

Inquiry of forms: “()is big” and “the concept of ‘() is big’”

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Abstract. Plato's *Parmenides* explores complex discussions about forms, which have puzzled scholars for many years. The topic of how items might possess similar qualities, such "bigness," is one of the main concerns. If something assumes the shape of "bigness," something else will adopt the form of smallness. But what if a lot of things share "bigness"? Nothing can have two conflicting features from an ontological standpoint, therefore why do things seem "smaller" in comparison? Using Frege's philosophical theory, this essay will examine the form of "bigness" in *Parmenides* and elucidate its essence. This paper will specifically differentiate between the concepts of "()is big" and "()'is big." It is possible for anything to be large without completely expressing "the concept of '() is big.'" (For example, the shape of largeness). In conclusion, this paper will demonstrate that the question of embodying "bigness" can be resolved by differentiating concepts from proper names.

Keywords: Form, Proper name, Concept, Function.

1. Introduction

In *Parmenides*, Plato applied eight deductions to expand the ontological inquiry of the "one." [1] He specifically attempted to address the concept of "oneness" and looked at potential issues that could arise from such an endeavor. Even though Plato started the debate with simple words like "is," readers who lack a philosophical background may not fully comprehend his thoughts. This essay will first present Frege's philosophy of language in order to make Plato's ideas more understandable, and then it will reinterpret a portion of his dialogue using Frege's framework. The ontological issues surrounding "bigness" in the second deduction will then be discussed in this study.

2. Frege's Theory of Language

2.1. Proper Name and Concept

According to Frege, a sentence is a complete expression consisting of concepts and proper names [2]. Concepts (e.g., wise) are incomplete terms that cannot stably denote a specific individual [3,4], while appropriate names (e.g., Plato) are complete terms that precisely denote a fixed individual. A proper name can subordinate to multiple concepts [5], such as "Aristotle is {a philosopher} & {is wise}" / "Aristotle is a {wise philosopher}." In other words, multiple concepts can simultaneously describe the properties of a proper name. To save language complexity, ordinary dialogues typically integrate various concepts (e.g., "philosopher," "wise") into a second-order concept (e.g., "wise philosophers") to fully describe a proper name's properties [2]. On the other hand, people can deduce a second-order concept by using the original first-order concept as a clue. People can infer if an object belongs to the related second-order idea (e.g., "wise philosophers") by looking at its first-order concept (e.g., "wise"). However, because concepts cannot represent distinct things, they cannot adequately communicate all of the information [2, 4, 5]. For example, "Plato" and "Aristotle" could both be considered "wise." Without more explanation, readers might be unable to tell which of two objects is being discussed because "wise" can represent both at once. In other words, the denotation "() is wise" is incomprehensible to readers. They are not discussing concepts (e.g., "wise") but adequate names (e.g., "the concept of 'wise'"). Although people can use "the concept of 'wise'" as a proper name to fill in a sentence, the concept of "wise" cannot. Otherwise, this ambiguity will cause logical confusion and hinder people's judgment.

To visualize Frege's idea, think of a notion as a circle and a proper name as a stable point. People can logically assess what the statement expresses once they have identified a point in the circle (see Figure 1). Assume, however, that there are several points in the circle (see Figure 1) and that people are unable to indicate every point at once. People describe the circle instead of those points, even if they are able to fully express each one with a term (for example, "the concept of 'wise'"). . People can derive "Aristotle" from "Aristotle is wise," but they cannot certainly derive "Aristotle" from "the concept of 'wise.'" As an analogy, no one can guarantee that the "x" in function "f(x)" must equal "1".

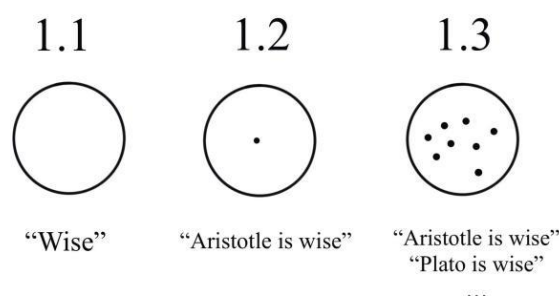


Fig. 1 How proper names fill in a concept

No one can test its validity if one expression randomly denotes infinite objects [4, 5]. A fixed object is necessary for further logical application [5]. Due to the incomplete nature of concepts, a sentence must contain complete terms to be valid. However, a sole complete name (e.g., Plato) either cannot fully explain one object's related properties if readers have no additional information. As a result, concepts must cooperate with names to construct a complete expression (e.g., "Plato is wise"). Based on the combination of ideas and names, a sentence can be interpreted from two perspectives: describing a name's properties (e.g., wise) or denoting a concept's exact object (e.g., Plato) [5].

2.2. Frege on functions

Frege believed that the logic in mathematical analysis could deepen people's understanding of language logic [3]. Since the majority of arithmetic is a priori analysis, time has little bearing on it [3, 6]. For instance, time changes won't make " $1+1=2$ " untrue. Frege did, however, recognize that functions entail modifications that are essentially distinct from those of numbers [3]. For instance, the value of "1" is fixed, whereas the value of " $2x+1$ " is subject to random variation based on changes in x . Stated otherwise, a change must occur to obtain the value of a function. If people enter different values into the expression, " $2x+1$ " may get different results. A function cannot produce a fixed output a priori if those values are spread over several points in time. Nonetheless, people regard the values of a function as equally legitimate. Hence, Frege indicated that the extension of values is fixed, but the function is not. The change occurs due to the function's locomotion. In other words, different function expressions only ambiguously represent a number inside the extension, and such ambiguity allows for changes. [3]

If people only consider the application of the function expression, there is no difference between " $2()+1$ " and " $2x+1$ " [3]. The fundamental role of a function argument is to indicate the location for inserting numbers and allow subsequent changes. If people merely consider the nature of a function argument, then functions are like concepts. Numerical symbols are complete, much like proper names, but functions and notions are not. A notion needs a suitable name to obtain a truth value, whereas a function needs a number to obtain a fixed value. For instance, by replacing "2" with "()", the function " $2()+1$ " yields "5"; by fusing "() is wise" with "Plato," "Plato is wise" is created. The subordinate proper names can also corroborate the extensional content of a notion, and the substituted numbers can be used to calculate the extensional value range of a function and describe it as a whole [2]. Based on this similarity, Frege believed assertive sentences could be analyzed like function expressions [2]. Even though concepts (e.g., "wise" and "red") may seem different, they both serve the same purpose of denoting truth, just like other functions (e.g., " $x+1$ " and " $y+1$ ") that denote

numerical values. The analogy with function expressions reduces the ambiguity in everyday language, revealing the skeleton of logic. Based on Frege's theory, this article will explore the core logical content of "Parmenides" and reduce the troubles caused by language itself.

3. Plato's Inquiry of Forms

3.1. The Application of Intellect

Although humans can perceive corporal information through sensation, only intellect can help people judge it through knowledge [7]. In other words, intellect enables people to understand forms [8]. Those forms let people detect the properties (e.g., bigness) that are not directly located in the corporal world.

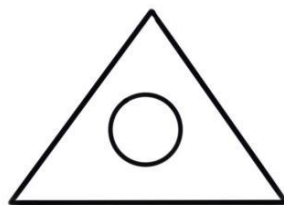


Fig. 2 One or Many

In Figure 2, although people can perceive the existence of two shapes simultaneously, sensation alone cannot treat them as two different objects because the sensation cannot detect the hidden forms. Forms (e.g., books) enable people to distinguish things and understand differences rather than merely staying in one [7, 8]. Sensation will see things that are not processed by the intellect as a single entity, devoid of the differentiation of subordinated attributes (such as size) [7]. People will incorrectly treat them as a single entity, just like they would extremely far away. Therefore, only "one" hazy item in Figure 2 may be detected by sense alone. Figure 2 shows that the triangle participates in "bigness," while the circle participates in "smallness"[9]. There will be a contradiction if the two attributes are part of the same unity. The soul will get a contradictory message from sensation, which will disregard that contradiction [7]. The intellect cannot tolerate such inconsistencies within the psyche [7]. When people observe contradictory entities simultaneously, intellect automatically detects such information as the characteristic of plural objects, not just one object [7]. Instead of placing "bigness" and "smallness" in the same object, the intellect will disperse the contradictory properties into different objects. In Figure 2, the intellect might indicate that one triangle is enormous, and the other circle is small. In Plato's words, the intellect splits "one" into "many" [7]. If people want to describe "bigness" and "smallness" in Figure 2, they must acknowledge a "big triangle" and a "small circle." If people discard the application of intellect, then they might tend to psychological subjectivity (i.e., opinion), which does not align with the goal of logical inquiry [10].

3.2. The Form of Bigness

Even though intellect can remove the ambiguity in sensory information, this mechanism alone does not clarify doubts about the form of properties (e.g., "bigness itself"). In Parmenides, Plato discusses in more detail how things partake in "bigness" and how they can exist [9]. Let us consider the following case:

Apple X > Apple Y,
Apple Y > Apple Z

Apple X is larger than the other two apples, while Apple Y is larger than Apple Z. Why is Apple X larger than Apple Y, despite the fact that both consume "bigness" itself, if there are entities that do so? Let's remain in the intellectual sphere for a time, even though this question can be promptly answered based on empirical facts. Apple X and Apple Y should be comparable if they both indulge in "bigness" [9]. Think about the additional attribute of "whiteness." People have no trouble judging the characteristics of things that share whiteness, such as white dogs and cats. People cannot, however,

acknowledge the similarities among entities that share "bigness." One might think people should consider quantity to explain how "bigness" can be partaken. However, this attempt is ineffective. Even if one's quantity can be different from another, it does not make the "big" become "bigger." One quantity appears bigger than other quantities because it partakes of "bigness," not because of the difference in quantity itself. If the agent lacks knowledge about "bigness," he cannot judge "bigness" when observing the difference in quantity. However, he is limited to evaluating the quantity difference, meaning that "these quantities are different." For example, those who are color-blind are able to tell two apples apart but are unable to sense their color. Stated differently, the assessment of a quantity's difference is distinct from the assessment of its size. From an a priori standpoint, this might not be the case, even if the two are related from an empirical standpoint. The other "big" will become "smaller" if the difference in size makes one "big" larger than another because they share more "bigness"[9]. However, will a white dog become black because it shares more whiteness? Even if there is a difference in quantity, it does not mean a difference in quality, especially considering the form of quality itself. Plato is discussing the form of quality, not the quantity of quality. If quantity can affect the form of quality, it indirectly acknowledges that the form is divisible [9]. However, Plato still could not explain how to effectively divide the "big" into many while ensuring that the "big" divided is not larger than the form of the "big."

3.3. "() is Big" and "The Concept of '() is Big'"

Plato encountered this problem because he confused concepts with proper names. To accurately describe the form of "bigness," Plato should distinguish "the concept of '() is big'" with "() is big" [5]. During Plato's discussion, he frequently switches between "the concept of '() is big'" and "() is big".

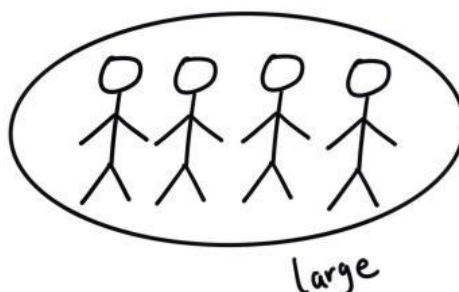


Fig. 3 How things partake of forms

As shown in Figure 3., Plato tried to prove a concept could attach to different things like laying a sail on a crew [6]. Therefore, he concludes that these proper names, or forms, can be used in the same way. In other words, because certain subsets "are big," the entire statement "the concept of '() is big'" will be present in all linked subsets. But "() is big" and "the concept of '() is big'" are not the same thing. It does not follow that anything in "the concept of '() is big'" can entirely embody the proper name of "the concept of '() is big.'" Even if everything in it can fully possess the quality of "() is big," For example, if five balls are dipped in red paint, one of them will not constitute a representation of all five balls simply because it has the feature that "() is red."

"() is big" itself cannot exist as an independent form because this concept is incomplete, while "the concept of '() is big'" (i.e., form) cannot be a property because it is a complete proper name. Although objects can be shaped to resemble a form [7], they are only located in the imagery of the form (i.e., concepts). To put it another way, an object appears similar to a shape but does not actually possess the form. Many objects can reflect a form, and these objects collectively symbolize the extension of forms, much like a light reflecting on various objects to indicate "() is illuminated." However, since forms and sensible objects are in different domains, they will inherently differ [5,6]. This technique cannot enable items to become the form, such as the light source, even though they can participate in the forms by being illuminated.

4. Conclusion

Through Frege's distinction between concepts and proper names, this paper can reconstruct the problem of the substantiality of properties in Parmenides. This work uses Frege's theory to explain "why things share greatness but are not smaller than bigness itself." This essay makes the case that objects can possess the quality of "bigness" even if they do not contain the extensional complete of "() is the concept of bigness." This essay just separates the potential misunderstandings in Plato's statements rather than going into great depth into the entity of attributes. more academics can also begin with analytical philosophy if they wish to comprehend more intricate Parmenide issues. Scholars might further investigate the metaphysical problems of forms by analyzing Plato's argument logic once the linguistic ambiguity has been cleared up.

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