

The Concept of Nature in the Philosophy of Parmenides: the Typology of Doxa Sentences (on Parmenides' Doxa)

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Abstract—During analyzing the Parmenides philosophical thought, the experts traditionally discuss the question, why did the philosopher devote a separate part of the poem to the structure of the natural world, if this world was not identified with the world of truth in the previous part? Why there is a need to describe an object about which, as is has been stated by the author, there can be no true knowledge, and there may only be an unstable, changing opinion? The paper proposes an answer to this question that proceeds from the division of statements about the world of opinion into quantified and non-quantified (statements about a single object). The first are more stable with regard to the truth value assigned to them.

Keywords—*opinion; knowledge; being; true being; world of opinion; context-sensitive information*

I. INTRODUCTION

Maybe most of the researchers, who have investigated Parmenides works, felt the need to decide on the answer to the question, which is in the title of the article. If someone did not suggest their own answer, then, in any case, he should have acceded to one of the existing versions. In fact, a collision takes place. Parmenides proposed to share knowledge, a stable, invariant truth, and statements that can be true or false. Parmenides receives two worlds according to each type of information. Parmenides receives two worlds. The world of objective reality, where that which is true,

is always the truth, and that, which is false, is always the false. And the world of opinion, in which truth can turn into a lie anyway, and a lie is guaranteed to turn back (or has already turned before) to be truth. In a different way, Parmenides clearly articulated the difference between the truth “forever” and the truth “for a while” and declared ontological priority for the first [1]. Actually, ontology is built by Parmenides according to this morphism: one ontological locus corresponds to invariant truths, and another ontological locus — to relative. Apparently, the Parmenides gnoseological specification implies an ontological one.

II. QUESTION REFINEMENT AND VARIANTS OF ANSWER

But why is there the need to investigate the concepts that were deemed unacceptable to (true) cognition — multiplicity and change? But after all, we are forced to deal with them, studying/describing the world of opinion. Getri, in his classic work, writes the following about Parmenides: "To ask: ‘But if it (the world of becoming — O.N.) is unreal, what is the point of trying to cover it?’ — means to pose a question that hardly come to mind" [2]. Maybe this idea is valid. But even in this case, the problem of building a context within which the second part of the poem, devoted to the world of becoming, is rationally (= not illogical) incorporated into some general concept of “being and becoming”, remains important. Finally, the intuition of logical, intuition of thinking as a process with technical characteristics (in the sense of logical alignment) is one of those innovations of Parmenides, thanks to which the beginning of the history of European philosophy itself is often associated with this name.

Let us quote Parmenides, as he characterizes a world, different from being, “everything else”:

...And everything else is just a name,

All that mortals put in their faith as truth,

All that exists and not exists is born and dies,

Changes its place and changes the bright colors.

It is obvious that the key in this description is its inconsistency (which is impossible in the world of true being or, in a different way, in this world describing/learning): there is and is not (A and non-A, as the most common version of logical contradictions), — this is the main “fault” of the world of opinion, and further Parmenides clarifies by three examples, what exactly contributes inconsistency to the world of opinion, why it do exists and not exists, by what situations inconsistency is funded. (A.V. Lebedev considers, that with these examples of contradictory statements, Parmenides characterizes (criticizes) Heraclitus philosophy) [3].

The birth and death of something to create a contradiction (A and not A) require a time scale, where at

one time “A is alive” is true and at another time –is false, i.e. as an argument of the inconsistency of the world of the “birth and death” view, time is considered as a parameter with more than one value (the latter situation gives a trivial model, if the time parameter has only one value, but since this is a logically possible model, we mention it) [4].

The same can be applied to changing “bright colors”: the color parameter takes at least two values if there is a change in color. In addition, there is a timeline in this example. Obviously, the idea of Parmenides is that the sentence (for example): “A is of a bright red color” is true at one moment of time, at another moment of time it is false.

In the second example, when a change in position in space ensures the inconsistency of the object, it assumes the parameterization of the parameter “position in space”. To take a place *x* in space and to take a place *y* in space when *x* is different from *y* - (according to Parmenides) are incompatible properties. Obviously, he does not accept the remark, which Aristotle will later indicate in formulating the principle of contradiction, among other things, Aristotle will say “at the same time” it is impossible to be *A* and non-*A*. If Parmenides does not take this into account, then his methodology is (= when checking an object for inconsistency): if an object has accepted incompatible properties at least once, then it is logically contradictory. He does not accept the correction on different values of the time parameter (like any other).

From here we obtain the minimum that immediately implies the inconsistency of the object. If during the description we have at least two time points/spatial points, our world is already in the Parmenides sense — contradictory. Since the term parametrization still implies nontrivial cases, i.e. those, when a parameter has more than one value, then, taking this into account, it can be formulated like this: if at the description of an object at least one of its characteristics allows parameterization, this object is contradictory in the sense of Parmenides. Actually, the radical approach of this philosopher lies precisely in the fact that he requires the constancy of all characteristics, including the temporal one [5].

In another way, the difference between the statements of the world of true being and the world of opinion can be clarified through the concept of context-sensitive information [6]. For the proposals belonging to the world of opinion, as quoted, there is always a context that makes difference. Let's clarify. Let's call contexts *i1* and *i2* distinguishing sentence *A*, i.e. in one of them *A* is true, in another — false. For example, the sentence “L.Tolstoy is the author of the novel “War and Peace”, is true in 1920 (context *i1*), but is false in 1830 (context *i2*) when L.Tolstoy was a child. According to the Parmenides methodology, it is enough once to find the contexts distinguishing the sentence, so that the proposal and its subject(s) are ranked among the world of opinion.

The sentence “Apples are useful” may be clarified, for example, with the help of contexts to whom? Or how many? Which ones?

Let's note that the above mentioned possibility of contextualizing a statement (which makes it belonging to the world of opinion) is in Dissoi Logoi:

“And the same things exist and do not exist; for the things that exist here do not exist in Libya, and those in Libya do not exist in Cyprus; and the same goes for everything else. Thus things both exist and do not exist (152:90A5, §5). Ask a man in Libya if there exist any lions, and he will give you a fearful affirmative; ask the same man in the peaceful streets of Athens “Are there any lions?” he or she will answer “By the dog, no”. Conjoin the replies, each of which seems ordinary and respectable, and the result is contradiction: “There are and there are not lions”. Again, it is the same things that are and are not; for it is lions which are said to be, and lions which are said not to be. But evidently the lions which are, the Libyan lions, are beasts of a far tougher character than those Athenian animals which do not exist. Lions, in sum, are and are not, are the same and not the same”. (Quoted from [7]) In the same place, the author indicates that he considers this version of the interpretation of inconsistency the most successful.

III. TYPOLOGY OF SENTENCES OF THE WORLD OF OPINIONS ON THE PRINCIPLE OF THEIR FALSIFICATION

Thus, the difference of doxical sentences from the sentences of the world of true being is the existence of confirming and refuting (verifying and falsifying) interpretation for the sentences of the first type.

Let's note that this principle of marking the sentences of the world of formation is held for isolated statements. However, if the sentence contains quantifiers (there exists, any), then the conditions for its verification and falsification at once change fundamentally.

In fact, the following sentences relating to the world of becoming have a confirmatory interpretation:

There is a period of time during which lions dwelt in Libya. (1.1)

There is a period in time-history, in which some Spartans fought with some Athenians. (1.2)

However, what does it mean to set a falsifying interpretation for it?

Since it, within the framework of Parmenides approach, has to exist, it seems that in this case it is necessary to proceed to the consideration of counterfactual situations. And include them in the context region for which we estimate the sentences.

The same may be applied, for example, to the sentence

All men are mortal. (2)

Or so:

There are people in history who believe that all people are mortal. (3)

With the remark that, unlike (1.1) and (1.2), for (2) and (3) it is necessary to consider possible worlds,

counterfactuals to those in which (let's call it so) "our usual laws of nature" work.

However, before discussing the question of counterfactual interpretations, we will discuss another one.

By what principle should one or another statement be attributed to statements about the world of becoming, to the doxical one? In view of the above mentioned, it is natural and legal to formalize the procedure for such qualification as follows.

Suppose that with respect to object *a* there is an exposition *P* (*a*), which is true in one quantifier context, and false in another. Let's use notation, adopted in logic, for interpretations.

$$|P(a)|_{I_1} = t$$

$$|P(a)|_{I_2} = f$$

If there are such two interpretations, then the object refers to the doxic / to the world of becoming, and any statements about it refers to the doxic. (Let's clarify: we are talking about statements of the objective level, not related to the characteristics of the object *a* within the general concept of Parmenides. From this point of view, for example, the statement "The Eiffel Tower is an object belonging to the world of becoming" refers to the meta level.) We will call the property *P* doxic.

The idea spreads to relationships between objects (we purposely avoid a more formal notation for an arbitrary *n*-argument predicate and *n* objects.)

*a*₁, *a*₂, ..., *a*_{*n*} — are doxical objects, i.e. there is such a ratio *R* and two such interpretations *I*₁ and *I*₂, that $|R(a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n)|_{I_1} = t$ and $|R(a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n)|_{I_2} = f$.

The ratio also is called doxic in this case.

Further, the sentence with quantifiers is referred to doxic, that is 1) it contains at least one doxic property; 2) this sentence refers not to the meta level, but to the objective level. (The author intends to discuss the objective level and metalevel in Parmenides's approach in further publications.)

In our opinion, the introduced definitions correspond to the intuition and methodology of Parmenides. Why, for example, the sentence "There are places in Africa where lions lived for some time" refers to doxic? You can answer through the analysis of the expression "Africa", or through the expression "lion", presenting the distinguishing contexts.

Let's now return to the problem of contextualization (finding the confirming and disproving interpretation) of sentences with quantifiers.

In his poem, Parmenides clearly indicates the possibility of contextualization, verification and falsification of single sentences.

Parmenides does not discuss the question of the contextualization of quantified and explicitly related to the world of doxic sentences. But the direction of the second part of the poem is precisely this — to give some description of the world of formation in terms of its regularities ("This

peacebuilding, I declare to you, is quite probable," says the goddess). (We emphasize that this is precisely the direction in which Parmenides moves, and not the establishment, which he strictly keeps up).

From here we can see the possibility of a consistent rendition of the philosophy of Parmenides, represented by a pair of "being – becoming", and not just the notion of "being." Namely, let's distinguish actual and counterfactual interpretations of the formation sentences in this article without strictly specifying (To refute the sentence "Aristotle is a philosopher", it is enough to consider a certain segment of his life when he have not become a philosopher yet, for the sentence "There is a period in world history, during which some people in some place were philosophers" — one must proceed to counterfactual interpretations to prove that it is refutable.) Apparently, the logical dialect of possible worlds used to interpret modal expressions is indeed relevant to Parmenides' intuitions [8]. Let's point out the fundamental work of Palmer, where the reading of Parmenides' philosophy is proposed as the first to distinguish between modalities of necessity, possibility and chance [9].

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Then, in the second part of the poem, Parmenides is more interested in sentences that are true in all relevant interpretations.

We'll note separately the question to which one have to return constantly when analyzing Parmenides works.

The approach of Parmenides explicitly, i.e. textually confirmed, goes to a logical topic: the formulation of a logical contradiction (version), a description of the world of true being, as a world free from this - the key - vice of the world of "mortals", the doxical world, etc. Therefore, a logical analysis of his ideas is completely legitimate. But this analysis should always articulate a measure of distance from the text, a measure of textual confirmation. As an example of such a spectacular interpretation of the Parmenides's ideas, one can name the so-called predicative monism developed in the works of Mourelatos and, in particular, Curd [10] [11]. The term itself is introduced in the work of Curd and is explained as follows: "the claim that each thing that is can be only one thing; it can hold only the one predicate that indicates what it is? And must hold it particularly strong. To be a genuine entity, a thing must be a predicational unity, with a single account of what it is; but it need not be case that there exists only one such thing. Rather, the thing itself must be a unified whole. If it is, says *F*, it must be all, only, and completely *F*. On predicational monism, a numerical plurality of such one-beings (as we might call them) is possible". Such an understanding a) is not confirmed textually, and b) moreover, it implies ignoring certain provisions (for example, the fact that "mortals" live in a world where everything "exists and does not exist" and that this "exists and not exists" does not exist in the world "being"/"truth").

Let's pose the question of the degree of confirmation and proximity/ farness of interpretation for our text. It seems to me like this. The legitimacy of the concept of contextualization of a single statement and of some quantified (as in the example of Dissoi Logoi) is directly textually confirmed. In turn, the concept of contextualization specifies sentences according to the principle of the need for not needing to take into account the so-called "Impossible possible worlds". This specification is not textually confirmed (of course), but the problematics of the type of refutability and confirmation is undoubtedly relevant for Parmenides (depending on what rational foundation we accept this or that statement, or decline it).

IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, the apology of the second part of the poem by Parmenides, an effective explanation of its presence, non-redundancy, lies, in our opinion, in the way of distinguishing two types of sentences in the world of becoming: single and quantized. This is due to the different types of contextualization, finding a confirming and disproving context. The counterfactual interpretations are not necessary for contextualization of single statements; for (at least some) qualitative ones, they are necessary. In the second part of the poem Parmenides, apparently, seeks not to enumeration of random statements about the world of becoming, but to description of relatively stable, in a certain "weak sense" — statements that are necessary in the world of formation. It is this "weak necessity", truth in topical interpretations, that is presented in the world of opinion, that explains the legitimacy of its (necessity) and its (world of opinion) description, presented in the second part of the poem.

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