

## ARISTOTLE, FIRST BOOK OF NATURAL HEARING (PHYSICS), READING NINE

Anaxagoras would seem to have thought the beginnings unlimited in this way because he assumed the common opinion of the naturalists to be true, that nothing comes to be from what is not. For on account of this, they speak thus: all things were together and coming to be such is alteration while others say it is putting together and separating. Further he reasoned from contraries coming to be from each other. Therefore, they exist within.

For if everything that come to be necessarily comes to be either from what is or from what is not, and of these, coming to be from what is not is impossible (for all those treating about nature are of one mind about this), he thought the rest followed necessarily - that coming to be was from what is and exists within, but on account of the smallness of their sizes to be from what is unable to be sensed by us. Hence, he said that everything is mixed with everything because he saw everything coming to be from everything.

They appear different and are called other from each other by that which excels through great number in the mixture of the unlimited things. There is not any whole purely white or black or sweet or flesh or bone, but that of which each thing has the most seems to be the nature of that thing.

If then the unlimited as unlimited is unknown, the unlimited in multitude or magnitude would be unknown as to how much it is and the unlimited in kind would be unknown as to what kind it is. But the beginnings being unlimited both in multitude and in kind, it would be impossible to know the things from them. For we think we know the composed when we know from which, and how many, things it is.

Further, if it is necessary that that whose part can be of any size in largeness and smallness - I mean one of those parts existing within the whole and into which it can be divided - can itself be of any size; and if it is impossible that an animal or a plant be just any size in largeness or smallness; it is clear that neither is any one of the parts. For the whole will be similar. But flesh and bone and such are the parts of animal and fruits of the plants. It is clear then that it is impossible that flesh or bone or something other be just any size in the direction of the larger or the smaller.

Further, if all such things exist within each other and do not come to be, but the within is separated while it is named from the more; and if anything comes to be from anything, as water is separated from flesh And flesh from water while every limited body is taken up and away by a limited body; it is clear that it is not possible for each thing to be within each thing. For taking away flesh from water and again another coming to be from the rest by separation, even if always the separated is smaller, nevertheless it will not go beyond some magnitude in smallness; so that if the separation stops, not all will be in all - for flesh does not exist within the remaining water; if however it does not stop but always there is a taking away, in a limited magnitude there will be equal limited magnitudes unlimited in multitude. This however is impossible.

In addition to these, if every body necessarily becomes less when something is taken away, and the how much of flesh is determined in largeness and smallness, it is clear that from the smallest piece of flesh, no body will be separated. There would be something smaller than the smallest.

Further, in the unlimited bodies, there will exist now unlimited flesh and blood and brain separated from each other, but nevertheless existing and each unlimited. But this is unreasonable.

It is not knowingly said that it will never be entirely separated, but it is correctly said. For the accidents are not separated. If then the colors and the habits are mixed and if they are separated, there will be something white and healthy, not being anything other, nor of a subject. So that the mind seeking the impossible would be absurd if it wants to separate. For to do this is impossible both according to quantity and according to quality: according to quantity because there is not a smallest magnitude and according to quality because the accidents are not separable.

Nor does he rightly take the coming to be of similar things. for it is possible that it be divided as clay into clay; yet it may not be possible. And there is not the same way as bricks from house and house from bricks; thus water and air both are and come to be from each other.

It is better to take fewer and limited beginnings which Empedocles does.