The Presocratic Philosophers: All early Greek philosophy before the end of 5th century BC.

Thus, the first philosophers are called either Milesians or Ionians. Philosophy began by asking the questions: "What are things really like?" and "How can we explain the basis of our world?"

Thales of Miletus (c. 624-546 BC):

- The concept of flux applies not only to rivers and bodies, but of thinking, and philosophy meant thinking about the basis of our world in a mood of genuine and free inquiry. (Samuel Stumpf, Philosophy: A History & Problems, 5th ed., 4)

Thales argued that all things were water, and that was an early version of entropy. If only one of the elements was unlimited and dominant then the others would cease to exist. Anaximander asked how water could become deadly, and why could a substance with a specific quality give rise to opposite qualities. Nobody can turn water into fire so why should we say they are the same thing?

Anaximander disagreed with Thales and is the first to explain why he is wrong. He argued that if all things were water, then long ago the river would have returned to its early version of entropy. If only one of the elements was unlimited and dominant then the others would cease to exist. Anaximander asked how water could become deadly, and why could a substance with a specific quality give rise to opposite qualities. Nobody can turn water into fire so why should we say they are the same thing?

"Anaximander paraphrases: "Ultimate reality must be something like water, the other elements would be annihilated by it. For the different elements have contrary one another. If one of them were annihilated the others would have ceased to exist by now."

Thales said that the mind of the world is god, and the ultimate reality is boundless. Full of daimons; right through the elemental moisture there penetrates a divine power that moves it.

It is wrong to say that he believed that primary substance was fire. Rather, there is a consistency & uniformity to nature. There is an explanation of all things for fire and for fire of all things; "War is father and king of Conflict; Justice is always an impartial power that moves things in the right way without being in the role of judge.

In sum: Thales is important because he abandoned mythic explanations & tried to understand the world naturalistically using a reductive & scientific method.

Anaxagoras (490-428 BC):

- He was the first pluralist, he maintained that earth, air, fire, & water are 4 elements. Aristotle says, "You will agree with me that the proper balance of these elements & functions of the body. The body is maintained in a proper ratio of these elements & functions of the body. The true number or figure, therefore, is the uniting force of the two poles.

But in solving the problems raised by previous thinkers he postulated primary forces along with the primary substances. The primary forces were "Love" (which is the uniting force) & "Strife" (which is the destructive force). He also anticipated Darwin stating that at one stage, anatomical parts stick to each other in random configurations, some of which are well adapted, others are not.

The clash between Heraclitus & Parmenides is often cited as birth of the battle between empiricism & rationalism. The clash between Heraclitus & Parmenides is often cited as birth of the battle between empiricism & rationalism. The clash between Heraclitus & Parmenides is often cited as birth of the battle between empiricism & rationalism. The clash between Heraclitus & Parmenides is often cited as birth of the battle between empiricism & rationalism.