The metamorphosis of change: a study of Plato's theory of change

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Chapter I The Starting Point of Plato's Theory of Change and Its Pre-Socratic Roots

In order to reveal Plato's theory of change, we are confronted with a series of critical inquiries: How does Plato understand and use concepts related to change? What are the implications of Plato's language regarding change? Which things are mutable and immutable within Plato's framework? What are the challenges inherent in his theory of change? Undoubtedly, Plato's theory of change and motion serves as a manifestation of his perception of the world he encounters. However, it is essential not to exclusively rely on Plato's original and direct experiences of this world, as his worldview is profoundly influenced by the philosophical milieu of his time. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the Platonic theory of change and motion necessitates a retrospective examination of pre-Socratic philosophy so as to elucidate the starting point of Plato's theory and its philosophical background.

During the early stage of philosophy, there is a lack of a dominant and normative understanding of change. Instead, various philosophers and schools of thought formulated competing theories in response to the distinct challenges they faced and their endeavours to fathom and expound upon the world. These endeavours show the early attempts in the history of Greek philosophy to interpret the primordial phenomena of change by philosophical languages. And for all the later philosophers, the way they empirically observe the phenomena of change and motion is unavoidably influenced and shaped by the pioneers. Although Plato may not have possessed an exhaustive and precise grasp of his predecessor's philosophical doctrines, it is worthwhile to investigate the intellectual

inheritance he received from pre-Socratic philosophy regarding the concept of change, which served as the starting point for his philosophical journey.

This chapter will delve into three principal dimensions: (1) the early Ionian thinkers and their conception of change between opposites; (2) the Eleatic school's perspective on generative change; and (3) the eternal motion of the immortal soul. These dimensions collectively constitute the backdrop against which change was contemplated during Plato's era. Our objective here is not to systemically expound upon and reconstruct Plato's own theory of change in this chapter. Instead, we endeavour to elucidate the broader worldview bequeathed to Plato by these philosophical precursors—a worldview characterized by the incessant flux of the entire cosmos. On one hand, all perceptible entities undergo ceaseless oscillations between opposing states. On the other hand, the immortal soul remains in a state of perpetual motion. And influenced by Parmenides and the Eleatic school, these changes are regarded to be generative. This view, in turn, leads to an essential problem how could the being, or What-is, change? This query may also constitute the primary impetus behind the inquiries into motion and change undertaken by many Greek philosophers. Only by comprehending this overarching framework can we discern Plato's point of departure in his exploration of change and the challenges he endeavours to grapple with.

1. Early Ionian Thinkers and Change between Opposites

In the so-called Cyclical Argument of the *Phaedo*, Socrates responds to Cebes' requirement of proving that the soul still exists after death and possesses its capability and intelligence (*Phd*. 70b), positing that the soul

must go round in a circle between the living and the dead, grounded in the philosophical principle that all things come to be from their opposites. To substantiate this assertion, he argues for the general rule of change as follows:

> Do not, he said, confine yourself to humanity if you want to understand this more readily, but take all animals and all plants into account, and, in short, for all things which come to be (γίγνεσθαι), let us see whether they come to be in this way, that is, from their opposites if they have such, as the beautiful is the opposite of the ugly and the just of the unjust, and a thousand other things of the kind. Let us examine whether those that have an opposite must necessarily come to be from their opposite and from nowhere else, as for example when something comes to be larger it must necessarily become larger from having been smaller before. (*Phd*. 70d7-e8)

Socrates posits a fundamental principle that underlies the generation of all things: namely, that everything that comes to be must come from their opposites. Large from small, beautiful from ugly, just from unjust and *vice versa*. And moreover, the change between each pair of opposites is called "becoming" or "generation" (γένεσις), such as the increase or decrease between the larger and smaller (71a12-b4). Therefore, change between opposites, namely being *F* and not-*F* in a row, is regarded as a universal and necessary pattern of change for all mutable entities. This view finds further reinforcement in the *Parmenides*, in which the formulation of change articulated as follows, "Don't you in fact call getting a share of being 'coming-to-be'…And parting from being

‘ceasing-to-be’? … Indeed, the one, as it seems, when it gets and releases being, comes to be and ceases to be” (*Prm.* 156a4-5), and also, “So everything of the sort we’ve described, which is both so and not so, signifies a change” (162b10-c1).

The seemingly commonplace and unremarkable nature of this universal pattern of change may belie its significance, particularly to a modern observer. In fact, it stands as one of the foremost contributions of the early Ionian thinkers to the change theory. Our discussion will primarily revolve around three philosophers who played pivotal roles in elucidating this pattern. Anaximander is attributed with the earliest recognition of this pattern, marking the initial endeavour in the history of Greek philosophy to comprehend and expound upon the natural and variational phenomena within the cosmos. Anaximenes, subsequently, provides a systematic and distinct mechanism to elucidate the change between opposites. Then, Heraclitus generalizes the pattern, regarding it as the foundational and universal law governing changes for all things. This change pattern conceptualized by Heraclitus, resonates throughout the Greek philosophical lineage, including Plato, irrespective of their stance on the reality of change.

Let us begin with Anaximander. It is widely acknowledged that we have a directly quoted fragment from Anaximander, preserved through the verbatim citation of Simplicius, which provides the earliest textual evidence reflecting upon the concept of change between the opposites:

> Among those who say that it [i.e. the principle] is one, in motion, and unlimited, Anaximander of Miletus, son of

> Praxiades, who was the successor and disciple of Thales, said that the principle and element of beings is the unlimited; he was the first to call the principle by this term. He says that it is neither water nor any other of what are called elements, but a certain other unlimited nature from which come about all the heavens and the worlds in them. And the things out of which birth comes about for beings, into these too their destruction happens, **according to obligation: for they pay the penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice** (κατὰ τὸ χρεών. διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας) according to the order of time—this is how he says these things, with rather poetic words. (Simpl. *In Phys.*, 24.13-21 = DK12 B1= TP2 Ar163. LM translation, adapted)

The sentence highlighted in bold type is acknowledged as the surviving fragment of Anaximander. As Mansfeld points out, in a long period of time up until the late nineteenth century, most scholars were led astray by the mistaken omission of the word 'ἀλλήλοις' (to each other) in the *Aldina* (Venice, 1526) which stood as the sole complete printed edition of Simplicius' *In Aristotelis Physicorum libros commentaria* prior to Diels' work. Some scholars, upon recognizing the absence of 'ἀλλήλοις', opted to disregard its existence in the correct text. Without 'ἀλλήλοις', the text seemed to suggest that the becoming of things by separating from the *Apeiron* or the unlimited was an unjust and guilty action towards the *Apeiron*, while they pay back this debt to the *Apeiron* by returning to it as their death. Conversely, the accurate text incorporating 'ἀλλήλοις' implies that Anaximander provides a dynamic system in which entities generate

from each other and become the others as encroachment and revenge.[6] Therefore, grounded in the correct reading incorporating 'ἀλλήλοις', Anaximander appears to adhere, to some extent, to the principle that entities change between the opposites.

Then, pertinent questions emerge, namely: (a) What is the extent of this principle within Anaximander's theory? Namely, (b) which things or what kind of things, according to him, change in that way? And then, (c) what is the essence of that kind of change? In addressing these inquiries, another report from Simplicius is remarkable:

> The other way is that in which they no longer ascribe change to matter nor explain becoming by alteration of the substrate, but by extraction; for the opposites are in the substrate, which is an unlimited thing, and that they are extracted from it, says Anaximander; he was the first to call the substrate a principle. **The opposites are hot, cold, dry, wet and the rest** (ἐναντιότητες δέ εἰσι θερμὸν ψυχρὸν ξηρὸν ὑγρὸν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα)**.** (Simpl. *In Phys.*, 150.20-25 = TP2 Ar169. Taylor translation, adapted)

In accordance with this, some scholars posit that the fundamental subjects within Anaximander's dynamic equilibrium system consist of opposing elements, including hot and cold, dry and wet, and possibly several other similar entities. Despite the variations in their interpretations, there is a consensus among scholars that, within this context, the things changing between the opposites are concrete entities (such as fire, and water) rather

[6] Mansfeld, J., 2010.

than qualities (such as hot, and wet).[7] Further, as argued by *KRS*, the concept of interchange between opposites is not only a fundamental principle within Anaximander's cosmogony but extends to the current natural world as well—just as "heat and drought in summer seem to be pitted against cold and rain in winter."[8] If this interpretation holds, Anaximander articulates a universal law applicable to various phases of the cosmos, encompassing both celestial bodies and more mundane entities.

Nonetheless, this interpretation primarily relies on Simplicius' account (TP2 Ar169), which may be subject to skepticism. As Lloyd claimed, this text is probably not a direct report of Anaximander's philosophy, but an Aristotelian comment on it. The style of terminologies employed in the text does not align closely with Anaximander's own language. Perhaps Aristotle and his followers reinterpreted Anaximander's theory in terms of hot and cold, wet and dry.[9] Although those who accept Simplicius' report could defend that Anaximander regards the change as occurring between oppositional substances (such as fire, water, wind, etc.) rather than opposite qualities (such as hot, wet, etc.), those who question the reliability of Simplicius' testimony may further query whether Anaximander actually presents the interchange between opposites as a universal natural law. Kočandrle and Couprie, for instance, argue that Anaximander does not speak of opposites in general. Rather, the only pair of opposites authentically mentioned by Anaximander is hot and cold, or

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[7] Cf. Vlastos, G., 1947:171. Cornford, F. M., 1952: 161-2. Kahn, C. H., 1960: 161-3. Kirk, G. S., Raven, J. E., & Schofield, M., 1983: 119-120. Freudenthal, G., 1986: 199. Graham, D.,2006: 34-44.

[8] *KRS*, 119.

[9] Lloyd, G. E. R., 1964.

more precisely, flame and air. Moreover, this pair is primarily discussed in the context of the generation of the heavens and not in other phases of the cosmos.[10] Mansfeld even argues that the fragment DK12 B1 itself implies no interchange system of opposites at all.[11]

Our objective is not to delve deeply into this scholarly debate. To provide definitive answers to our initial questions, we must examine Anaximander's doxographies to ascertain whether he indeed describes changes between opposites. The result is quite unequivocal. In addition to the possible change between flame and air in the cosmogony, which garners widespread acknowledgement, at least two more pieces of evidence can be identified. First, in Aristotle's *Meteorology*, he claims,

> And those who are wiser in human knowledge give an account of its origin: for they say the terrestrial region was at first entirely moist, but that, while it was being dried out by the sun, the part that evaporated produced the winds and the returns of the sun and moon, and what remained formed the sea; and this is why they think that it diminishes while it dried out and that one day it will be completely dry. (Arist. *Meteor*. 2.1 353b5-11 = DK12 A27 = TP2 Ar8. LM translation, adapted)

Aristotle clearly reports the view that the dry land comes from the moist and the sea. The process from wet to dry is a typical change between the opposites. Alexander of Aphrodisias further points out that according to Theophrastus' report, this opinion belongs to Anaximander and Diogenes

[10] Kočandrle, R., & Couprie, D., 2017: 73-85. Also, cf. Hölscher, U., 1970.
[11] Mansfeld, J., 2011.

of Apollonia (Alex. *In Meteor.*, 67.11-12 = DK12 A27 = TP2 Ar84), which is also confirmed by Aëtius (Aët. 3.16.1 =DK12 A27= TP2 Ar66). *KRS* worries that this testimony might suggest the completely dried death of the world, potentially undermining the notion of the eternal dynamic cycle of encroachment and retribution outlined in DK12 B1.[12] But this concern is possibly misleading, as DK12 B1 does not guarantee the perpetual existence of the universe. Instead, it may align more suitably with smaller-scale cycles of change. For instance, Hippolytus reports,

> Winds come about when the finest vapours of the air are detached and when, set into movement, they are agglomerated; **and rains from the vapour coming from the earth by the effect of the sun is released** (ὑετοὺς δὲ ἐκ <τῆς ἀτμίδος> τῆς ἐκ γῆς ὑφ' ἥλιον ἀναδιδομένης)**;** and lightning when the wind falls upon clouds and bursts them. (Hippol. *Ref.* 1.6.7 = DK12 A11 = TP2 Ar75. LM translation)

This text describes a very subtle circulative process of rain which includes the interchange between the wet and the dry. Heated by the sun, the moist land dries out, and from its vapour the wet rain generates. Then after the rainfall, being implied by this text, the dry land becomes moist again or is even overrun by the sea. Therefore, during this process, not only does the land change between wet and dry, we can also recognize a more macroscopic circulation of transformation between the earth and the rain as a pair of opposites. They perfectly fit the encroachment and

[12] *KRS*, 140. Thus, they assume that a 'great winter' will immediately come after the world being completely dried out which will reverse the whole process until the land is overrun by sea. But this idea lacks direct and sufficient evidence. An alternative solution, cf. Freudenthal, G., 1986.

retribution mentioned in DK12 B1. Namely, on the one hand, the moist land is replaced by the dry, and then it becomes wet again. On the other hand, more importantly, the generation of rain is injustice for the (moist) land, while it pays this debt by falling and then wetting the land.

Another case that can be treated as the change between opposites is as follows. Aëtius also reports,

> (On thunder, lightning, thunderbolts, whirlwinds, and typhoons) Anaximander: all of these phenomena come about from wind. For when this has been caught in a thick cloud but then breaks out violently by reason of its fineness and lightness, the tearing causes the noise, **and the crack, against the blackness of the cloud, causes the flash** (ἡ δὲ διαστολὴ παρὰ τὴν μελανίαν τοῦ νέφους τὸν διαυγασμὸν ἀποτελεῖ)**.** (Aët. 3.3.1 = DK12 A23= TP2 Ar63. LM translation, adapted)

In this testimony, the phenomenon of flash, characterized by its luminance, emanates from its opposing counterpart, the dark and black cloud. Subsequently, once the transient lightning ceases, the obscurity of the cloud reasserts itself. Therefore, the black cloud and the bright flash could be considered as another pair of opposites that encroach and return to each other as described in DK12 B1.

Hence, it becomes evident that Anaximander does indeed treat some transformations as changes between opposites. He articulates the changes or transformations between wet and dry lands, land and rains, as well as flash and clouds. Consequently, this pattern manifests more ubiquitously

than Kočandrle and Couprie acknowledge. It is not confined solely to the cosmogonical phase but extends to encompass meteorological phenomena within the contemporary world, as we have observed. This transition between opposites, therefore, embodies Anaximander's encapsulation and reflection of worldly phenomena

Nevertheless, it remains uncertain whether this pattern is as universally applicable as asserted by Vlastos, Freudenthal, and, and *KRS*. A dearth of concrete textual evidence distinctly stipulates that all natural phenomena conform to this mode of change.[13] Namely, the ambiguity resides in whether the change between opposites represents a fundamental and comprehensive natural law or merely a limited rule governing specific categories of things.

Moreover, Anaximander's conception of the mechanism underlying change remains nebulous. As Classen noted, Anaximander seems to possess "a naïve notion of coming-to-be, based on an unreflected notion of substance."[14] Both aspects of ambuiguity would be addressed by his successors: Anaximenes expounds upon the mechanism of change explicitly; while Heraclitus introduces a much broader and more systematic framework for the change between opposites.

As the next member of the Milesian school, Anaximenes' conception of change aligns with Anaximander's to some extent, albeit with subtle distinctions. In contrast to Anaximander, Anaximenes posits that air, rather than the *Apeiron*, serves as the *arche* of everything. Furthermore,

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[13] Cf. Graham, 2006: 68-70. But Graham regards that this principle only occurs in the cosmogony, while we believe that it is widely used in all phases of the universe.
[14] Classen, J., 1977: 98.

he introduces a well-defined mechanism of change that lacks articulation in Anaximander's account. The ensuing report is a testimony from Theophrastus collected by Simplicius:

> Anaximenes of Miletus, son of Eurystratus, a companion of Anaximander, says too, as he does, that the underlying nature is one and unlimited, but not that it is indeterminate, as he does, but rather it is determinate, for he says that it is air. **It differs by its rarefaction or density according to the substances: rarefies, it becomes fire; condensed, wind, then cloud; even more, water, then earth, then stones; and everything else comes from the last** (διαφέρειν δὲ μανότητι καὶ πυκνότητι κατὰ τὰς οὐσίας. καὶ ἀραιούμενον μὲν πῦρ γίνεσθαι, πυκνούμενον δὲ ἄνεμον, εἶτα νέφος, ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ὕδωρ, εἶτα γῆν, εἶτα λίθους, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ἐκ τούτων)**.** As for motion, he too considers it to be eternal; and it is because of it that change too comes about. (Simpl. *In Phys.* 24.26-25.1 = DK13 A5 = TP2 As 133. LM translation, adapted)

An explicit and systematic mechanism of change between opposing elements is discernible within this context. The air is considered the *arche* of the universe. And through its rarefaction, air becomes fire, while it becomes wind, cloud, water, earth and stone, etc. when being condensed. Unlike Anaximander who only alludes vaguely to the pattern of change between opposites, Anaximenes offers a precise description of this pattern, contending that rarefaction and density serve as the ways by which entities undergo change and transformation. In accordance with this mechanism, more rarefied entities, such as fire, originate from their

opposites, namely denser entities such as air, and *vice versa*. As noted by Graham, this theory even finds resonance in Plato's *Timaeus* (*Tim.* 49b7-e7).[15]

But how to understand this mechanism? Theophrastus, in the aforementioned testimony, regards the air as the 'underlying' (ὑποκείμενον), a term unmistakably rooted in Aristotelian philosophy. This terminology, however, may suggest the alleged Peripatetic 'material monist' which is a label that does not apply to Anaximenes. From an Aristotelian perspective, Anaximenes' air would be regarded as the fundamental and eternal substance from which all other entities emerge and ultimately return. Furthermore, as the underlying and stable essence of all things, air would ensure that transformations between opposites (e.g., fire and cloud, wind, water, etc.) are mere alterations rather than generative processes.[16] However, this interpretation might be untenable. Heidel correctly argues that the distinction between essence and attribute, which is the foundation of the 'material monist', does not align with the intellectual milieu of Anaximander's and Anaximenes' era.[17] Instead, Anaximenes' description precisely delineates the sequence of the substantial transformations of entities.[18] for instance, air completely vanishes and transmutes into fire, whereas it undergoes a thorough transformation into cloud, water, or earth through condensation, leaving no remnants.

And further, as we have argued, Anaximander mainly concerns himself

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[15] Cf. Graham, 2003.
[16] Barnes, J., 1982: 29-30. Also cf. Graham, 2003: 332-333.
[17] Heidel, W. A., 1994: 93.
[18] Graham, 2003: 335.

with the dynamic interchanging system of the concrete opposite entities rather than opposite properties. Conversely, Anaximenes seems to propose that all changes between opposing entities can be categorized through the opposition of hot and cold attributes, as these attributes emerge as consequences of the processes of contraction and rarefaction. In essence, what rarefies is hot and what condenses is cold. Plutarch reports,

> Or else, as ancient Anaximenes thought, let us accept neither cold nor hot as substance, but consider them to be common affections of matter supervening during its transformations. **For he says that the contraction and concentration of this is cold, while what is loose in texture and slack (calling it this very wat in his own words) is hot** (τὸ γὰρ συστελλόμενον αὐτῆς καὶ πυκνούμενον ψυχρὸν εἶναί φησι, τὸ δ' ἀραιὸν καὶ τὸ χαλαρὸν—οὕτω πως ὀνομάσας καὶ τῷ ῥήματι—θερμόν)**.** And that is why it is said, not implausibly, that a man emits both heat and cold from his mouth: for the breath is cooled when it is pressed together and condensed by the lips, whereas when the mouth is distended it comes out of it heated by the effect of its rarefaction. (Plut. *De prim. frig.* 7.947F = DK13 B1 = TP2 As 27. LM translation, adapted)

If Plutarch's report is reliable, Anaximenes indeed accords paramount importance to hot and cold as the fundamental opposing attributes transcending all other opposing entities. Hotness, as posited, arises from the rarefaction of entities, while coldness results from increased density.[19]

[19] Cf. Hankinson, 1998: 24.

Plutarch underscores the use of the term 'slack' (χαλαρός) as originating from Anaximenes himself, indicating that this quotation likely originates from an authentic work by Anaximenes, thereby enhancing the reliability of this testimony.[20] And this is also confirmed by Hippolytus' report (Hippol. *Ref.* 1.7.1 = DK13 A7 = As 56). Consequently, it is reasonable to deduce that within the framework of rarefaction and density of air as the *arche*, fire is hot while cloud or water, earth, stone, etc. are cold. Moreover, among those entities generated through the condensation of air, the less dense things are comparatively hotter than the denser entities and *vice versa*. For instance, a cloud is hotter than earth or stone. This is supported, to some extent, by Anaximenes' meteorology, as reported by Aëtius:

> Anaximenes: clouds are formed when the air becomes extremely condensed, and if it becomes even more concentrated rains are squeezed out; snow when the water freezes while it descends; and hail when some air is enclosed together with the moisture. (Aët. 3.4.1 = DK13 A17 =TP2 As 42. LM translation)

In these natural phenomena, the greater the condensation of air, the lower the temperature becomes in meteorological terms. Snow and hail, denser than air and cloud, undoubtedly possess lower temperatures than the latter. Thus, Anaximenes, akin to Anaximander, primarily focuses on the transformations and interchanges of tangible entities when elucidating the mechanism of change between opposites. However, he extends his understanding by recognizing that all changes between opposing elements can be distilled into the principles of rarefaction and contraction,

[20] *KRS*, 148.

corresponding to the opposing and relative attributes of hot and cold. Consequently, Anaximenes' theory of change mechanism is systematical and clear-cut.

This mechanism also serves as a fundamental principle in cosmogony. We have a testimony from Hippolytus suggesting that the heavenly bodies originate from the rarefaction of the moisture leaving from the earth (Hippol. *Ref.* 1.7.5 = DK13 A7 = As 56). And Aëtius' testimony also indicates the fiery nature of the celestial bodies (Aët. 2.13.10 = DK13 A14 = TP2 As 124). The earth itself, according to Pseudo-Plutarch's doxography, is the first thing emerging from the air through compression (Ps.-Plut. *Strom.* 3 = DK13 A6 = As 83).[21] And obviously, the fiery celestial bodies as the rarefied entities are hotter than the earth.

To recapitulate, both Anaximander and Anaximenes underscore the change between opposing elements as a fundamental pattern of change, with their focus mainly directed towards the transformations and interchanges between opposing entities, such as land and rain, air and fire, earth and water, and more. Anaximander hardly delves into changes between opposing attributes, whereas Anaximenes exclusively addresses hot and cold as consequences and effects of changes between opposing

[21] There are some conflicts between the testimony of Hippolytus and the one of Pseudo-Plutarch. In Hippolytus' report, the celestial bodies are fiery, while in Pseudo-Plutarch's they are earthy. And then, according to Hippolytus, the heavenly bodies are hot and fiery due to rarefaction, which process perfectly fits the mechanism of change. But Pseudo-Plutarch claims that the heat of sun comes from its swift motion. Pseudo-Plutarch's story is apparently strange to Anaximenes, for the philosopher always emphasizes the rarefaction as the reason of being hot. Pseudo-Plutarch very probably gets the wrong impression from Theophrastus' report in which everything besides air, fire, wind, cloud, water, earth and stone is said to come from the stones (DK13 A5). Also cf. *KRS*, 152.

entities. Furthermore, their theories of change span multiple domains, encompassing cosmogony and meteorology. However, a significant difference emerges. Anaximander does not provide a clear, systematic statement regarding the essence of this type of change, while Anaximenes offers an intricate mechanism involving rarefaction and contraction between opposing entities, giving rise to the attributes of hot and cold. Indeed, hot and cold conspicuously underscore these transformations as changes between opposites.

Heraclitus, in turn, takes a step further. He not only adopts the notion of change between opposing entities from Anaximander and Anaximenes but also generalizes it as a more comprehensive and universal principle. The pattern of change between opposites also extends to attributes. Furthermore, his concept, known as the flux theory or *Flusslehre*, leaves a profound impact on later philosophers and significantly shapes their fundamental understanding of the world. In contrast to his predecessors, Heraclitus emphasizes the unity, or even identity, of opposites within change, a viewpoint that subsequently becomes a primary opponent of the Eleatic metaphysics. These debates form the backdrop and foundation of Plato's theory of change.

Like Anaximander and Anaximenes, Heraclitus discusses the changes between concrete opposing entities as well. As he says,

> The transformations (turnings) of Fire: First sea, and of the sea the half is earth, the half prester (burning). … <Earth> is liquefied as sea, and it is measured in the same proportion as existed before it became earth. (Clem. Alex. *Strom*. 5.105.3,5 et

al. = M.53 = DK22 B31. Marković translation)

As Marković astutely points out, this fragment encapsulates "the constant, normal natural processes which are every day going on."[22] The fire becomes water, and water returns to be fire; also, the water earth, and earth water. These changes follow cyclic patterns, echoing the philosophies of Anaximander and Anaximenes, as previously discussed.[23] Of greater significance, Heraclitus interprets these changes as transformations rather than mere alterations, distinct from the 'material monist' theory proposed by Aristotle, as nothing persists in the process of transformation. As Kahn argues, this fragment implies that water stands at the opposite pole of fire, and then "sea represents the death and defeat of fire."[24] This is further verified by what Heraclitus claims,

> For souls it is death to become water, for water it is death to become earth; but out of earth water comes-to-be, and out of water, soul. (Clem. Alex. *Strom*. 6.17.2 et al. = M. 66 = DK22 B36. Marković translation)

Heraclitus employs the terms 'death' and 'come-to-be' to signify a profound transformation between opposite entities, where the preceding entity undergoes complete conversion into its successor, resulting in the full replacement of the former by the latter. These texts do not exhibit any indication of 'material monism', as in the texts of Anaximander and Anaximenes.

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[22] Marković, 1967: 289.
[23] Guthrie, 1962: 203-204; Kahn, 1979: 139. Also, cf. Wiggins, 1982: 5.
[24] Kahn, 1979: 140.

However, in contrast to his predecessors from the Milesian school, who primarily focus on the transformations of entities, Heraclitus applies this principle of change between opposites on a broader scale. For instance:

> Cold things become warm, warm thing becomes cold; moist thing becomes dry, dry (parched) thing becomes wet (τὰ ψυχρὰ θέρεται, θερμὸν ψύχεται, ὑ<γρὸν> αὐαίνεται, καρφαλέον νοτίζετ<αι>). (Schol. in Tzetz. *In Il.*, p. 126 = M.42 = DK22 B126. Marković translation)

Hot and cold, dry and wet—the fundamental opposing properties acknowledged by the philosophers since the time of Anaxagoras—are asserted to undergo cyclic transformations into their contraries. Heraclitus not only delineates the cyclical change of these primary opposing properties but also numerous other commonplace pairs, including:

> As [one] and the same thing (ταὐτό τ' ἔνι) there exists in us living and dead, and the waking and the sleeping, and young and old: for these things having changed round are those, and those things having changed round are these ones (γὰρ μεταπεσόντα ἐκεῖνά ἐστι, κἀκεῖνα πάλιν μεταπεσόντα ταῦτα). (Ps.-Plut. *Cons. Ap.* 10 106E = M.41 = DK22 B88. Marković translation)

Then, young Heraclitus' becoming old is actually a replacement of the young Heraclitus by the old one. Similarly, when Heraclitus dies, the living Heraclitus ceases to exist.[25] Some of these changes even exhibit

[25] Triplett, 1986: 18; Graham, 2006: 122-129. Also, cf. Neels, 2018: 431. But Neels

circular patterns: after transitioning to their opposites, they may revert to their original states. Evidently, these properties are asserted to transform into their opposites, symbolizing the change between opposites. Thus, both concrete entities and properties adhere to this transformative pattern throughout their changes. When we use the terms ‘entity’ and ‘property’, we are not implying an Aristotelian substance-property structure, as there is insufficient and convincing textual evidence to support this concept in Heraclitus’ theory. Rather, we intend to emphasize that Heraclitus no longer focuses solely on natural entities, as his predecessors did, but also considers the various aspects of each individual entity. Consequently, Heraclitus inherits the Milesian concept of change between opposites and potentially generalizes it as a more universal and fundamental rule.[26]

And although those changes are transformations rather than Aristotle’s alterations based on the alleged ‘material monism’, it does not necessarily imply that Heraclitus views them as generations in the Aristotelian sense. In this fragment, for instance, Heraclitus appears to perceive these changes between opposites as transformations but refers to them as ‘one and the same thing’. Such changes do not inherently negate the identity of the changing subjects. This perspective may appear contradictory from a modern viewpoint, but it is very like what is held by Heraclitus himself.

The so-called ‘river fragments’ provide further insights into Heraclitus’s philosophy. On one hand, they illustrate the universality and continuity of change in another manner—namely, all things are in perpetual flux. On the other hand, these texts offer a glimpse into how Heraclitus

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only admits the elemental transformations represented by B126 while rejects the transformation of other entities.

[26] Similarly, cf. Vlastos, 1955: 356-357.

comprehends the seemingly paradoxical concept of non-generative change between opposites. According to the fragments:

a) Upon those who are stepping into the same rivers different and again different waters flow (ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ). (Cleanthes *apud* Ar. Did. in Eus. *PE* 15.20.2 = M.40a = DK22 B12. Marković translation)
b) We step and we do not step into the same rivers, we are and we are not (ποταμοῖς τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐμβαίνομέν τε καὶ οὐκ ἐμβαίνομεν, εἶμέν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶμεν). (Heracl. *Alleg*. 24.5 = M.40c[2] = DK22 B49a. LM translation)
c) It is impossible to step into the same river twice (ποταμῷ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμβῆναι δὶς τῷ αὐτῳ). (Plut. *De E* 18, 392B = M.40c[3] = DK22 B91)

Scholarly debates persist regarding the authenticity of these fragments attributed to Heraclitus. I accept B12 and B91 as genuine statements of Heraclitus, in line with Tarán's assessment.[27] Through these similes, Heraclitus appears to argue that all things are in a state of flux, akin to the ceaseless flow of a river. The prevailing consensus among most scholars is that Heraclitus does indeed uphold the concept of flux.[28] When you step into a river, different waters pass by, which implies that the river undergoes constant and endless changes, reflecting the notion that all

[27] Tarán, 1999. Also, Kahn (1979) admits B12 and B91. *Contra*, such as: Kirk (1954) and Marković (1967) who only accepts B12; Vlastos (1955) B49a and B91; DK (1964) B12, B49a and B91, etc.
[28] Such as Vlastos, 1955; Guthrie, 1962; Kahn, 1979; Barnes, 1982; Tarán, 1999; Graham, 2006.

things are in flux. And in accordance with the fundamental pattern discussed earlier, it is believed that entities in this world undergo transformative, continual, and possibly cyclical changes.[29]

A minority of scholars, Kirk and Marković for instance, who accept the credibility of only B12 among the three river fragments, dispute the notion that Heraclitus intends to emphasize the constancy of change with the river simile. Kirk acknowledges the universality of change in Heraclitus' theory, and which is indeed very common in early Greek thought, but he contends that B12 does not imply that everything is in a constant state of change at every moment. Instead, Kirk argues that Heraclitus emphasizes the constancy or 'measure' (μέτρον) preserved in a change. He suggests that the concept of constant flux may have originated with Melissus rather than Heraclitus.[30] Similarly, Marković tentatively interprets this simile as an illustration of the unity of opposites, specifically sameness and difference. In this view, everything is both the same and different compared to itself during change.[31] Therefore, they think the river-simile is supposed to emphasize the constancy and sameness of the changing subjects. Just as Graham's comment, according to them, you can step into the same river—precisely contrary to B91 which they do not accept.[32]

In this analysis, we predominantly align with the majority view, as B91 is persuasively argued to be reliable. Nevertheless, the two perspectives are

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[29] Graham, 2006:145.
[30] Kirk claims, "the river-fragments, then, seems to exemplify not the constancy of change—for there is no hint that all things resemble rivers—but the regularity of natural change in one particular manifestation." Cf. Kirk, 1951: 37-42.
[31] Marković, 1967: 212-213.
[32] Graham, 2006: 116.

not markedly divergent. First, the minority view, exemplified by Kirk, more or less acknowledges universal change. There is little contention regarding the notion that beings are in a constant state of flux within Heraclitus' philosophy. Second, the majority view does not advocate an extreme understanding of flux. It avoids conflating Heraclitean flux with the more extreme Cratylean perspective, which posits that everything is perpetually changing in all respects.[33] Cratylus, according to Aristotle, does not even allow for the possibility of stepping into the same river 'even once', while Heraclitus still permits this. Both views recognize the enduring identity of changing things to some extent, as exemplified by the river being described as "the same" in B12. Graham elucidates this perspective by asserting that "the changing waters preserve the river, while the perennial river concentrates and conducts the changing waters. More generally, local change begets global stability, while global stability focuses local change."[34]

Hence, Heraclitus advances a comprehensive understanding of the change that characterizes the world according to his philosophy. He conceives of the entire world or universe as being in a state of flux, where all things are in perpetual change, analogous to the continuous flow of a river. Both entities and properties of things conform to his pattern of change between opposites. This understanding encapsulates the essence of change within Heraclitus' theory, defining it as a form of transformation. Crucially, this transformation does not entail a loss of identity or sameness for the changing entities.

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[33] Graham, 2006: 116.
[34] Graham, 2006: 132.

Undoubtedly, Heraclitus' depiction of a changing world profoundly influences later philosophers. They universally acknowledge, based on empirical observations, that the world lacks stability, and everyday entities are constantly oscillating between opposites. The debates among these philosophers revolve around whether to accept this view as an accurate description of reality and, if so, how to interpret and comprehend this observable phenomenon. Figures such as Melissus (DK30 B8) and Empedocles (DK31 B17) explore strategies that we will delve into in detail in the subsequent section.

Plato, too, appears to be significantly influenced by Heraclitus' change theory. As previously noted, Plato posits that the change between opposites is a fundamental pattern in the realm of sensible objects. And apparently, he partly accepts the flux picture of the world. Not only does he attribute the saying "πάντα χωρεῖ" (Everything flows) to Heraclitus (*Crat*. 402a8), but he himself also seems to claim that all sensible things are unstable and always changing (Such as *Phaed*. 78d-e; *Ti*. 28a, etc.). Nonetheless, scholars debate whether Plato misinterprets Heraclitus' theory of flux and whether he takes the concept to an extreme, asserting that all sensible things are in perpetual change in every aspect [35] If this is the case, Plato's theory of change could rightly be considered a 'Heraclitean Flux,' as it appears to derive directly from Heraclitus. [36]

However, an often overlooked aspect of Plato's philosophy is his

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[35] Cf. Irwin, 1977; Moyal, 1988; Adomenas, 2002; Colvin, 2007; Ademollo, 2018, etc.

[36] Aristotle first presents this opinion in the ancient world (*Metaph*. 987a33-34, etc.), which is somehow followed by many contemporary scholars, such as: Cornford, 1935: 36; Kahn, 1985: 244; Silverman, 2009: 5, etc.

departure from Heraclitus in his understanding of the essence of such change. The fundamental distinction between them lies in their interpretation of the change between opposites. As we have argued, Heraclitus accentuates the sameness or identity of entities during their transformation, while Plato characterizes this change between opposites as generative, resulting in a complete loss of identity for the changing entities.[37] This critical difference is exemplified in the *Symposium*, in which Diotima claims:

> "And this is possible in one way only: by reproduction/generation (τῇ γενέσει), because it always leaves behind a new young one in place of the old (ἀεὶ καταλείπει ἕτερον νέον ἀντὶ τοῦ παλαιοῦ). Even while each living thing is said to be alive and to be the same—as person is said to be the same form childhood till he turns into and old man—even then he never consists of the same things, though he is called the same, but he is always being renewed (ἀλλὰ νέος ἀεὶ γιγνόμενος) and in other respects passing away, in his hair and flesh and bones and blood and his entire body…And in that way everything mortal is preserved, what is departing and aging leaves behind something new, something such as it had been (οὑτῳ γὰρ τῷ τρόπῳ πᾶν τὸ θνητὸν σῴζεται, οὐ τῷ παντάπασιν τὸ αὐτὸ ἀεὶ εἶναι ὥσπερ τὸ θεῖον, ἀλλὰ τῷ τὸ ἀπιὸν καὶ παλαιούμενον ἕτερον νέον ἐγκαταλείπειν οἷον αὐτὸ ἦν)." (*Smp*. 207d2-208b2)

Scholars like Guthrie and Kahn draw parallels between this text and

[37] Also cf. Manson, 2016: 7-26; esp. 10.

Heraclitus' river fragments, suggesting that Plato adeptly paraphrases Heraclitus' flux theory and incorporates it into his own theory of sensible things.[38] However, upon closer examination, it becomes evident that the relationship between Diotima's speech and Heraclitus' philosophy is quite the opposite. In fact, Diotima's speech should be interpreted as a critique of Heraclitus, as it explicitly highlights the absence of self-identity in changing things. These entities are merely "said to be the same" during the process of change, revealing their lack of genuine diachronic identity—meaning they lack true oneness and sameness over time. According to Diotima, such changes inherently lead to the loss of an object's oneness and sameness, resulting in what she considers a form of generation. Accordingly, Heraclitus' assertion that changing things can retain their sameness is fundamentally untenable. This perspective is further reinforced in the *Phaedo*, where the change between opposites is referred to as 'γένεσις' (*Phd.* 70d-71b), and in the *Parmenides*, where all forms of motion and change are argued to be generative (*Prm*. 162b-163b). Thus, in contrast to Heraclitus, Plato views the change between sensible opposites as generative, implying that it inevitably strips objects of their identity and sameness.

Therefore, the concept of generative nature of change, which is a critical and ontological characteristic of Platonic change, does not originate from Heraclitus. Again, when we use the term "generation," we are referring to a change in which the subject becomes an entirely new entity with no continuity or identity with its previous state before the change. It is clear that Heraclitus does not impose generative character on change, whereas Plato does so explicitly in the *Symposium* and several other dialogues.

[38] Guthrie, 1962: 210; Kahn, 1979: 167.

Therefore, it would be imprecise to label Plato's understanding of change as 'the Heraclitean Flux.' Indeed, as we will soon explore in the next section, the notion of generative change was widespread among philosophers preceding Plato. Heraclitus' genuine legacy, inherited by Plato and other pre-Socratic philosophers, pertains to the generalized pattern of change between opposites and the overarching portrayal of the empirical world as in a state of perpetual flux. The generative nature of change must have had a different source of origin.

2. Generative Change, the Eleatic School and the Pluralists

The concept of generative change undoubtedly finds its roots in the Eleatic school. As they ascribe generative characteristics to all forms of change, they firmly uphold that the real Being or What-is, in accordance with their beliefs, cannot partake in any form of change or motion. This doctrine is interpreted in various ways by Pluralists and Plato alike. The inquiries into change undertaken by Greek philosophers after Parmenides are largely driven by the same fundamental question posed by this Parmenidean doctrine: How could a real being or What-is move and change?

2.1 The Eleatic School and Parmenides' Principle of What-is

While the awareness of generative change is first systematically articulated by Parmenides, its origins can be traced back to Xenophanes. In the ancient world, Xenophanes is consistently recognized as the forerunner of the Eleatics (Plato, *Soph.* 242d) and tutor of Parmenides (Aristotle, *Metaph.* 986b22). And moreover, he is thought to argue that the principle is one (i.e. the god), unlimited and motionless (Nicolaus of Damascus *apud* Simpl. *In Phys.* 23.14-15 = DK21 A31), an idea thought

to have deeply influenced and inspired Parmenides and the Eleatic philosophers (Aristocl. *Philos.* 7 = DK21 A49). Conversely, modern scholars tend to regard Xenophanes more as a poet or theologian rather than a genuine Eleatic philosopher. Although there are disagreements in detail, most contemporary scholars maintain that Xenophanes' alleged monist 'doctrine' lacks authenticity and is more likely an outcome of 'Eleatization' by ancient doxographers.[39] Therefore, the philosophical resemblance and connection between Xenophanes and Parmenides is very probably just superficial.[40] Brémond even suggests that when Plato refers to Xenophanes as the 'starting-point' of 'our Eleatic tribe' in the *Sophist* (*Soph.* 242d), he is not indicating Xenophanes' position within the Eleatic school but merely alluding to the fact that Xenophanes was one of the early scholars residing in the city of Elea—a geographical association.[41]

While it may be true that Xenophanes did not develop a rigorous and strict monist theory and that Parmenides likely did not derive his alleged monism from Xenophanes, this does not imply that Parmenides drew nothing from Xenophanes. Indeed, Xenophanes' conception of change, or at least the contemporary ideas prevailing in the Eleatic circle, as reflected in Xenophanes' verses, laid the groundwork for Parmenides' and his followers' theories of change. Xenophanes is reported to write:

> αἰεὶ δ' ἐν ταὐτῷ μίμνει κινούμενος οὐδέν,
> οὐδὲ μετέρχεσθαί μιν ἐπιπρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλλῃ.
> He [i.e. the god] always stays in the same place, not moving at

[39] Mansfeld, 1987: 301. And cf. Brémond, 2000, esp. 3-4.
[40] *Contra*, Finkelberg, 1990: 155-157. Criticism of Finkelberg's argument, see Brémond, 2000: 4-5.
[41] Brémond, 2000: 7.

all,
And it is not fitting that he travels to different places at different times. (Simpl. *In Phys.* 23.11-12 =DK21 B26. LM translation, adapted)

[…]

ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθε πόνοιο νόου φρενὶ πάντα κραδαίνει.
But without any toil, by the organ of his mind he makes all things tremble. (Simpl. *In Phys.* 23.20 =DK21 B25. LM translation)

In these verses, it is asserted that the god remains devoid of motion. As some scholars have noted, this concept constitutes a direct critique of Homer and Hesiod, who depict the gods as exhibiting various forms of motion in their myths, akin to human beings.[42] What prompts Xenophanes to posit that his god should be motionless? Or, to be more precise, why is it deemed "not fitting" (οὐδὲ … ἐπιπρέπει) for the god to engage in movement? Lesher contends that this arises from the divine nature ascribed to the god. The god is proclaimed to be "the greatest" (μέγιστος):

One god, among both gods and humans the greatest (μέγιστος),
Neither in bodily frame similar to mortals nor in thought. (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 5.109.1 = DK21 B23. LM translation)

According to Lesher's analysis, "the greatest" of the god (DK21 B23) "would entail instant and complete accomplishment of divine wishes and intentions across enormous expanses of space and time" without any

[42] Guthrie, 1962: 374; KRS, 1982:170; Lesher, 1992: 112-113.

movement (DK21 B25).[43] Namely, from Xenophanes' perspective, the various motions and travels of the gods in Homer's epics contradict the idea of the 'greatest' as the divine nature of the god.

It is undeniable, as previously discussed, that Xenophanes' notion of an unmoving god may not exhibit a direct philosophical connection to Parmenides' concept of What-is. However, Xenophanes' conception of the nature of motion itself could serve as a crucial resource for Parmenides' theory. If motion is deemed to potentially threaten and compromise the god's 'greatest' state and nature, forcing the god to behave like humans (DK21 B23), it implies that motion would lead to a substantial and fundamental change in the god's nature. This concept, although subtly implied in the verses, serves as a source of inspiration for Parmenides and his successors, as we will see shortly, and contributes to the development of the notion of generative motion.

This idea, while only hinted at in the verses, is sufficient to underscore its uniqueness and significance. On the one hand, it contrasts with the beliefs of the Eleatics, who generally argue that motion does not conflict with the nature and identity of gods, a point to which we will return in the next section. On the other hand, it encompasses various forms of change and motion. Previous philosophers, as argued earlier, primarily focus on transformation as the change between opposites. However, Xenophanes, or perhaps the Eleatic circle, also places significant emphasis on spatial motion. Xenophanes denies the god the capacity for spatial motion, contending that it would fundamentally alter the nature and identity of the god. Similarly, Parmenides and other Eleatic philosophers reject spatial

[43] Lesher, 1992: 113.

motion for What-is, characterizing it as generative change.

Parmenides is the first to undertake a rigorous ontological analysis of the generative nature of change. Although he negates motion and change for What-is (τὸ ἐὸν) by asserting that What-is is "entire, unique, unmoved and perfect" and entirely devoid of generation or destruction (DK28 B8.3-4), his rejection must be founded on a profound consideration of motion as the metaphysical basis. Hence, a meticulous examination of his doctrine of What-is can unveil his underlying deliberation regarding change and motion in his enigmatic poem.

Yet, it is challenging to delve into Parmenides' theory of What-is. Modern scholars offer varying interpretations concerning Parmenides' precise intent and ideas regarding What-is. The traditional one, exemplified by Guthrie, interprets it as a *numerical* or *strict monism*.[44] According to this view, what Parmenides discusses here is the sole being which really exists. Some other scholars doubt whether Parmenides truly advocates numerical monism. Mourelatos presents an alternative called *predicational monism*, suggesting that Parmenides emphasizes that each entity can only have a single predicate, and thus, a being cannot be both *F* and not-*F*.[45] Barnes, on the contrary, refutes the orthodox notion that the fragments preclude a plurality of beings.[46] Then, Curd declares that predicational monism allows the existence of more than one being. Namely, what the fragments enumerate are the criteria for a Parmenidean being.[47] Palmer takes a different stance, advocating a *generous monism* reading of Parmenides,

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[44] Guthrie, 1965: 4-6.
[45] Mourelatos, 1970: 56-60.
[46] Barnes, 1979.
[47] Curd, 1991; 1998: 64-75. And also cf. Graham, 2006: 162-168.

where Parmenides affirms the existence of a single necessary whole being, and multiple mutable and non-substantial entities.[48]

Fortunately, these interpretations do not significantly affect our subsequent analysis of Parmenides' comprehension of change. Our investigation does not hinge on a definitive answer to the question of what Parmenides' What-is is or how many types of What-is Parmenides allows. Instead, it relies on the widely accepted metaphysical characteristic of What-is or 'to be' (εἶναι) , namely, that What-is or Being always is and cannot be What-is-not, and *vice versa*. In the way of Conviction, is. He says,

> χρὴ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ᾽ ἐὸν ἔμμεναι, ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι,
> μηδὲν δ᾽ οὐκ ἔστιν ·τά σ᾽ ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα·
> It is necessary to assert and conceive that What-is is. For it is to be,
> But nothing is not. These things I command you to heed.
> (DK28 B6.1-2. Coxon translation, adapted.)

As one of the most renowned propositions, this fragment establishes a rigorous demarcation between What-is and What-is-not, adhering to the principle of non-contradiction. What-is-not cannot exist and be What-is, and conversely, What-is cannot not-exist and be What-is-not (also, DK28 B7.2). In Parmenides' view, this foundational principle renders generation and destruction of Being impossible. This is because, according to his perspective, generation has to involve the transformation of What-is-not into What-is, while destruction must entail the transition of What-is into

[48] Palmer, 2009.

What-is-not, as evidenced by the subsequent passage:

> **οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐφήσει πίστιος ἰσχὺς / γίγνεσθαί τι παρ᾽ αὐτό· τοῦ εἵνεκεν οὔτε γενέσθαι / οὔτ᾽ ὄλλυσθαι ἀνῆκε δίκη χαλάσασα πέδῃσιν** / ἀλλ᾽ ἔχει, ἡ δὲ κρίσις περὶ τούτων ἐν τῷδ᾽ ἐστιν, / ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν κέκριται δ᾽ οὖν, ὥσπερ ἀνάγκη, / τὴν μὲν ἐᾶν ἀνόητον ἀνώνυμον, οὐ γὰρ ἀληθής / ἐστιν ὁδός, τὴν δ᾽ ὥστε πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι. / **πῶς δ᾽ἂν ἔπειτα πέλοιτο ἐόν; πῶς δ᾽ ἄν κε γένοιτο; / εἰ γὰρ ἔγεντ᾽, οὐκ ἔστ᾽, οὐδ᾽ εἴ ποτε μέλλει ἔσεσθαι. / τὼς γένεσις μὲν ἀπέσβεσται καὶ ἄπυστος ὄλεθρος.**
> Nor will the strength of conviction ever impel anything to come to be alongside it from Not-Being. Therefore, justice did not loosen it in her fetters and move it either to become or to be perishing but holds it fast, and the decision regarding these things depends on that of the issue, is or is not. Now it has been decided, as was necessary, to leave the one way unconceived and nameless, since it is not a real way, and for the other to be a way and authentic. And how could What-is going to be in the future? How could it come to be? Seeing that, if it came to be, it is not, nor is it, if at some time it is going to be. Thus becoming has been extinguished and perishing is unheard of. (DK28 B8.12-21. Coxon translation, adapted.)

It is evident that What-is or Being must invariably exist and cannot cease to exist at any time and under any circumstances. Parmenides demands a robust and absolute self-identity of What-is. Should it transform into What-is-not, it would necessitate a transition between What-is and

What-is-not, a contradiction with the inherent self-identity of Being. Parmenides characterizes such a transition as generation and destruction. Consequently, true Being or What-is remains exempt from both generation and destruction. Using the same reasoning, since generation and destruction purportedly derive identity from objects through transitions between What-is and What-is-not, they are unsuitable for Being.

Further, Parmenides argues that other kinds of change and motion are also incompatible with What-is. That is because, the change of an object logically depends on its becoming from or coming to be something different from its original state. And what differs from What-is is undoubtedly What-is-not. Consequently, all types of change and motion inherently involve a transition between What-is and What-is-not. In other words, generation and destruction constitute the essence of every change and motion. Thus, What-is does not change. For instance, the growth of What-is—if it could exist—is said that it must become from What-is-not (DK28 B8.5-11). This change, therefore, cannot be attributed to What-is, as it is evidently perceived as a form of generation. Indeed, Parmenides puts forth a comprehensive argument:

> αὐτὰρ ἀκίνητον μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν / ἐστιν ἄναρχον ἄπαυστον, ἐπεὶ γένεσις καὶ ὄλεθρος / τῆλε μάλ᾽ ἐπλάγχθησαν, ἀπῶσε δὲ πίστις ἀληθής· / τωὐτόν τ᾽ ἐν τωὐτῷ τε μένον καθ᾽ ἑαυτό τε κεῖται / χοὕτως ἔμπεδον αὖθι μένει ·κρατερὴ γὰρ ἀνάγκη / πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἔχει, τό μιν ἀμφὶς ἐέργει, / οὕνεκεν οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον τὸ ἐὸν θέμις εἶναι / ἔστι γὰρ οὐκ ἐπιδεές, μὴ ἐὸν δ᾽ ἂν παντὸς ἐδεῖτο.

> But it is motionless in the coils of huge bonds, without beginning or end, since becoming and perishing have strayed very far away, thrust back by authentic conviction; remaining the same, and at the same place, it lies by itself and remains thus where it is perpetually, for strong necessity holds it in the bondage of a limit, which keeps it apart, because it is not lawful that What-is should be incomplete, for it is not defective, whereas What-is-not would lack everything. (DK28 B8.26-33. Coxon translation, adapted.)

In this fragment, the absence of generation and destruction in What-is serves as the basis for asserting that What-is remains motionless, as indicated by the term 'ἐπεί' (B8.27). This suggests that motion and change are predicated on the concepts of generation and destruction. All forms of motion would compel What-is to no longer remain "the same, and at the same place," leading it to lose its sameness and oneness, thus undergoing a process of generation. However, generation has already been ruled out for What-is. Consequently, What-is cannot exhibit any form of motion, as generation constitutes the essential characteristic of all change and motion.

Furthermore, what types of motion and change does this argument encompass? Traditionally, it was widely accepted that this text exclusively argued against spatial motion until Hermann Fränkel, Kirk, and Stokes introduced the view in the 1950s that "ἀκίνητον" should encompass all forms of motion or change. Their interpretation has since become mainstream.[49] On the contrary, Curd finds it odd to consider

[49] Kirk & Stokes, 1960. Also, cf. Tarán, 1965: 109-113; Palmer, 2009: 153-155; etc.

spatial motion as a threat to the identity of What-is. Therefore, she posits that the text's purpose is to reject alteration rather than spatial motion.[50] Bicknell advocates a compromise solution, in which Parmenides is claimed to argue against alteration in lines 26-28 while against spatial motion in lines 29-33.[51] In our perspective, Parmenides unequivocally rejects all forms of motion and change. The most compelling evidence comes from several lines later (B8.38-42), where he contrasts truth with the mistaken beliefs of mortals: What-is should be motionless (ἀκίνητον, B8.38), while the mortal believes that it possesses all kinds of change, including generation, destruction, locomotion, alteration, etc. Since this statement can be considered as the conclusion of the argument in B8.26-33 cited earlier, it undeniably demonstrates that Parmenides rejects all types of motion and change by ascribing 'motionless' to What-is.

Curd's perspective may seem aligned with our everyday intuition, as we commonly believe that local motion or rotation of an object does not compromise its identity and sameness. However, this view diverges from Parmenides' genuine argument and his perspective on this matter. As we have elucidated, all forms of change and motion, including spatial motion, are incompatible with the nature of What-is or the strict identity of What-is, precisely because they entail generative character as their essence. And it can be further confirmed by Parmenides' claim in B8.29-33 that What-is must remain in itself and at the same location, otherwise, it would become the incomplete What-is-not. This obviously implies that both spatial change and other changes would destroy the

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Those who still advocate the traditional idea that this text merely discusses spatial motion: cf. Guthrie, 1965: 36; Mourelatos, 1970: 116-119.

[50] Curd, 1998: xxiv; 84-89.

[51] Bicknell, 1967.

identity of What-is. Thus, Parmenides unquestionably regards spatial motion as generative, just like all other forms of motion and change. Indeed, for Parmenides, What-is-not not only signifies something non-existent but also something distinct from What-is. In the context of Parmenides' poem, the verb 'to-be' (εἶναι) can be employed either in an existential sense signifying existence or in a broader sense indicating possession of certain attributes or states.[52] Therefore, whether something transforms into another thing, moves to another place, or completely disappears, it inevitably undergoes a process of generation according to Parmenides' perspective.

Hence, just like Xenophanes' view, spatial motion, alteration, or other forms of change are deemed unsuitable for the divine because they would diminish its greatness. Parmenides regards all forms of change, including spatial motion, as a profound threat to the identity of What-is, since no change can avoid being generative. Generative character constitutes Parmenides' key insight into change, and this theory is passed down to his Eleatic followers in a direct way.

We have very little credible knowledge about Zeno from which we may reconstruct his complete theory of change and motion. He presents four well-known paradoxes to challenge the possibility of motion: (1) The Dichotomy: the object in motion must reach the half-way point before it gets to the end (Aristotle, *Phys*. 239b11-13 = DK29 A25); (2) the Achilles: the slowest runner will never be overtaken by the swiftness Achilles (*Phys*. 239b14-17 = DK29 A26); the Arrow: the flying arrow is at rest

[52] Cf. Kahn, 1966; and also a series of his studies after that: cf. Kahn, 2009. But we do not use the term 'predicative' to summarize the broader usage of 'to-be' in order to distinguish Parmenides from the latter Pluralists, as we will discuss later.

(*Phys*. 239b30-33 = DK29 A27); and (4) the Stadium: half a given time is equal to its double (*Phys*. 239b33-240a18 = DK29 A28).[53] All of these paradoxes concern locomotion, suggesting that Zeno shares Xenophanes' and Parmenides' preoccupation with spatial motion. However, his arguments are rooted in the physical concepts and analyses of the continuum, space, and time rather than considerations of generation or destruction. Hence, unlike Parmenides, his arguments against motion do not depend on the metaphysical idea of generative change. Due to the paucity of extant materials, we cannot conclusively determine whether Zeno disagrees with Parmenides on this matter or if his arguments about generative change did not survive.

Melissus, on the contrary, explicitly argues for the generative essence of change and motion. As a successor of the Eleatic school, he also maintains that true What-is is absolutely self-identical without any change or motion.[54] According to Simplicius' report, Melissus argues,

> In this way, therefore it [i.e. What-is] is eternal, unlimited, one, and entirely similar, and it could not either be destroyed (ἀίδιόν ἐστι καὶ ἄπειρον καὶ ἓν καὶ ὅμοιον πᾶν καὶ οὔτ' ἂν ἀπόλοιτο),

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[53] For more doxographies and reports, cf. Lee, 1967. A detailed reconstruction of the paradoxes, cf. Faris, 1996. A comprehensive collection of the most important English literatures in the 20th century, cf. Salmon, 2001.

[54] Some recent scholars try to challenge the traditional view of Melissus' acceptance of Parmenides' theory. And they conversely emphasize the essential gap between them. Palmer, for instance, argues that it is Melissus rather than Parmenides who advocates the strict numerical monism. Namely, Parmenides allows the existence of a variety of different entities, while Melissus only accepts one Being. Cf., Palmer, 2009: 205-224. However, as we said this does not affect our argument, for we only focus on their metaphysical understandings of the concept What-is, on which they have no disagreement.

> not increase in size, or change its arrangement, or suffer either pain or distress. For if it underwent any of these affections, it would no longer be one. For if it is being altered (ἑτεροιοῦται), it is necessary that what is not be similar, and what is not come to be (ἀλλὰ ἀπόλλυσθαι τὸ πρόσθεν ἐόν, τὸ δὲ οὐκ ἐὸν γίνεσθαι). If then the whole had become different by a single hair in the course of thousands of years, it would have been destroyed in the whole of this time. (Simpl. *In Phys*. 111.18-24 = DK30 B7. LM translation, adapted.)

Apparently, Melissus considers What-is as one diachronically self-identical entity.[55] This idea undoubtedly draws from Parmenides' principle that What-is always is and never becomes What-is-not. Melissus, too, interprets What-is-not as anything different from What-is. Consequently, What-is must remain entirely consistent with itself, as even the slightest alteration would compel it to become different, thus becoming What-is-not or non-Being. Therefore, change capable of rendering an object different is inherently generative and is absolutely incompatible with What-is.

A pertinent question arises: does Melissus also regard all forms of change and motion as generative, akin to Parmenides? In this context, he enumerates various types of changes: generation, increase, re-arrangement, suffering pain or distress, and being altered. This comprehensive list encompasses what Aristotle categorizes as substantial change, quantitative change, qualitative change or alteration, and activity.

[55] Concerning the diachronic self-identity of What-is, cf., Brémond, 2019.

[56] Notably, spatial motion is the only form of change, based on Aristotle's classification, not mentioned in this paragraph. However, Melissus subsequently adheres to the Eleatic tradition by rejecting the spatial motion of What-is. He contends that What-is cannot move due to the absence of void for it to traverse. Moreover, void is nonexistent since void constitutes non-being or What-is-not, a concept that cannot exist according to the Parmenidean principle (Simpl. *In Phys*. 112.6-15 = DK30 B7).[57]

Nevertheless, a clear metaphysical interpretation of how spatial motion could be generative remains absent.[58] The final piece of the puzzle may be offered by Gorgias. In his work *On What-is-not*, the Sophist parodies the Eleatic theory by arguing, "[I]t could not move [spatially] either. For if it moved, it would no longer be in the same way, but on the one hand it would not be, and on the other what is not would have come to be." (Ps.-Arist. *MXG* 980a = LM. D.26, 14) This implies that the spatial motion of something results in the destruction of the object at its previous location and the generation of a new object at its current location—clearly reminiscent of Melissus' notion of generation. Similarly,

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[56] Concerning the generative alteration, also cf., Harriman, 2019: 154-155.

[57] This argument is clearly confirmed by Plato (*Theaet*. 180e2-4) and criticized by Aristotle (*Phys*. 214a26-31).

[58] Indeed, by refuting the spatial motion of What-is, this argument might implicitly suggest that spatial motion, like other forms of change, compels What-is to become different and become What-is-not. Consequently, spatial motion is also deemed generative. This is supported by the position of this argument, placed closely after previous arguments against various generative changes of What-is. This suggests Melissus' tentative stance: on one hand, he upholds the Eleatic tradition by considering spatial motion as generative; on the other hand, he finds it practically challenging to construct a metaphysical argument against spatial motion of What-is by demonstrating that this kind of motion must be generative. Thus, he may have opted for a compromise.

although Plato does not explicitly treat spatial motion as generation in his middle dialogues, in the *Parmenides* he allows the interlocutor to assert that locomotion of something entails self-alteration, and generation underlies all changes (*Prm*. 162d-163b).

Thus, Melissus aligns with the Eleatic tradition by excluding all forms of change and motion from What-is, and he also regards them as generative, similar to Parmenides. Furthermore, compared to his Eleatic predecessors, Melissus' understanding of change bears a resemblance to Plato in several aspects. Firstly, in contrast to Parmenides, Melissus delves into greater detail regarding how a change effectively leads to generation for What-is, or what such generation would entail. In this fragment, he argues that every change or affectation experienced by What-is results in the destruction of What-is and the generation of a new What-is from What-is-not. In other words, at the moment of such a change, a new being is generated which supplants the disappearing old one. This may inspire the speech of Diotima in the *Symposium*, in which she claims that every mortal thing is always being renewed and becoming a new thing with some aspects passing away and being replaced (*Smp*. 207d2-208b2).

Secondly, as a response to Heraclitus, Melissus accepts his flux theory as a proper empirical description of the world, but he asserts that it does not represent the fundamental truth of the world. He is reported to claim:

> For if earth exists and water, air, iron, gold, fire, the living and the dead, black and white, and the other things of which humans say that they are true…then it is necessary that each thing of this sort be as it first seemed to us…each one always

> be as it is…**but it seems to us that what is hot becomes cold and what is cold hot, what is hard soft and what is soft hard, that what is living dies and that it comes to be out of what is not living, and that all these things become different…it seems to us that they all become different and change out of what is seen each time**. Hence it is clear that we do not see correctly…For they would not change if they were true, but they would just as each one seemed to us to be…but if it changed, then what is would be destroyed, while what is not would come to be. (Simpl. *In Cael*. 558-559 = DK30 B8. LM translation.)

On the one hand, according to our perception, everything in this empirical world seems to change constantly.[59] Whenever we perceive something, it instantly becomes different. Just like Heraclitus' river which we can never step into it twice, here Melissus further argues that we cannot perceive the same thing twice, emphasizing that all our observations indicate an ongoing process of change. As we have previously discussed, Plato also embraces Heraclitus' view of a world in flux. On the other hand, Melissus, like Heraclitus, emphasizes that change between opposites is the predominant and fundamental characteristic of change. The constant change we perceive in everything typically involves a shift from one attribute, such as cold or soft, to its opposite, like hot or hard. However, Melissus departs from Heraclitus in that he considers all these changes as generative. According to our perception, all things undergo substantial transformations between opposites, and they are immersed in a generative flux. Given Parmenides' principle, which Melissus upholds, that What-is

[59] Barnes, 1982: 299-300.

must always remain true to itself, Melissus concludes that our perception of the world is unreliable.

And the opinion of generative flux definitely reminds us of Socrates' interpretation of Protagoras, Heraclitus and other philosophers' doctrine of change in the *Theaetetus*, where he argues that according to their theory nothing can be called 'one', for when you perceive the object as large or heavy, it suddenly turns to the opposites as small or light (*Theaet*. 152d). Similarly, in Socrates' speech of the *Phaedo*, which we have cited (p. 8), he posits that all things change between opposites, and the processes of these changes are named after 'generation' (*Phd*. 70d-72b).

Therefore, at present, it is evident that Melissus' and Plato's critical ideas concerning change are quite close to each other. Specifically, they both accept Heraclitus' flux theory as a partial description of our empirical world. According to our sensory perception, all things constantly undergo changes between opposites. Moreover, in light of Parmenides' principle, they recognize that all types of changes and motions are generative. Consequently, they both acknowledge that if our sensory perception is trustworthy, all perceptible objects are subject to various forms of generation. However, it is essential to note that this metaphysical judgment does not originate with Heraclitus but is a result of the Eleatic analysis of What-is.

Plato himself appears to be cognizant of this intellectual progression. In the *Sophist*, the Eleatic stranger categorizes philosophers into two groups concerning their views on Being. He describes "a battle of gods and giants among them". 'The gods' refer to Parmenides and the Eleatic

school, perhaps as well as the theory of forms established in Plato's middle dialogues.[60] As 'the friends of the forms', they advocate that the true being must be immaterial and intellectual. In contrast, 'the giants' insist that only the material can be considered as being (*Soph.* 246a-c). According to the Eleatic stranger, 'the giants,' as the opponent of 'the friends of the forms,' believe that "everything is moving and changing" (249b-d), apparently encompassing Heraclitus and his followers criticized in the *Theaetetus*.[61] Then, Heraclitus and those 'giants' are never argued to claim the generative character of motion. Rather, their opinions are clearly summarized as the belief that beings are material and constantly changing. Those who introduce the issue of generative motion, on the contrary, are the friends of the forms. It is said,

> Therefore, the people on the other side of the debate [i.e. the friends of the forms] defend their position very cautiously, from somewhere up out of sight. They insist violently that true being is certain nonbodily forms that can be thought about. They take the bodies of the other group, and also what they call the truth, and they break them up verbally into little bits and call them a process of coming-to-be instead of being (ἐν τοῖς λόγοις γένεσιν ἀντ᾽ οὐσίας φερομένην τινὰ προσαγορεύουσιν). (*Sph.* 246b6-c2)

Obviously, 'the giants' themselves do not declare that material beings are always generatively changing. But under the perspective of the friends of the forms, the changing things do not possess any diachronic self-identity

[60] Cornford, 1935: 242-8; Bluck, 1975: 94-101; de Rijk, 1986: 102.
[61] Cornford, 1935: 241.

and they are merely “little bits”. This suggests it is they who treat change and motion as generative. Their position is further confirmed by what the Eleatic stranger claims several lines later, “You [i.e. the friends of the forms] say that being always stays the same and in the same state, but coming-to-be varies from one time to another.” (τὴν ὄντως οὐσίαν, ἣν ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν φατέ, γένεσιν δὲ ἄλλοτε ἄλλως. 248a11-13) Since What-is always is according to the Eleatic doctrine, the changing sensible entities cannot be What-is but only the “little bits” as the result of the generative process of change.

Consequently, it becomes evident that Plato recognizes that the insight into generative change belongs to the Eleatics. To summarize, early Ionian thinkers initially identified the pattern of change between opposites as a fundamental aspect of change. Over time, this pattern evolved into the central principle of Heraclitus’ philosophy, where all things are in constant flux, exemplified by his river fragments. In contrast, the Eleatics, guided by their principle that What-is always is, perceive all forms of change and motion as generative and unsuitable for What-is. Melissus’ arguments underscore his alignment with the Ionian thinkers: He acknowledges the Ionian pattern of change between opposites and Heraclitus’ general flux theory as a suitable description of the empirical world perceived through our senses. However, he also maintains that this observation is illusory because What-is remains immutable.

As demonstrated, Plato also inherits these legacies to a certain extent. On one hand, he acknowledges the pattern of change between opposites and the general flux observed in the material world through our senses. On the other hand, he considers these changes, sometimes even including

spatial motion, as generative. Nevertheless, this does not imply his complete acceptance of Eleatic theories and judgments. The pre-Socratic philosophers provide Plato, as well as his audience, with a description of the empirical world: a sensory world characterized by generative and constant changes. Plato must decide whether to fully embrace this perspective or to reject it, either partially or entirely, with a systematic solution to the challenge posed by the Eleatics: how can What-is move or change?

2.2 The Pluralists and Another Alternative

Plato is not the only thinker faced with this critical problem. In the fifth century, the Pluralists, exemplified by figures like Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and their adherents, grapple with a similar dilemma. They indeed embrace Parmenides' foundational principle that What-is always maintains its existence, leading them to reject the notions of coming into being and passing away of What-is. However, their stance is not as rigorous as that of the Eleatic philosophers. They are hesitant to outright deny the ever-changing empirical world and the existence of mutable entities. Consequently, they propose a compromised solution founded on mixed change. They postulate the existence of plural or even limitless What-is or entities that inherently undergo neither generation nor destruction. Instead, they assert that the generation and alteration we perceive in the world are manifestations of the combination and separation of these beings.[62] This perspective allows them to acknowledge the reality of the changing world to some degree, rather

[62] Cf. Vlastos, 1950: 36-39; Guthrie, 1965: 271, 281; Furley, 1976; *KRS*: 351; Curd, 1998: 127-128; 2007: 73; Inwood, 2001: 24-33; Sisko on Anaxagoras, 2014: 54. *Contra*, Palmer, 2009: chp.6-7; Sisko on Empedocles, 2014: 61.

than dismissing it as a mere illusion, as Melissus does. This viewpoint potentially serves as a source of inspiration for Plato. Nonetheless, their interpretation of the immutability of What-is differs somewhat from that of the Eleatics. Unlike the Eleatics, the Pluralists do not categorically consider all forms of motion as generative, nor do they rule out every form of motion. This distinction arises from their understanding of Parmenides' doctrine of the self-identity of What-is, which they interpret in a predicative sense rather than the absolute sense embraced by the Eleatics. This alternative proposed by the Pluralists underscores the profound influence of Parmenides' doctrine, shaping the framework for discussions on change and motion prior to Plato's era.

For instance, Anaxagoras is recorded as stating,

> The Greeks do not think correctly about coming-to-be and passing-away; for nothing comes to be or passes away, but is mixed together and dissociated from the things that are (ἀπὸ ἐόντων). And thus they would be correct to call coming-to-be mixing-together and passing-away dissociating. (Simpl. *In Phys.* 163.20-24 = DK59 B17. Curd translation.)

This fragment is widely recognized as a reflection of Parmenides' profound influence on Anaxagoras. Much like Parmenides, Anaxagoras repudiates the concepts of generation and destruction concerning What-is. The perceived generation or destruction of macroscopic objects, such as flowers or cats, according to Anaxagoras, amounts to nothing more than the mixing and separation of various constituent What-is, serving as the fundamental components of these objects. These ingredients encompass

opposing qualities like hot and cold, wet and dry (Cf. Simpl. *In Phys*. 34.20-27 = DK59 B4b) as well as flesh, bones and other similar things (Cf. Arist. *Cael*. 302a28-b5 = DK59 A43).[63] Therefore, in the birth of a cat, for instance, Anaxagoras believes that the bones, tissues and fleshes do not come-to-be or pass-away but remain ungenerated. Although the cat as a whole appears to be generated, Anaxagoras contends that this is not a genuine process of generation but merely the aggregation of non-generative constituents. This perspective is further illuminated by the following doxography:

> When Anaxagoras discovered the old belief that nothing comes from that which is not in any way whatsoever, he did away with coming-to-be, and introduced dissociation in place of coming-to-be. For he foolishly said that all things are mixed with each other, but that as they grow they are dissociated. For in the same seminal fluid there are hair, nails, veins and arteries, sinew, and bone, and it happens that they are imperceptible because of the smallness of the parts, but when they grow, they gradually are separated off. 'For how,' he says, 'can hair come from what is not hair, and flesh from what is not flesh?' He maintained this, not only about bodies, but also about colours.

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[63] Concerning what exactly are the ingredients or fundamental things, cf., Curd, 1998: 131-141. I am convinced by her arguments that the ingredients include opposites, some natural substances, and the ingredients of organic objects, while excluding entire physical objects. Besides, I also concur with her perspective on how Anaxagoras substantiates his claim that What-is does not undergo generation or destruction. *Contra*, some scholars reduce the ingredients to the opposites alone, such as, Vlastos, 1950; Marmodoro, 2017: 12-17. And some others, on the contrary, make no clear distinction between the ingredients (What-is) and the macroscopic objects we perceive, exemplified by Strang, 1963; Guthrie, 1965: 279-294; Barnes, 1982: 320-326.

> For he said that black is in white and white in black… (Scholium in Greg. Naz. *Patrologia Graeca* 36 911 Migne = DK59 B10. Curd translation.)

Therefore, the hair cannot be anything other than hair, and this is the same for flesh or any other ingredients. In comparison to Parmenides' fundamental doctrine that What-is maintains an eternal and unchanging essence, Anaxagoras offers a subtly distinct interpretation. For him, since What-is cannot transform into something entirely distinct, it is permissible for it to undergo change without fundamentally altering its essence. In other words, the constituent elements can experience growth and expansion through mixing, and conversely, they can undergo decay and reduction through separation. Consequently, the body, as an assemblage of these constituent elements, is merely a product of their mixing and separation. However, the question arises: How can this theory ensure that What-is and macroscopic objects altogether evade genuine generation and destruction? According to Anaxagoras' doctrine, there exists the notion that 'everything is in everything', or, 'in everything there is a portion of everything' (Simpl. *In Phys*. 164.22-165.1 = DK59 B6+B11+B12). And further, he also advocates that there is neither a smallest nor a largest among the ingredients (Simpl. *In Phys*. 164. 14-22 = DK59 B3). In other words, one can always find a smaller component within a small one. Thus, regardless of how the constituent elements and macroscopic objects are separated, they would never be reduced to nothingness.[64] Consequently, in the strictest sense, true generation and destruction are deemed impossible.

[64] Cf. Curd, 1998: 148.

Moreover, Anaxagoras' interpretation of the Parmenidean doctrine also leads to the rejection of qualitative change. As alluded to in B10 cited above, just like flesh and hair do not come from what is not flesh and hair, according to Anaxagoras' acceptance of Parmenides' idea, black must come from what is black and white must come from what is white.[65] This perspective suggests that akin to Parmenides, Anaxagoras also considers qualitative change as a form of generation of What-is. Moreover, concerning macroscopic objects, there exists no generative alteration since their qualitative changes are reduced to the mixing and separation of ingredients. These constituent elements collectively contribute to the various characteristics that a macroscopic object may exhibit, such as being hot or cold, dry or wet, and so forth (Cf. Simpl. *In Phys*. 155.23-30 = DK59 B1). Therefore, any qualitative change in a macroscopic object signifies a shift in the proportions of ingredients brought about by mixing or separation. For example, if a white cat turns black, it is due to an increase in the proportion of black constituent elements, rather than the black constituent elements themselves changing into white.

Hence, Anaxagoras rejects all forms of generative change. Although, as observed, Anaxagoras seemingly embraces Parmenides' doctrine that What-is always is and cannot become different, his understanding of this principle exhibits nuanced deviations from Parmenides and the Eleatic philosophers. On one hand, contrary to the Eleatics, Anaxagoras does not universally categorize all forms of change and motion as generative. While he disallows generation *ex nihilo* and qualitative change, he does permit quantitative changes of What-is, such as combination and

[65] As Furley points out, Anaxagoras takes the Parmenidean principle in a very strong sense that "nothing comes-to-be out of what *it* is not." Cf. Furley, 1976: 64.

separation, growth and diminishment. Moreover, he acknowledges the spatial motion of What-is, as exemplified by rotation (cf. Simpl. *In Phys*. 156.13-157.4 = DK59 B12). This perspective suggests that Anaxagoras interprets Parmenides' doctrine of What-is primarily in a predicative sense. In other words, he asserts that changes like increase, decrease, and spatial motion do not necessitate What-is transforming from F to not-F, hence they do not entail a process of generation. From Anaxagoras' viewpoint, a cup of hot tea, for instance, does not undergo a generative change by becoming hotter or colder when heated or by moving from one location to another. Thus, these types of changes are not considered generative by Anaxagoras. In contrast, for Parmenides and the Eleatics, any form of change implies a generative process since it invariably undermines the strict and absolute self-identity of What-is

Although it is premature to conclusively determine whether Plato's own theory aligns more closely with the Eleatics or Anaxagoras on this matter, it is apt to engage in some preliminary comparisons. Plato undeniably regards quantitative changes as generative in the *Symposium* as well as other middle dialogues. As evident in Diotima's discourse, no matter how minimal a change may be, it is perceived as a generative process that erodes an entity's identity and unity. In this regard, Plato unequivocally aligns with the fundamental tenets of the Eleatics. However, it should be noted that Plato permits certain changes and motions not to be generative, as exemplified by his treatment of the soul's motion in the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and the *Laws*. It is because Plato's systemic theory of change is complicated and dialectical. We will not deal with those cases in the meantime, and our current focus pertains solely to the context and initial standpoint of Plato's philosophical exploration of change and motion.

And in the *Symposium*, one of the earliest dialogues dedicated to this topic, Plato unequivocally embraces Parmenides' original concept of absolute What-is and lays the groundwork for his subsequent ontological investigations. Further examination of this topic will be revisited in the following chapter.

On the one hand, unlike Melissus and possibly Parmenides, Anaxagoras does not consider everything as genuine What-is; instead, he designates only certain constituents as What-is, while regarding macroscopic objects, which result from the mixture of these constituents, as not being true beings.[66] This dichotomy results in a metaphysical and epistemological innovation. As demonstrated earlier, Parmenides dismisses changes in What-is as mere mortal opinions, and Melissus goes further to perceive the constantly changing world, as reported by our senses, as pure illusion. Conversely, Anaxagoras suggests that our perception of the empirical world is not illusory. Although the macroscopic objects we perceive are not genuine What-is and are subject to generation and destruction, they still exist and undergo temporary change. To illustrate, consider once more the example of a cup of hot tea. Melissus would deny the possibility of such a cup, as a What-is, becoming hotter or colder, asserting that What-is always remains unchanged. However, Anaxagoras contends that such changes can indeed occur because the cup itself is not a true being. This viewpoint aligns with Parmenides' principle without entailing the impossibility of change. Even though Anaxagoras' formulation may not have directly influenced Plato, it bears a remarkable resemblance to Plato's perspective in his dialogues. Undoubtedly, in the *Republic*, the entity undergoing a generative change is not a genuine Being, nor is it

[66] Cf. Curd, 2007: 72-73.

complete nothingness—it falls somewhere between true What-is and pure What-is-not (i.e. *Rep*. 478e). The external world undergoes perpetual change as perceived by us, yet the concealed true What-is remains immutable.[67]

Empedocles, although marked by certain distinctions, expounds a very similar theory to Anaxagoras. Empedocles also does not outright deny the reality of the changing external world apprehended by our senses, nor does he wholeheartedly rely on sensory perception. He posits that for most mortals, the knowledge attainable through the senses is limited and incomplete—although the power of each sense organ is unique and irreplaceable, while as *KRS* rightly points out, Empedocles still promises that the perceptions somehow could reveal each thing in a clear way by a careful and discriminating use of them under his guidance (Sext. Emp. *Adv. Math*. 7.124 = DK31 B3; also cf. Sext. Emp. *Adv. Math.* 7.122-124 = DK31 B2).[68] This limited reliance on sensory perception appears to partially embrace Heraclitus' portrayal of the ever-changing world:

> And these things never cease from constantly alternating,
> At one time all coming together by love into one,
> And at another time again all being borne apart separately by the hostility of strife.
> …
> [I]n this respect they come to be and have no constant life;
> But insofar as they never cease from constantly interchanging,
> in this respect they are always unchanged in a cycle. (Simpl. *In*

[67] Other attempts to construct the metaphysical relationship between Anaxagoras and Plato, cf. Brentlinger, 1972; Furley, 1976: 80-83, etc.
[68] *KRS*, 285.

Phys. 158 = DK31 B17.6-13. Inwood translation)

Much like Heraclitus, Empedocles shares the belief that all objects perceived in the empirical world are in a perpetual state of flux. This perspective paints a picture of a world characterized by unceasing processes of generation and destruction. According to Empedocles, each act of generation involves a dual birth of the mortal and also a double death. For when a fresh entity comes to be, the previous one or ones must pass away.[69] Nevertheless, akin to Anaxagoras, Empedocles derogatorily labels those who advocate for the concepts of generation and destruction as fools (Plut. *Adv. Col.* 12 1113C = DK31 B11). In his view, the instances of generation we perceive are not entirely genuine; instead, they represent combinations and separations of authentic beings, as he articulates,

> I shall tell you something else. There is no growth of any of all mortal things
> nor any end in destructive death,
> but only mixture and interchange of what is mixed
> exist, and growth is the name given to them by men. (Aët. 1.30.1 = DK31 B8. Inwood translation)

Macroscopic objects, as compounds, undergo processes of birth and death. However, they do not represent genuine beings; hence, their birth and demise do not constitute authentic acts of generation but rather the mixing or separation of entities. True entities, in contrast, remain exempt from both generation and destruction. Empedocles takes a dual stance: he

[69] Cf. Furley, 1987: 84.

rejects complete generation and destruction of beings (Plut. *Adv. Col.* 11 1113A-B = DK31 B9; Ps.-Arist. *MXG* 2 975a3-4 = DK31 B12; Simpl. *In Phys.* 158 = DK31 B17.30-35). Additionally, he categorically denies the possibility of any alterations in these entities. This is grounded in the claim that each being or What-is, being equal in age and character to others, possesses a distinct prerogative and unique character (Simpl. *In Phys.* 158 = DK31 B17.27-28). Any alteration in the entity inevitably entails the cessation of the old character and the emergence of a new one, thus constituting a form of generation for the being. Consequently, similar to Anaxagoras, Empedocles treats alterations in being as a type of generation and rejects them.

But Empedocles diverges from Anaxagoras by only acknowledging specific types of being, which he designates as 'roots'. Those permanent beings are fire, water, earth, and air (cf. Simpl. *In Phys.* 158 = DK31 B17.18).[70] And the macroscopic objects, as anticipated, are the compounds of those roots under the affection of Love or Strife. Empedocles likens the roots to pigments in the hands of painters, while the natural objects we perceive correspond to the diverse figures created using these pigments (Simpl. *In Phys*. 160 = DK31 B23). It is clear that the pigments or the roots themselves remain unaltered, but their combinations give rise to all mortal things. Empedocles intriguingly assigns the names of four immortal gods to these roots: Zeus, Hera, Aidoneus and Nestis (Aët. 1.3.20 = DK31 B6).

The widely accepted view is that Empedocles adheres to Parmenides' doctrine of What-is and thus regards the roots or What-is as unchanging,

[70] The terms of Empedocles for the four roots, cf. Wright, 1981: 23.

ungenerated, and deathless.[71] However, in line with our earlier discussion of Anaxagoras, Empedocles' interpretation of Parmenides' doctrine deviates slightly from Parmenides' own conception. Although he rejects complete generation (or generation *ex nihilo*), destruction, and qualitative change of beings, Empedocles argues explicitly for the spatial motion of roots. Indeed, he asserts that the roots are continually "running through each other" (Simpl. *In Phys.* 158 = DK31 B17.34). Consequently, it is highly likely that Empedocles, akin to Anaxagoras, interprets Parmenides' theory in a predicative sense, whereas Parmenides himself maintains a more stringent stance, rejecting both qualitative change and spatial motion.

This perspective forms the basis of the Pluralists' response to Parmenides' challenge concerning how beings can undergo change and also illuminates their relationship with Plato. The Pluralists acknowledge that What-is remains devoid of generative changes, while they still allow for spatial change and, conceivably, fluctuations in quantity. This perspective may partly explain why Socrates, in the *Theaetetus*, classifies Empedocles among the scholars who uphold a Heraclitean perspective that opposes Parmenides (*Theaet*. 152e). From Diotima's perspective, certain motions permitted by the Pluralists within What-is still constitute generative changes. Furthermore, the Pluralists do not regard all objects as candidates for What-is. Instead, they recognize only specific beings as authentic and ungenerated, allowing the changes and generations of

[71] Cf. Guthrie, 1965: 146; Curd, 1998: 155; Inwood, 2001: 31, etc. *Contra*, some scholars only admit that the beings are unchanging in a qualified way, for in the cosmogony they are generated and destroyed when they are submerged in the '*Sphairos*' and separated from it. Cf. Wright, 1981: 22-40; Osborne, 1987: 38-44; Sisko, 2014: 61. Palmer even denies that the beings are ungenerated at all, cf. Palmer, 2009: 279-298; 2016.

macroscopic objects because these transformations are merely the combination and separation of fundamental entities. This nuanced approach enables them to refrain from outrightly dismissing our perception of the empirical world as pure illusion, a perspective that might have influenced Plato.

This pattern of thought appears to have exerted considerable influence in the late fifth century before Plato's era. For instance, in the *Hippocratic Corpus*, we can find that the author of the *On Ancient Medicine* voices criticism against certain doctors and sophists of his time who erroneously prioritize understanding the nature of human beings as the foundation of medical skill. The author attributes this misguided emphasis to the teachings of figures like Empedocles and others regarding the nature of being. Further, according to this author, those doctors also imply the philosophy of "what the human being is and how it originally came to be and from what things it was compounded."[72] (*VM* 20.1. Schiefsky translation) Clearly, the influence of the Pluralists can also be discerned in the works of other medical writers. For instance, the author of *On Regimen* argues in a manner consistent with Pluralism that all things are in a state of flux through exchange (*Vict.* 1.5). The author further claims, "So of all things nothing perishes, and nothing comes into being that did not exist before. Things change merely by mingling and being separated."[73] (*Vict.* 1.4. Jones translation. Also cf. *Vict.* 1.3) These texts clearly demonstrate the connection between these writers and Pluralist theory. They both accept Parmenides' doctrine that What-is always is and

[72] Cf. Schiefsky, 2005: 30-33; 293-298.

[73] Plato might be familiar with this essay. For as argued by Craik, Plato uses the idea of *On Regimen* in the speech of Eryximachos in the *Symposium*. Cf. Craik, 2001; 2014: 275.

never becomes What-is-not and interpret the generation and destruction of macroscopic objects as a combination and separation of What-is. Thus, it is evident that the author of *On Regimen* and similar medical writers inherit this perspective from the Pluralists. Indeed, Jones aptly points out that *Vict* 1.4 cited above is "almost verbally the same as a fragment of Anaxagoras" (DK59 B17).[74]

And there are also several other philosophers activating in the late fifth century who seemed to accept, at least partly, Parmenides' principle of being, aligning themselves closely with the Pluralists. Philolaus, a member of the late fifth-century Pythagorean School, expounded the notion that "the being of things, which is eternal, and nature itself admit knowledge that is divine and not human, except that it would have been impossible for any of the things that exist and are known by us to come to be…" (Stob. 1.21.7d = DK44 B6. LM translation) Philolaus asserted that the being of things is eternal and serves as the necessary condition for the generation of all things. This argument is widely recognized as reflecting the influence of the Eleatic school.[75] However, since Philolaus, much like the Pluralists, only rejects the generation of genuine beings, his interpretation of Parmenides' principle may be more in line with the perspectives of Anaxagoras and Empedocles.

Likewise, Diogenes of Apollonia is seen as a synthesis of the Eleatic principle of What-is and the old Milesian monism.[76] Diogenes argues that "all the things that are are differentiated out of the same thing and are the same thing…for if the things that exist now in this world—earth,

[74] Jones, 1959: 235.
[75] *KRS*, 328; Kahn, 2001: 24-25.
[76] Barnes, 1982: 568.

water, air, fire, and all the other things…if any one of these were different from the other, being different by its own nature…it would not be possible in any way either that things would mix with one another or that benefit or harm to the other, or that any plant could grow from the earth either, or any animal or anything else come to be…" (Simpl. *In Phys*. 151-152 = DK71 B2. LM translation) In his theory, being is singular and eternal, eschewing both generation and destruction (Simpl. *In Phys*. 153.19-22 = DK71 B7+B22). While this idea bears a resemblance to the philosophies of Parmenides and Melissus, it can also be regarded as a monistic argument against the Pluralism of Anaxagoras and Empedocles. Nevertheless, Diogenes' theory remains closely connected to the metaphysical framework of the Pluralists. On one hand, like the Pluralists, he selectively designates only specific things as candidates for being, enabling him to accept the generation of macroscopic objects. On the other hand, any generation devoid of genuine beings can only be viewed as creation *ex nihilo*, as genuine beings evidently undergo numerous changes.

Therefore, the Pluralists' theory gained significant traction in the latter part of the fifth century. Although Plato did not fully embrace their conception of the predicative sameness of What-is, the prevalence of Pluralism underscored the enduring influence of Parmenides' principle of What-is, which proved too potent to be disregarded by the philosophers of that era. Consequently, it serves as the contextual backdrop and point of departure for Plato's philosophical exploration.

3. The Motion of the Immortal Soul

Another crucial facet to consider is the motion of the Soul. It is a widely

accepted view that Plato espouses the notion that the immortal soul is perpetually in motion and possesses self-moving characteristics, a position underscored by Socrates in the *Phaedrus*:

> Every soul is immortal. That is because whatever is always in motion is immortal (ψυχὴ πᾶσα ἀθάνατος. τὸ γὰρ ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον), while what moves, and is moved by something else stops living when it stops moving. So it is only what moves itself, since it does not leave off being itself, never desists from motion. In fact, this self-mover is also the source and spring of motion in everything else that moves; and a source has no beginning. That is because everything that is generated must generate from a beginning (ἐξ ἀρχῆς γὰρ ἀνάγκη πᾶν τὸ γιγνόμενον γίγνεσθαι), but the beginning is not generated from anything; since if a beginning were generated from something, it would no longer be the beginning. And since it is ungenerated, then necessarily it cannot be destroyed (ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἀγένητόν ἐστιν, καὶ ἀδιάφθορον αὐτὸ ἀνάγκη εἶναι). That is because if the beginning were destroyed, it could never get started again from anything else and nothing else could get started from it—that is, if everything generates from a beginning. This is then why a self-mover is a beginning of motion. And that is incapable of being destroyed or generated, otherwise all heaven and everything that has been generated would collapse, come to a stop, and never have cause to start moving again. But since we have found that a self-mover is immortal, we should have no qualms about declaring that this is the very essence and principle of a soul, for every bodily object that is moved from

> outside has no soul, while a body whose motion comes from within, from itself, does have a soul, that being the nature of a soul; and if this is so—that whatever moves itself is essentially a soul—then it follows necessarily that soul should have neither birth nor death. (*Phdr*. 245c5-246a1, adapted)

In this renowned passage, Socrates asserts that the soul is in a perpetual state of motion, with the capacity to move both itself and others. This inherent quality of ceaseless motion renders the soul immortal, as it remains unaffected by generation or destruction. To elaborate further, the soul's immortality is contingent upon its constant self-movement and its ability to impart motion to others. A parallel argument resembling this can be identified in Plato's *Laws* X. And it is also hinted at in various other dialogues, such as the discussions on the immortality of the soul and its capacity to induce motion in others found in the *Phaedo* and the *Timaeus*.

While this detailed argument presented in the *Phaedrus* is undeniably a product of Plato's unique philosophical vision, the concept of a self-moving and consequently eternal soul, as portrayed here, is often attributed to Alcmaeon by scholars.[77] There exist two prominent doxographies of Alcmaeon expounding upon the nature of the self-moving and eternal soul:

> Alcmaeon…says that it [i.e. the soul] is immortal because it resembles the immortals. This belongs to it because it is always in motion. For everything that is divine always move continually: the moon, the sun, the heavenly bodies, and the

[77] Cf. Skemp, 1942: 5-6; Barnes, 1979: 116-118; *KRS*, 347; Hankinson, 1998: 32-33.

> whole heavens. (Arist. *DA* 405a29-b1 = DK24 A12. LM translation)
>
> Alcmaeon: [i.e. the soul is] a nature that moves itself with an eternal motion, and it is for this reason that he thinks that it is immortal and similar to divine things. (Aët. 4.2.2 = DK24 A12. LM translation)

Aristotle's doxography offers what some consider to be 'an unimpressive analogy'. According to his testimony, Alcmaeon's soul is perpetually in motion, akin to the celestial bodies of the divine realm. This constant motion appears to be intrinsic and indispensable to immortality, suggesting that what is immortal is inherently characterized by perpetual movement. Consequently, the soul is established as eternal and imperishable. Of particular interest to most scholars is the testimony provided by Aëtius, as it not only underscores the soul's eternal motion but also lays the foundation for Alcmaeon's argument regarding the self-motion of the soul. Aëtius' account implies a more intricate line of reasoning. As Barnes highlights, Aëtius' case does not hinge on a comparison between the soul and the divine celestial bodies; instead, it asserts that if the soul is self-moving, it operates autonomously, devoid of external impetus. Such a self-moving entity is unquestionably alive, implying that continuous motion equates to immortality for the perpetually moving soul.[78]

However, Mansfeld persuasively argues that Aëtius' testimony does not authentically represent Alcmaeon's original theory. Upon meticulous

[78] Barnes, 1982: 116-120. Also cf. Hankinson, 1998: 30-33.

examination of the context in Aëtius' text, Mansfeld contends that this account is a misguided paraphrase of Aristotle's doxography. According to Aristotle's report, Alcmaeon solely posits the eternal motion of the soul, with Plato being the proponent of the notion of self-motion in the soul. The concept of self-motion appears to be a misattribution to Alcmaeon, projected onto him by Aëtius and originating from Plato and Xenocrates.[79] The reconstruction based on Aristotle's report may probably be closer to Alcmaeon's own idea. Therefore, Plato may not inherit the self-motion of the soul from his predecessors, at least not from Alcmaeon.

In light of this, what precisely does Plato glean from the pre-Socratic philosophers concerning the nature of the soul's motion? Mansfeld provides an intriguing comment that Socrates' view of the eternally moving soul "derives an entity's (i.e. soul's) being ungenerated and indestructible from its being always in movement, whereas according to the Eleatics, an entity's (i.e. Being's) ungeneratedness and indestructibility make it immobile and changeless. A combination of eternal mobility on the one hand and being both ungenerated and indestructible on the other was of course investigated by the Atomists and, to a lesser extent, Empedocles. A certain affinity between this Platonic soul and Anaxagoras' *nous-qua-moving-cause* cannot be denied either."[80] Namely, Plato is inspired by Anaxagoras' idea of the soul as the cause of moving others, and that the soul can be both moving eternally and being ungenerated comes from the Atomists and Empedocles. Such theory of the Atomists and Empedocles is suggested to be a combination of the

[79] Mansfeld, 2014.
[80] Mansfeld, 2014: 1.4.

eternal mobility of the soul and the Eleatic metaphysics on the ungeneratedness of Being.

Thus, as Mansfeld pointed out, the most important aspects of the soul are: the eternal mobility, the immortality, and its ability to move others. We are now able to further examine the whole intellectual history of the opinion that the immortal soul is always moving and even moving others. Let's return to the early phase of Greek philosophy again. Aëtius claims that Thales is the first philosopher who considers always-moving and self-moved as the nature of the soul (Aët. 4.2.1 = Th360 = DK11 A22a). It might come from Aristotle's testimony:

> Thales too, to judge by what is reported, seems to have held that the soul causes motion, since in fact he said that the magnet has a soul because it moves iron. (Arist. *DA* 405a19-21 = Th31 = DK11 A22. McKirahan translation)

As suggested by the case of the magnet, Thales believes that whatever has the ability to move other bodies without being compelled by any external force must have a soul inside. Although he may not go so far as to support the idea of the self-moved soul just as what is asserted by Aëtius, this testimony does imply the close and necessary connection between soul and motion. Thales, then, opines that the soul originates the external objects by its nature.[81] What's more important, Plato himself seems to acknowledge Thales' idea of the soul's ability to move others. In the *Laws* X, the Athenian cites the saying "all things are full of gods" as a confirmation of the theory that the souls, like the gods, cause the motions

[81] Cf. Pinto, 2016: 245-246.

of the heavenly bodies (*Laws*, 899b). And this saying is clearly attributed to Thales by Aristotle (Arist. *DA* 411a7-8 = Th32 = DK11 A22).[82]

However, the available material does not provide conclusive evidence regarding whether Thales subscribed to the idea of an eternally moving and immortal soul. His Ionian followers, Anaximander and Anaximenes, may offer more nuanced perspectives, particularly if a deity can be interpreted as a form of soul in their philosophy. Anaximander's *apeiron*, as the fundamental principle of everything, is declared to be eternal and perpetually in motion:

> He said that the principle of beings is a certain nature, that of the *apeiron*, from which the heavens come about and the world that is in them. It is eternal and unaging (ἀίδιον…καὶ ἀγήρω) and it surrounds all the worlds…Besides this, there is an eternal motion, in which the birth of the heavens comes about. (Hippol. *Ref.* 1.6 = DK12 B2 = TP2 Ar75. LM translation, adapted)

Thus, the *apeiron* undeniably entails perpetual motion as it envelops and encompasses the world. By its eternal motion, all the heavens generate from the unlimited *apeiron*. Indeed, Aristotle also reports that the *apeiron* "surrounds all things and steers all" (Arist. *Phys*. 203b = DK12 B3 = Tp2 Ar2). The *apeiron*, therefore, is continuously engendering and guiding. And at the same time, it enjoys immortality, for this principle is described as "eternal and unaging". Those words, as *KRS* pointed out, are likely attributed to Anaximander himself. Additionally, the usage of similar terms to depict the gods in the Homeric epics suggests that Anaximander

[82] A summary of various possible readings on this saying, cf. Pinto, 2016: 250-255.

extends the immortality associated with the Homeric gods to the *apeiron*.[83] In fact, Aristotle remarks that the deathless and imperishable nature of Anaximander's principle is akin to the divine (DK12 B3). Most significantly, these accounts indicate that Anaximander conceives of the *apeiron* as a god. And the god is certainly a soul. If this interpretation is accurate, then the *apeiron*, characterized as a great soul or a god, possesses both immortality and perpetual motion.

A clearer edition could be found in Anaximenes' philosophy. According to Anaximenes, air serves as the fundamental principle from which all things emerge through processes of condensation and rarefaction. Cicero's writings report that air, in Anaximenes' philosophy, maintains eternal motion and is regarded as a deity:

> Anaximenes declared that air is god, that it is born, and that it is immense and unlimited and always in motion (*infinitum et semper in motu*). (Cic. *Nat. deor.* 1.10.26 = DK13 A10 = TP2 As17. LM translation)

Aëtius also reports Anaximenes' belief that air is considered a god.[84] When comparing Anaximenes' views to Anaximander's somewhat obscure stance, it becomes evident that Anaximenes subscribes to the notion of a perpetually moving god, a soul that is in a perpetual state of motion and generation.

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[83] *KRS*, 117.

[84] Aët. 1.7.13 = DK13 A10 = TP2 As119. However, Aëtius continue says that it is because the "powers traverse the elements or the bodies." This interpretation is Stocizied and not authentic. Cf. Mansfeld, 2018: 170-171.

Indeed, even Xenophanes represents a relevant idea. While Xenophanes vehemently rejects spatial motion, he asserts that the god is characterized by a multitude of activities. According to Sextus Empiricus' testimony, the god is described as seeing, thinking, and hearing all things (Sext. Emp. *Adv. Math*. 9.144 = DK21 B24). Moreover, as previously cited, the god "makes all things tremble" without any movement (DK21 B25). Consequently, if the god is regarded as a soul, it perpetually acts and initiates motion and generation among mortals.

In summary, these early Greek philosophers suggest that the immortal god, envisioned as a soul, is perpetually in motion and instigates motion in others. Unfortunately, there is insufficient evidence to determine whether these philosophers held the same view regarding the human soul. Scholars normally trace the immortality of the human soul back to the Orphic faith[85], or to Pythagoras. According to Pythagoras, the human soul is immortal and subject to transmigration, persisting beyond death and potentially reincarnating into the body of a human or even an animal[86]—Herodotus attributes the origin of Pythagoras' idea to the Egyptians (Hdt. 2.123 = DK14.1), which however may not be credible. As Burkert convincingly claims, Pythagoras' idea of the immortal human soul represents a revolutionary departure from Homer's view of the soul as a powerless phantom in Hades. Furthermore, the term 'deathless' was used by Homer to describe the gods, but Pythagoras attributes this character to the soul of human beings.[87] Empedocles appears to support the transmigration of the soul, as it is caught in a cycle of incarnation and considered immortal (cf. Plut. *Exil*. 17 607C = DK31 B115+B119; Diog.

[85] Skemp, 1942: 7-8.
[86] Barnes, 1982: 100-106; *KRS*, 220.
[87] Burkert, 1985: 300. Also, cf. Kahn, 2001: 18.

Laert. 8.77 = DK31 B117; etc.). As previously discussed, Alcmaeon argues that the human soul, like the divine, is perpetually in motion, and consequently, it is immortal.

Then, Anaxagoras brings forward the well-known idea of *nous-qua-moving-cause*. According to Anaxagoras, the nous, which evidently encompasses the human soul, serves as the catalyst for all motion and the generation of all things (Simpl. In Phys. 156-157 = DK59 B12). This idea is also mentioned by Plato in the *Phaedo*. And Anaxagoras claims that the nous is "self-ruled" (αὐτοκρατές) and it controls all things including those which have souls (DK59 B12), which may somehow suggest that the soul is believed to be self-moved. Besides, Anaxagoras' nous or soul is undoubtedly immortal and eternal. As previously discussed, Anaxagoras rejects genuine generation and destruction in his theory, influenced by his acceptance of Parmenides' principle of being. Given that he interprets this principle in a predicative sense, as argued earlier, Anaxagoras permits all genuine entities—the ingredients and the nous—to undergo spatial or non-generative motions while remaining ungenerated at the same time. Therefore, from Anaxagoras' perspective, the soul is immortal and possesses the capacity for motion. It serves as the prime mover of all other entities and may even be self-moved.

In conclusion, Plato is situated within a longstanding tradition that posits the immortality of the soul, whether divine or human, as perpetually in motion. Moreover, at times, the soul is regarded as the ultimate cause of all other motions. As implied by the text of the *Phaedrus* cited at the beginning of this section, Plato seems to accept this tradition thoroughly

without any question. However, as Mansfeld rightly points out, this idea necessitates the belief that the soul "being ungenerated and indestructible from its being always in movement," contradicts the Eleatic understanding of being, where ungeneratedness and eternality precisely results in immobility and lack of motion.[88] As argued earlier, Plato indeed inherits such a notion of being from the Eleatics, creating a conflict between his conception of the soul and the Eleatic-style understanding of being. For instance, in the *Sophist*, the Eleatic Stranger claims, according to 'Friends of the Forms'—alluding to the Eleatics and perhaps the Idealism of middle Platonic dialogues,[89] "being always stays the same and in the same state" (*Sph*. 248a12). But then,

> Stranger: But for heaven's sake, are we going to be convinced that it's true that change, life, soul, and intelligence are not present in that which wholly is, and that it neither lives nor thinks, but stays changeless, solemn, and holy, without any understanding?
>
> Theaetetus: If we did, sir, we'd be admitting something frightening.
>
> Stranger: But are we going to say that it has understanding but doesn't have life?
>
> Theaetetus: Of course not.
>
> Stranger: But are we saying that it has both those things in it while denying that it has them in a soul?
>
> Theaetetus: How else would it have them?
>
> Stranger: And are we saying that it has intelligence, life,

[88] Mansfeld, 2014: 1.4.
[89] Cornford, 1935: 242-8; Bluck, 1975: 94-101; de Rijk, 1986:102.

> and soul, but that it's at rest and completely changeless even though it's alive?
>
> Theaetetus: All that seems completely unreasonable. (*Soph*. 248e7-249b1)

Hence, if we uphold the premise that every alteration and motion must entail generation, the notion that the soul, which is in perpetual motion, could be attributed to true being becomes utterly untenable. Consequently, the Stranger must undertake a rigorous re-evaluation of the ontological examination of being to reconcile the inherent nature of being with the soul's eternal motion. Since this predicament is presented within the pages of the *Sophist*, one of Plato's later dialogues, it strongly implies the existence of a potential conflict between the Eleatic conception of being and the dynamic nature of the soul within Plato's philosophical framework.

Now, let us endeavour to provide a concise overview. The early Ionian philosophers unearthed a fundamental pattern within the realm of change: all change takes place between opposites. Heraclitus further expounded that everything resides in a state of perpetual flux, in a continuous oscillation between opposing states. Subsequently, Parmenides and the Eleatic school staunchly maintained that all changes inherently entail generation and cannot be ascribed to the realm of What-is. They contended that any alteration, by its very nature, would undermine the absolute self-identity of What-is, inevitably resulting in a process of generation. Thus, generative change became the quintessential essence of all changes. In light of this, every predecessor of Parmenides was compelled to confront Parmenides' profound challenge: how can Being

undergo change? Parmenides himself responded with an unequivocal and categorical negation, positing that What-is cannot undergo change in any conceivable sense. Melissus augmented this by asserting that our sensory perceptions of constant alterations between opposites in the empirical world, as expounded by Heraclitus, are fundamentally illusory. Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and their intellectual successors concurred in the conviction that What-is could not undergo generative change. However, they adopted a more nuanced interpretation of Parmenides' principle, one that primarily operated in a predicative sense. Furthermore, they acknowledged that our sensory experiences were not entirely deceptive, as the macroscopic objects we perceive are not authentic beings. In this context, Plato entered the discourse, aligning himself with the strict interpretation of Parmenides and the Eleatic school, which upheld the absolute self-identity of Being and rejected generative change. Simultaneously, he concurred with the Pluralists, who posited that these perceptible objects lacked genuine existence. Consequently, Plato maintained that our sensory perceptions were not wholly erroneous. Lastly, Plato upheld the longstanding tradition in Greek philosophy asserting the soul's immortality and perpetual motion, a position that, strictly speaking, contradicts the Eleatic doctrine that What-is remains entirely devoid of motion and change. Collectively, these viewpoints assemble the conceptual framework of the empirical world as conceived by Plato: every perceivable entity undergoes ceaseless motion and transformation between opposing states. These transformations engender generative changes, as they continually alter the nature of the objects in question. Meanwhile, the soul maintains its perpetual motion while retaining its immortal essence. Now, it falls upon Plato to address Parmenides' enduring challenge: how can being partake in change and

motion?