

Anaxagoras

- Cosmogony: Mind

Does it have a spiritual quality? Perhaps either like a Deist's god-like being who starts things (by rotation) but then does no further work or like an all powerful, all knowing god who "creates" the cosmos and whose "spirit" is everywhere.

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“Other things include a portion of everything, but mind is infinite and self-powerful and mixed with nothing, but it exists alone itself by itself. For if it were not by itself, but were mixed with anything else, it would include parts of all things, if it were mixed with any thing;

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for a portion of everything exists in everything, as has been said by me before, and things mingled with it would prevent it from having power over anything in the same way that it does now that it is alone by itself. For it is the most rarefied of all things and the purest, and it has all knowledge in regard to everything and the greatest power; over all that has life, both greater and less, mind rules.
[fr. 13]

Four key principles

Anaxagoras' cosmogony and cosmology:

- Infinite divisibility of matter
- Principle of homoiomereity
- Principle of universal mixture
- Principle of predominance

Infinite divisibility of matter

- For neither is there a least of what is small, but there is always a less. For being is not non-being. But there is always a greater than what is great. And it is equal to the small in number; but with reference to itself each thing is both small and great.
[Fragment 3]

Principle of Homoiomereity

For how could hair come from what is not hair? Or flesh from what is not flesh?

[Fragment 11]

Principle of Universal Mixture

- All things were together, infinite both in number and in smallness; for the small also was infinite. And when they were all together, nothing was clear and distinct because of their smallness. [Fragment 1]
- In all things there is a portion of everything except mind; and there are things in which there is mind also. [Fragment 12]

Principle of Predominance

- From Aristotle's *Physics* I. 4, 187a36.
"... for the whole is not purely white or black or sweet or flesh or bone, but the nature of the thing seems to be that of which it has the most."

Problems

- Various scholars think that Homoiomereity and Universal Mixture contradict each other and that Homoiomereity and the Principle of predominance also are contradictory.

Problems

- Homoiomereity suggests that gold is composed of *only* gold while Universal Mixture suggests that gold has a portion of *everything* in it. The Principle of predominance suggests that gold is *predominantly* gold.

Anaxagoras' Greatest Hits?

- Good new/bad news: Mind and matter split
- Pre-atomistic