

PART ONE (= 40%) Answer each question directly and succinctly.

1. What is the most informative translation of the word '*apeiron*'? Why might Anaximander have regarded *apeiron* as theoretically superior to the *archê* that Thales endorsed?

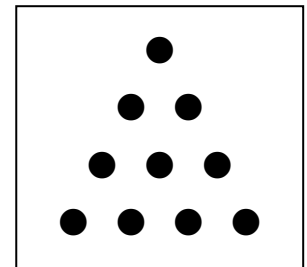
Apeiron is indefinite. It is able to change into the other 4 elements making it a 5th element. It is ubiquitous and limitless. Anaximander may have regarded apeiron superior to Thales' archê, water, because it is not just one thing but it's oneness is able to be all things. Fire for example directly contradicts Thales archê, how can the thing water also be fire?

Apeiron can be both.

[Roark's comment: Define '*archê*'. Score = 3.7]

2. Use the box below to illustrate how the Pythagoreans represented the number *ten* (the *tetractus*). Explain how it is supposed to embody either: (a) musical *harmonia* or (b) the creation of the cosmos.

The Pythagoreans were all about ratios. The ratio of 1:2 in the tetractus represents an octave. The ratio of 2:3 represents a perfect 5th chord, and the ratio 3:4 represents a perfect 4th chord.



3. Heraclitus is traditionally portrayed as endorsing a doctrine called "Unity of Opposites". Illustrate this doctrine with 3 opposite-pairs he examines in the fragments and then explain how the opposites in question are unified.

The unity of opposites is identified by the unity of change. This is shown by a fragment in which he states that a hot thing must turn cold and a cold thing hot. The relativization of opposites or perspective is shown when he talks about the road going up and down being the same road as well as a fish living in safe/drinkable water where humans see it as destructive/undrinkable sea water. Lastly, there is valuation of experience of opposites in which health is not made pleasant until you experience disease.

4. One of the premises in Parmenides's argument is *For the same is for thinking and for being*, by which he seems to mean that one can think of some particular object if, and only if, the object exists. So does Parmenides believe that unicorns exist (since we can think of them)? Explain.

No, as Parmenides works the argument in the opposite direction, we can only think of things that exist. He's say that since unicorns don't exist, we can't think of them. In a sense thinking of unicorns would be not thinking at all.

PART TWO (= 30% + 30%) Write a short essay in response to each of the following prompts.

1. Suppose someone were to say: "The Milesians are correctly regarded as the first Western philosophers because they abandoned the superstitious theistic worldview that dominated before their time and put in its place a naturalistic/scientific worldview." How would you respond?

I would respond firstly by stating that this is the wrong way to be looking at the evolution of philosophy. Religious views are still to this day stalwartly defended by very good philosophical reasoning. The question then to beg with this answer though is, "If not science, then what changed in their methods of arriving at claimed truths?"

[Roark's comment: why not science?]

This, I think, is now a good question. If we look back to theories of how the universe was and came to be, from times prior to these men, we will find a common feature in their stories and claims: divine whisperings and visions were given to these people. So then, elaborate stories would be crafted as to the way things were, often including whimsical decisions of gods, and the gods were also responsible for the way things come to be as well, through sexual relations betwixt these human-like deities. How and why never reached beyond, "Because the oracle told me this was so."

Now, enter the Milesians. These men begin telling a different kind of story. Rather than claim their truths to come from divine providence, they began to look to reasons for their claims. They began to look for arguments, comprised of provable statements, to justify their perspectives. Rather than stating the gods as proof enough, they took it upon themselves to not project their whimsical behaviors onto the creation of the cosmos, but began to wonder if something beyond human comparison could better explain the cosmos. From Thales to Pythagoras, they began to look for things that better described our state of affairs, and gave reasons why it was the most useful perspective over current notions.

What is most beautiful about this last piece is that it opened up the floor for philosophy in the following way: it allowed people to start comparing reasons why things were the way

they were, and allowed philosophers to begin a dialectical argument if they thought they had a perspective of the cosmos that better accounted for everything. It allowed us to begin asking the questions that would lead us to the first truly philosophical arguments/answers.

[Roark's comment: Very nearly perfectly complete. Score = 3.8]

2. In the famous river fragment transmitted through Plutarch, Heraclitus seems to offer the following argument: *The minute parts of what we regard as the self-same river are subject to continuous flux; therefore, what we regard as a self-same river is in fact a numerically distinct object from one moment to another.* The argument so construed is logically invalid. Articulate the suppressed premise that is required for the argument's validity. Next, explain what the supplemented argument is supposed to show about the material world more generally (i.e., not just about rivers). Do you believe that Heraclitus endorses such a view about the material world? Explain.

The missing premise in the river fragment's argument, as told by Plutarch, is that "that which is subject to continuous flux must in reality be many numerically distinct objects."

The argument constructed fully is meant to be not just about rivers, but all existing things. Things seem to change all around us all the time, thus, if we assent to the suppressed premise, there are no really constant things in existence. Everything we see as permanent moment to moment is an illusion of permanence. In reality, according to the argument, all objects are numerically distinct from themselves moment to moment, always being replaced. In this worldview, everything is an instantaneous object, and all permanent objects are illusory.

It is a common and understandable misconception that Heraclitus endorsed this worldview himself, but one finds that it is not the case upon looking closer. Heraclitus believed in the doctrine of constant flux, that is, that everything in the cosmos underwent constant change, and thus no qualitative permanence really existed. However, this does not mean that no numerical permanence exists. In fact, for things to truly undergo qualitative change, there MUST be numerical object permanence. If I paint and repaint a table over and over, then the table is changing. But if I replace the table with a brand new one, the table has NOT been changed at all, rather it has been replaced. Qualitative change and numerical replacement are not the same thing, and for Heraclitus, the doctrine of flux meant that all things underwent qualitative change, NOT numerical replacement.