] has."

"Bad witnesses for men are the eyes and ears of those who have foreign souls" scepticism on the senses.

"eyes are more accurate witnesses than ears."

"God makes all things contribute to the harmony of the universe, managing it commodiously"

b. Ur-stuff: fire (energy)--not literal fire, but fire as the principle of change through opposition.
Cannot step in the same river twice.

Explains change by noting that it is the essential nature of the world. A stable world would be dead, static, soulless.

Strife is the world's essence.

c. epistemology: key is "reasoned speech" (Logos). Not just logos in our minds, but in the world. It is the structure in the world, which is recognized in the mind. This is Hera.'s solution to the problem of the One and the Many. Evidence: notice how we come up with the same ideas: everyone gets five when adding 3 & 2. This is bec, Hrclt thought, we all have access to logos (the form of the world). He thought most people are not capable of reasoned speech. Couldn't engage in reflection.

d. Relativity: it may seem bad to you that you die, but from the perspective of the universe, death is necessary, otherwise we would run out of room eventually....not enough food for such a mass of beings, etc. If you didn't have what seem to be bad things to us, you would have many good things (hunger is tied to satiety, pangs of thirst and the quenching of thirst, etc.)

Continue theme of the logos (hidden, but intelligible structure of world best detected by the reasonable faculty)

IV. Pythagoras and others thought "everything is really numbers". The world is actually structured mathematically, literally. One reason he believed this was that music seemed to obey certain ratios: 1:2, 2:3, 3:4. Found a mathematical regularity in the relations between dominant tones and their harmonics.

From Thales thru Heraclitus, rejection of mythopoetic explanations and the manifest image in favor of rationalistic explanations and the "scientific image" leaves us with a new problem: how to adjudicate which explanation is acceptable. How can I choose between Thales/water and Heraclitus/fire? And we still have the problem of the one and the many to contend with.

V. Parmenides and Zeno

Parmenides tht we have only one form of equipment that allows us to distinguish between the various explanations we consider. Judge by reason (logo) or judge by custom (myth).....Parm. agrees with Thales against the manifest image.

a. These eleatics take Heraclitean preference for reason over sense experience to an extreme. Gave birth to abstract metaphysics and rationalist philosophy. They based claims about the world entirely on logical proofs, without any reference to sensual evidence whatsoever. Parmenides.

Claim: Being is one, reality is a static monism.

Argument:

1. There is no non-being.
2. there is generation only if there is non-being.
3. therefore there is no generation.
4. there is real change only if there is generation.
5. therefore, there is no real change.
6. sense perception records a world of real change.
7. therefore, there is no real change. (the senses are systematically mistaken)

Motivation for #1: you cannot think of non-being (p22/23). To think at all is to think of something, and non-being is the absence of something, in fact of anything. So if you can think at all, you must think of something.

assumption: thinking is essentially relational. That is, to think is to put yourself in relation to some object, and that object must have some kind of existence.

The picture: there is being. And people perceive differentiation, when there couldn't be any. Notice

that Parmenides knows very well, even expects that his audience will not believe his conclusion. He encourages them to consider his proof, judge it by reason alone, to see what is wrong in it, and thereby to trick them into going beyond custom. This yields a choice: giving up something we have no good argument for, or giving into a conclusion we don't like. The philosophy depends for progress on us choosing one or the other.

Notice that this is an entirely a priori (based on thought alone) proof of the systematic derangement of the senses.

Another, similar set of proofs came from:

b. Zeno: invented reductio ad absurdum. Way it works: take every premise and derive an absurd conclusion. This was the chief tool of Socrates, and was greatly responsible for the decision to give him the hemlock cocktail.

Zeno uses reductio to prove that change, plurality, motion are impossible. He is showing that, not only is common sense deluded by the illusion of multiplicity, but it generates logical contradictions. Assume something which common sense tells you must be the case about, say, motion, and then follow out the implications of that assumption to its logical end:

Paradox of motion: common sense says we can run 100 yards (normally). Common sense also says that to run 100 yards, you must first go half way, or 50 yards. And to run the last 50 you must go half way, to the 25. You keep doing this, proceeding to span half the remaining distance to the goal in each instance. But if you keep moving in this manner, you will never reach the goal. Since you must span these half-distances to get to the goal, you can never reach the goal. So, common sense says we can run 100 yards and common sense says we cannot run 100 yards! Paradox!

Attacks of this kind are indicative of a culture either in decline or in regeneration. Commonplace things were being questioned everywhere: in intellectual matters, politics, even with respect to the form of political and economic power in Athens and Greece generally. An unsettled time (post-periclean Athens faced a major defeat at the hands of both Sicily and then Sparta, and consequent loss of economic influence and control over the affairs affecting the city-state). Segue into Socrates (concerned over the effects of Ionian physical explanation on moral and political judgments and questions. If you can explain the world in nonmythological terms, this has unexpected effects. One's oath's to the god's seem to ring hollow (if the sun is not Apollo on his chariot but a hot rock flying through the void, what point is there in swearing by it?). Because later presocratic thinkers like Democritus take the view, encouraged by the Eleatic metaphysicians, that we do not contact reality by our senses (he in fact tried to make change possible, contra Parmenides, by arguing that there was a kind of non-being which existed, namely, the Void, and that change was explained by the motion and altering relations of atoms in this Void. With the link to reality cut, while mythopoetic explanations (and their concomitant moral claims on us) undermined, it is understandable that Socrates was chiefly worried about the emergence of moral relativism and protagorean "man is the measure of all things" principles in political life.

What the Presocratics left for P & A & S:

problem of the one and the many
problem of what the world is made of
problem of what being is
problem of how change is possible
problem of how to judge what counts as a good explanation for natural phenomena
problem of how to judge what is moral (the gods offer no help)
problem of how to judge what the right political form is
generally: to clarify the new-found rational methods of thought, argument and explanation, and to show how they were compatible with justice in both individuals and the polis.