

The PreSocratic Philosophers: A Few Miscellaneous Questions

1. For the PreSocratic philosophers, what's the difference between **monism** and **pluralism**?

2. **Heraclitus** said, "Nobody can step in the same river twice." In a sense, **Parmenides** had agreed, but he and **Heraclitus** had different reasons for thinking that nobody can step in the same river twice. Along with how **Parmenides** thought that only one thing exists, he and **Heraclitus** had different opinions about the existence of movement. On whether or not movement exists in any way at all, what was their difference of opinion?

3. **Anaxagoras** was from the Ionian School, and **Empedocles** was from the Italian School, but they agreed with each other about many important things. According to both of them, *creation* is simply *combining* elements, and *destruction* is simply *separating* elements. Also according to both philosophers, the only four elements are earth, air, water, and fire. Yet even though they *agreed* on all of that, **Anaxagoras** and **Empedocles** had *disagreed* about *what* combines and separates the elements. In other words, the two philosophers had disagreed about *what* creates and destroys.
 - (a) According to **Anaxagoras**, *what* combines and separates the elements? According to him, what creates and destroys?
 - (b) According to **Empedocles**, *what* combines and separates the elements? According to him, what creates and destroys?

4. **Anaxagoras** said, “Everything happens by *chance*, and everything happens at *random*. Nothing happens for a reason, and *neither* fate *nor* destiny exist.” Yet in disagreement, **Leucippus** said, “Nothing happens by *chance*, and nothing happens at *random*. Rather, everything has to happen for a reason!” Hence whereas **Leucippus** was a *determinist*, **Anaxagoras** was an *indeterminist*. In a way, their difference of opinion represented a philosophical difference of opinion between the Italian School and the Ionian School.

- (a) As a student of the Eleatic School philosophers **Zeno** and **Melissus**, **Leucippus** might have inherited his *determinism* indirectly from **Parmenides**. Why would it make sense for **Parmenides** to have been a *determinist*?

(Hint: See your answer to question #2.)

- (b) As an autodidact who taught himself the Ionian School’s philosophies, **Anaxagoras** might have inherited his *indeterminism* indirectly from **Heraclitus**. Yet, why would it make sense for **Heraclitus** to have been an *indeterminist*?

(Hint: See your answer to question #2.)