

REGRESS AD INFINITUM IN PLATONISM

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The fundamental idea of Platonism is that any such-and-such thing is such-and-such because it participates in the Form of a such-and-such thing. There are a lot of arguments against this view. Four of these arguments are of regress ad infinitum from. One of these arguments is famous "The third man" argument. In this paper author argues that none of these four arguments is valid. Therefore, platonistic ontology is immune to arguments of this form.

The platonistic ontology treats properties as independent. If it is asserted that properties exist independently, substantivised as Forms, and that at the same time there are particular things which instantiate those properties, then the question is what the relationship between the things which have those properties and the Forms of those properties is. A transcendent realist must at this point introduce some relation which connects particular things and an independently existing property which those things have. Plato says that the mentioned relation is participation (greek infinitive *metechein*, substantiv *metexis*, lat. *participatio*),

This relationship schematically looks like this:



Some particular entity which has property P is in relation R with a Form of the property P. Now, what is the relationship between the entity e and the relationship R? An attempt to answer this question could yield infinite regress. What sort of regress, we shall now see.

According to platonists things have properties because they participate in Forms. Man is man because he participates in the Form of man. If the man participates in something, how does he participate? If he participates in anything, this means that he has a property of participating; having any property is explained by participating in the Form of that property, so, the man participates in the Form of the participation. How can the man participate in the participation in the Form of man? The answer lies in participating in the participating in the participating in the Form of man, and so on ad infinitum. If the man can not participate in the participation because he previously must participate infinity many times, which is impossible, then he can neither participate in the Form of man, therefore, the man is not a man. Nevertheless, the man is a man, so our ontology is wrong.

Argumentation goes like this:

1) x is a man

When we say in everyday language "that object over there is a man", then, according to platonism, we say that that object over there participates in the Form of man. Thus:

2) x participates in the Form of man.

What does it mean when one says that something participates in something? When we say that something has some property, we in fact say that that thing participates in some Form. If we say that something participates in some Form, then that thing participates in the participating in some Form. This:

3) x participates in the participation in the Form of man. For any participation, the thing must participate once more:

4) x participates in the participating in the participating in the Form of man.

etc)

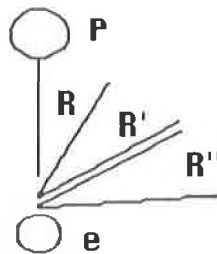
Let us see how F. H. Bradley presented the structure of this argument:

“There is a relation C, in which A and B stand; and it appears with both of them. But here again we have made no progress. The relation C has been admitted different from A and B, and no longer is predicated of them. Something, however, seems to be said of this relation C, and said, again, of A and B. And this something is not to be ascription of one to the other. If so, it would appear to be another relation, D, in which C stands on one side, and A and B, on the other side. But such a makeshift leads at once to the infinite process. The new relation D can be predicated in no way of C, or of A and B; and hence we must have recourse to a fresh relation, E, which comes between D and whatever we had before. But this must lead to another, F; and so on, indefinitely.” (Appearance and Reality, chapter II, “Substantive and Adjective”, page 18)

In logical notation it looks like this:

- 1) $e R P$
 - 2) $e R' R R' P$
 - 3) $e R'' R' R R' R'' P$
- etc)

Graphicaly:



We have presented the first objection to Platonism. Let me now propose a refutation. This argument is not valid because the relation can connect a thing and property, two relations (if it is second-order relation), but it can not connect a thing with a relation (if both relations are of the same order), nor can it connect a relation with a property. There are three kinds of reasons why it cannot:

i) If it is matter of definiton, or convention, whether a relation can or cannot connect a thing or a property with another relation, then we are going to accept a solution which is more convenient for us, so we are going to decide that it can not. In our ontology all and only properties can, and should be substantivised into Forms, relations cannot. Relations connect entities and Forms, so, if relations can not be substantivised into Forms, then there is no relation which can connect a

thing and relation.

ii) If our opponent holds that any latter relation is the consequence of a former relation (that is: 2 follows from 1, 3 follows from 2, etc.), then the example looks like this:

- 1) the pencil is yellow
 - 2) the pencil has the property of yellowness
 - 3) the pencil has the property of having the property of yellowness
- etc)

In such a situation we have the following case: if a new relation R— is established connecting relation R and entity, then it is a second order relation, and it does not affect the first order relation R. In other words relation R remains unchanged in its function. No matter how huge hierarchy of relations we build upon the first relation, it still holds.

If the regressor (our opponent) claims that every subsequent relation is a necessary consequence, and also a necessary condition to the previous relation, then the regress looks like this:

- 1) the pencil is yellow iff it has the property of yellowness
 - 2) the pencil has the property of yellowness iff it has the property of having the property of yellowness
 - 3) the pencil has the property of having the property of yellowness iff it has the property of having the property of having the property of yellowness.
- etc)

Therefore the pencil cannot ever have any property, so it can not be yellow either (of course, this does mean that it has some other color).

How and where should one block this regress to make it possible for the pencil to “reach” its property? The answer is: between the second and the third step (in the former, weaker example between the first and the second), because TO HAVE A PROPERTY IS NOT A PROPERTY. If a thing has a property, it does not have additional property - to have that property. This, from the fact that the pencil is yellow, it follows that the pencil has the property of being yellow, but from the fact that the pencil has the property of being yellow, it does not follow that it has the property of having the property of being yellow.

The same is true for the negative properties too, regardless whether they are extrapolated from the utterance of the type “S is not P” or from the type “S is non-P”. From the fact that certain things does not have a certain property it does not follow that that thing has the property of not having that property. Therefore, if the pencil is yellow, then it has the property of being yellow, but if it is not yellow, then it does not have the property of not being yellow. We can not also conclude to the existence of the property “not to be yellow”, no matter whether it

belongs to any thing or not. Only positive properties exist (in our ontology) independently of things, and things can have them or not have them.

So, we have seen how the problem of existence or non existence of negative properties is solved. Let us just add that if negative properties existed, then any thing would have the same number of properties.

iii) Let us label this argument “the argument from natural language”. When we say “the sky is blue” we put “sky” and “blue” in some relationship. But, we can not put in any relation “sky” and “relation”, or “relation” and “blue”. Therefore if the structure of logic mirrors the structure of language, then there is no room for relations as R-, R—, etc. in logic either.

For example, we can say that Stevo is tall, we can say that Stevo is taller than Đuro, we can also say that Stevo is to a larger extend taller then Đuro, then Darko is taller than Milan, but we can not say that Stevo is taller than to be taller than.

Let us imagine an analogical example: if I want to participate in the New York marathon, or in football tournament, I can not participate because I must participate in the participating, and then I must participate in the participating in the participation, etc. Also, if I want to cross the bridge, I must have another bridge which connects the river bank and the first bridge, and I must also have another bridge to connect the river bank and the second bridge, etc. So, I can never cross thr bridge, and I never reach the bridge, because before reaching the bridge I must cross infinitely many bridges, which is impossible.

However, I can participate in the New York marathon, and in football tournament, and I can cross the brige, so, it seems that something is wrong with such reasoning.

From the point of view of traditional logic, in some utterance of type “S is P”, which is composed of subject and predicate, the mistake is made when COPULA AND PREDICATE ARE PUT TOGETHER, AND A NEW PREDICATE IS BEING MADE. Then, in order to connect subject and new predicate, new copula is needed. As it has been done once, it has to be done infinitely many times, and we fall into the regress ad infinitum. It looks like this:

- 1) S is P
 - 2) S is (is P)
 - 3) S is (is (is P))
- etc)

In the notation modern logic utterance “S is P” is written “P” where “P” means “to be P”. It does not mean that the whole modern logic is addicted to infinite regress, because as long as we have in mind that “P” means “to be P”, we can not have troubles.

The conclude: We can say that either “S is P” or “S is not P”, but we can

neither say that "S is (is P)", nor "S is (is not P)".

II

The next infinite regress argument is the following: a thing is what it is because it participates in certain Form. O. K. but why is that Form what it is? Because it participates in the Form of Form. Why is the Form of the Form what it is? Because it participates in the Form of the Form of Form, etc.

The regressor could pose the argument in two ways:

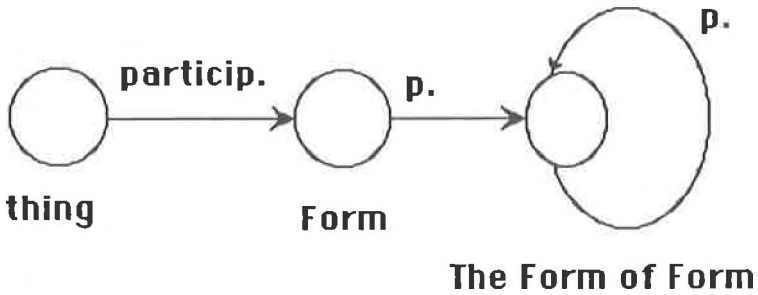
- A)
- 1) the man is a man iff he participates in the Form of man
 - 2) the Form of man is the Form of man iff it participates in the Form of the Form of man
 - 3) the Form of the Form of man is what it is iff it participates in the Form of the Form of Form of man
- etc)
- B)
- 1) the man is a man iff he participates in the Form of man
 - 2) the Form of man is what it is iff it participates in the Form of Form
 - 3) the Form of Form is what it is iff it participates in the Form of the Form of Form
- etc)

Both ways are harmless for platonism. For, the platonist principle of introducing Forms into ontology claims that WE MUST INTRODUCE NEW FORM WHENEVER THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO THINGS WHICH SHARE SOME PROPERTY (here, I will not go to into the question whether things must be actual, or can be only possible). That is, the Form is a device for explaining common property shared by many things.

In the way A) the regress should be blocked between the first and the second step, because there is only one Form of the Form of man. But, the aspect the Form of man has in common with other entities in our ontology is "the Formhood", there are a lot of Forms, and they all share the same property "to be a Form". There is a Form of this, and a Form of that, but they are all Forms. According to the platonist principle of introducing new Forms, we must introduce the Form of Form. Now, according to the same principle we do not have to, and we can not introduce the Form of the Form of Forms, because there is only one Form of Form. Therefore, regress B) should be blocked between the second and the third step.

If someone, in spite of platonistic principle, claims that any entity must

participate in some Form in order to be an entity at all, then we can give an answer that the Form of Form participates in itself (the same for the Form of man). Graphically the situation looks like this:



However, if we accept such explanation (that the Form of Form participates in itself), then it seems that we are involved in Russell's paradox. I think and I will try to show that it is not the case, that is, that we can accept participation in itself without being involved into Russell's paradox. For the beginning, let us quote Armstrong's opinion about this:

"Since "predicate" falls under itself, there is a predicate "predicate falling under itself". Equally, there is a predicate "predicate not falling under itself" under which most tokens of predicates fall. But tokens of this latter predicate can neither fall under the predicate nor can they not fall under the predicate. The assumption that tokens of "predicate" fall under themselves is incoherent." (Universals and Scientific Realism, volume I, page 74.)

In platonistic terminology where "participation" corresponds to "falling under", the paradox looks like this: there are Forms which do not participate in themselves, and there are Forms which participate in themselves. "To participate in itself" and "not to participate in itself", are properties which Forms have. However, for any property there is a Form, so there is the Form of participating in itself. Therefore, if some Form participates in the Form of participating in itself, then that Form participates in itself, and if some Form participates in the Form of not participating in itself, then that Form does not participate in itself.

Let us now take a look at where the paradox allegedly lies. If the Form of participating in itself participates in itself, it means that the Form of participating in itself participates in itself. So far everything is clear. But, if the Form of not participating in itself participates in itself, then it does not participate in itself, (and if it does not participate in itself, then it does not have the property of not-

participating in itself). This if the Form of not participating in itself, does not participate in itself, then it participates in itself, and if it participates in itself, then it does not participate in itself.

Let us state this once more:

1) There are Forms which do not participate in themselves, and there are Forms which participate in themselves (for example the Form of Form)

2) According to 1) and to platonistic principle of introducing Forms, there is the Form of participating in itself, and the Form of not-participating in itself.

3) If the Form of not-participating in itself participates in itself, then it does not participate in itself, and if it does not participate in itself, then it participates in itself.

The refutation follows (it can be used also for the theories which the relation between things and properties interpret as "falling under", "having", or something alike). There are two arguments, already used in the chapter I, but this time for slightly different purposes.

i) According to the argument from chapter I, negative properties do not exist. There is only non-participation in positive properties (Forms). This means that non-participation of certain Form in itself should be explained by not-participating in the Form of participating in itself, instead of not-participating in the Form of not-participating in itself. If there are no negative properties, then there is no Form which would explain that what is common to all of them, i.e. there is no Form of not-participating in itself. Therefore, if the Form of not-participating in itself does not exist, then there is no Russell-s paradox.

ii) Let us come back to the structure of ascribing properties to the things once more (to the example of the yellow pencil).

1) The pencil is yellow.

From the platonist point of view it means the following:

2) The pencil participates in the Form of yellowness. In the first sentence the subject is "pencil", the predicate is substantivised property, i.e. "the Form of yellowness", and the copula is "participates in".

Now, if we turn back to the objection to the participation of Form in itself, we will see that the mistake is made when a new predicate is made out of the copula and the predicate. In the sentence "Form participates in itself", "to participate in itself" is taken as a predicate which is ascribed to the subject, while the genuine predicate is, in fact, "itself" (that is, Form again). If we wanted to say that the Form participated in itself, and if we used "to participate in itself" as a predicate, the sentence would look like this:

"The Form participates in the participating in itself"

Utterance of this type leads directly into the infinite regress refuted in chapter I. Therefore, from the fact that thing has a certain property, it does not follow that a

things has the property of having that property, from the fact that variable falls under some predicate does not follow that variable falls under falling under that predicate. From "S is P" does not follow "S is is P".

Also, from the fact that some Form participates in itself does not follow that it participates in participation in itself. It just participates in itself, and that is all. And what is crucial for the refutation of the argumentis: from the fact that a Form participates in itself it does not follow that there exists the Form of participating in itself, and from the fact that there exists the Form of participating in itself, and from the fact that a Form does not participate in itself, it does not follow that there exist the Form of not-participating in itself. If there is no Form of participating in itself, then there is no Russell-s paradox.

All the ontologies which do not contain classes are, I thing, defended from Russell's paradox by this argument. Therefore, if in the ontology which does not contain classes, the situation is such that there is Russell-s paradox, then there is no Russell-s paradox, because (logically) before it, we have to have infinite regress between entities and relations. So, Russell-s paradox can not exist. For, if Russell-s paradox does not exist then it does not exist, and if Russell-s paradox exists then it does not exist, therefore there is no way for Russell-s paradox to exist.

We have showh that platonistic principle of introducing entities (Forms) does not force us to introduce an infinite number of entities, that is, that this argument (against platonism) is not valid.

III

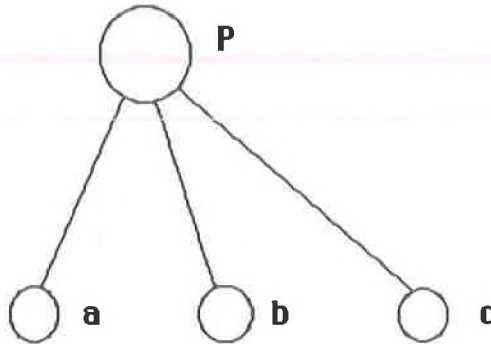
Now, we are going to deal with the famous "third man argument". For the beginning I will present the argument, then I will quote its formulations by other philosophers, and finaly I will show why it is not valid.

Let us imagine the situation in which there are entities a, b and c, which have property P in common.

In logical notation it looks like this:

P(a), P(b), P(c)

Schematically:



So, in order to explain property P, which is common to entities a, b and c, we introduce the Form of P-ness. However, the question is: what is the resemblance between particular things which have property P and the Form of P-ness? If the Form of P-ness is introduced because the property P is instantiated in entities a, b and c as a property which makes a, b and c resemble each other, then what is common to the entities a, b and c, and the Form of P-ness? If we explain every resemblance by the form of property which entities have in common, then we must introduce the new Form of P--ness, by which we explain resemblance between entities a, b and c, the Form of P-ness. Then, entities a, b and c, the Form of P-ness, and the Form of P--ness have something in common all the same, therefore, we must introduce the Form of P---ness, and we fall into infinite regress.

Let us examine the line of argumentation once again. There are three entities:

- 1) a, b, c

all of them have the same property P

- 2) P(a), P(b), P(c)

we introduce the Form of P-ness

- 3) P(a), P(b), P(c), P(F)

as their common aspect we introduce the property P-

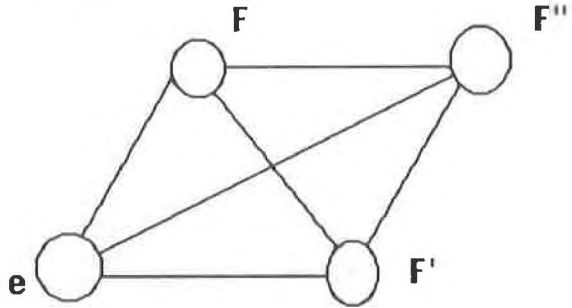
- 4) P-(P(a)), P-(P(b)), P-(P(c)), P-(F(P))

we are entangled in infinite regress.

This argument was formulated on the example of one man and the Form of man, that are already, in some way, two men. In order to explain the common aspect of the particular man and the Form of man, we need another Form of man,

that is, in some way, a third man. The regress starts at this point. This is the reason why the name of this argument is the third man argument.

Put schematically it looks like this:



Let us see now, how this argument was formulated by a distinguished philosopher:

“But for two things to resemble each other in a certain respect, both must have at least one common attribute, or both must be instances of at least one common universal. So, if a Form and its instances are similar, both must be instances of at least one higher Form. And if their being instances of it entails, as according to the theory it must entail, that they and it have some point of similarity, then all must be instances of a still higher Form, and so on ad infinitum.” (Gilbert Ryle, “Plato—s “Parmenides””, *Collected Papers, Volume I*, page 18)

“The argument, Presented in the *Parmenides*, is that if we consider the particulars which have a certain property plus the Form which explains the possession of the property, we see that particulars and Form constitute a new many which demands a new or second-order Form to be their one. But this new Form gives rise to yet further many, demanding yet another one, and so ad infinitum.” (D.M.Armstrong, *Universals and Scientific Realism, Volume I*, page 71)

“Then if anything,” he said, “resembles the idea, can that idea avoid being like the thing which resembles it, in so far as the thing has been made to resemble it; or is there any possibility that the like be unlike its like?”

“No, there is none.”

“And must not necessarily the like partake of the same idea as its like?”

“It must.”

“That by participation in which like things are made like, will be the absolute idea, will it not?”

“Certainly.”

“Then it is impossible that anything be like the idea, or the idea like anything; for if they are alike, some further idea, in addition to the first, will always appear, and if that is like anything, still another, and a new idea will always be arising, if the idea is like that which partakea of it.” (Plato, Parmenides, translation by H.N.Fowler, 132 E)

Now, the whole argument will be presented in the form of inference (premises and conclusion), and then we will show the invalidity of the argument by refuting two of the three premises.

- P1) Thing e and Form F are in the relation of participation R , (eRF).
 P2) Everything that is in the relation R , has something in common C (if xRy , then there exist C , such that C is common to x and y).
 P3) For any x and y which have something in common C , we introduce Form of that common property, $F(C)$. (platonist principle)

C) For any thing e and any Form F , such that e exemplifies F , we need new Form $F-$ which explains what e and F have in common.

This formulation of the argument is, I hope, correct. Now we will see why the argument is not valid.

Refutation of P2) If some thing e is in the relation of participation R to certain Form F , then thing e and Form F do not have to have something in common. Is the property of a thing the same as the Form of that property? That is, is the Form of triangularity triangular? Is the Form of green meadow green? Neither green, nor meadowish. The Form of being 2 kilometers long is not 2 kilometers long.

Let us take a look at how D.M.Armstrong presented this objection.

“It is now generally appreciated that the argument depends upon a premise, the Self-predication assumption, that the Form which accounts for particulars having a certain property, itself has that property. The Form of Whiteness, say, is itself something white. Only if this is true can the argument advance, ... With the denial of Self-predication, the Third Man collapses.” (Universals and Scientific Realism, Volume I, page 71)

When we said that entity e which has property P , $P(e)$, and Form of P -ness, $F(P)$, have something in common $P-$, then we opened the way to the infinite regress. However, entity e , which has property P , and Form of P -ness, $F(P)$, do not have anything in common, so, there is no need for new Form of P -ness, which should explain alleged resemblance of $P(e)$ and $F(P)$.

If the attitude that the Form of green meadow is green and meadowish

seems mad, we have to keep in mind that word "idea" in Greek designates properties connected to the visual perception (form, shape, pattern), and that is the sense of the English translation "Form".

Even if we accept the attitude that Forms have properties of which they are Forms, i.e. if we accept self-ascription, the Third man argument is still not valid (put aside all other difficulties of self-ascription). Now we will see why.

Refutation of P3) According to the argument, particular things and the Form have something in common. That is, by presumption, true, but THAT WHAT IS COMMON TO THE THINGS AND THE FORM IS NOTHING ELSE BUT THE FORM. There is no need to introduce new entities to explain the relationship which is already explained by introducing the Form. That is, particular man is a man because he participates (in fact, it would be better to say "it participates" because the man is not a man before participating in the Form of manhood) in the Form of man. That what is common to the particular man and the Form of man is not some "third man", but already introduced Form of man. We can introduce "the third", "the fourth", and as many people as we want, but it does not change anything because what all those people have in common is nothing but the first introduces Form of man, introduced with the intention to explain how man are men, and what they have in common.

Expressed in the notation of the set theory it would look like this;

- 1) $P(e) \cap F(P) = F(P)$
- 2) $P'(P(e)) \cap P'(F(P)) = F(P)$
- 3) $P''(P'(P(e))) \cap P''(P'(F(P))) = F(P)$

etc)

It seems to me that a platonist would not agree with the assertion that particular things have a lot of properties, and that only one of them (the essential one) determines particular thing as such and such. A platonist would rather say that the Form of man contains all human properties, and that particular man is such and such because he participates in such and such way in the Form of man. This objection does not change our argument, for the pair "particular thing - Form" instead of having Form as the common aspect, should have particular thing as the common aspect. Our argument remains valid because in both cases that what a particular thing and Form have in common remains within the pair "particular thing - Form". Therefore, once again there is no need to introduce a new (the third) entity.

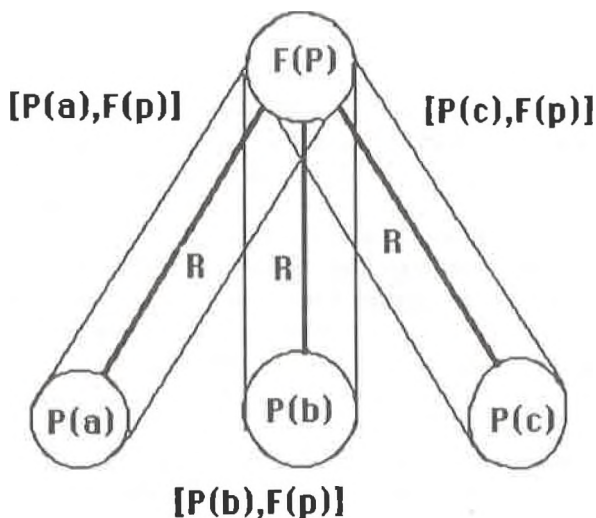
We have shown that in the "Third man" argument the second premise is invalid. Even if the second were valid, the third would not be so, therefore in both cases the whole argument is invalid.

IV

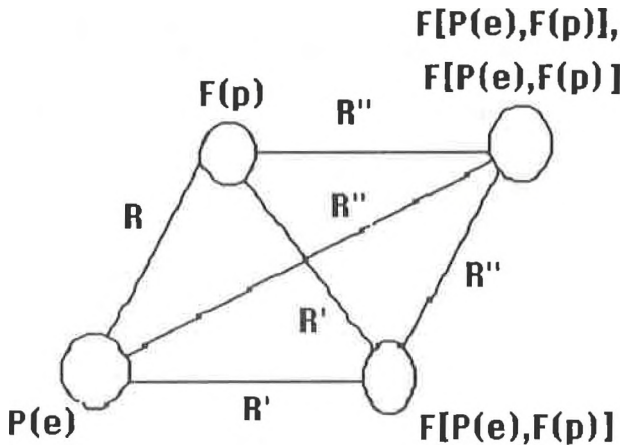
The fourth, and the last argument is Ryle's relational regress. Although the name "Relational regress" would better suit the argument presented in chapter I, we are going to respect its original name given after the philosopher who has put it forward). First we will explain the argument, then quote Ryle and Armstrong, and then show why the argument is invalid.

Many things participate in one Form. Each thing which participates in the Form makes with the Form a pair "thing - Form". Therefore, the number of things which participate in the Form is equal to the number of the pairs thing - Form, that is, there are many pairs. Each many must have its one, i.e. its Form. The Form which will explain the common feature of many. Therefore, we must introduce new Form, that is, the Form of pair thing - form. Now each pair thing - Form participates in the Form of pair thing - Form. Each pair thing -Form, (which participates in the Form of thing - Form) and the Form of thing - Form make new pair, that is, pair / (pair thing - Form) - (the Form of pair thing -Form)/. And we fall into regress again.

Let us show it graphically. Entities a, b and c have common property P, and therefore, they all participate in the Form of P-ness, $F(P)$.



The next diagram shows when, and why, forms of pairs must exist.



There are:

- 1) thing e, which has property P, P(e)
 - 2) Form F(P)
 - 3) pair thing - Form /P(e),F(P)/
 - 4) the Form of pair thing - Form F/P(e), F(P)/
 - 5) pair (pair thing -Form) - (the form of the pair thing - Form) /P(e),F(P)), (P(e), F(P))/
 - 6) the Form of pair (pair thing - Form) - (the Form of pair thing - Form) F/P(e),F(P)), F(P(e), F(P))/
- etc)

Also, there is another regress, the regress of relations.

- 1) relation R, thing P(e) - the Form of P-ness F(P)
 - 2) relation R-, Form F /P(e), F(P)/ - pair /P(e), F(P)/
 - 3) relation R—
- etc)

We have seen that Ryle-s Relational regress is, in fact, composed of two regresses:

- i) the regress of multiplying entities (Forms)
- ii) the regress of multiplying relations which connect entities

Ryle made his point at ii). It is clear that ii) presupposes i), for, relation can not exist without entities which it connects.

Let us see how Ryle and Armstrong have presented this argument.

"Now what of the alleged relation itself, which we are calling "exemplification"? Is this a Form or an instance of a Form? Take the two propositions "this is square" and "that is circular". We have here two different cases of something exemplifying something else. We have two different instances of the relation of being-an-instance-of. What is the relation between them and that of which they are instances? It will have to be exemplification Number 2. The exemplification of P by S will be an instance of exemplification, and its being in that relation to exemplification will be an instance of a second - order exemplification, and that of a third, and so on ad infinitum." Gilbert Ryle, *Plato's Parmenides*, Collected Papers, Volume I, page 10)

"By contrast, the Relational regress, first stated, as far as I know, by Ryle (1939, pp 137-8), appears to be vicious. Particulars participate in Forms. The relation of participation is therefore a type having indefinitely many tokens. But this is the very sort of situation which the theory of Forms finds unintelligible and insists on explaining by means of a Forms. The theory is therefore committed to setting up a Form of Participation in which ordered pairs consisting of a particular and a first order Form participate.

Once again, however, the problem is reproduced. If this second - order participation is something different in nature from first - order participation, then it requires to be explained by third - order participation, and so ad infinitum. But if second - order participation is the same in nature as first - order participation, then the analysis of first - order participation is proceeding in terms of this (first - order) participation in a Form, which is circular.

It appears, then, that the Relation regress holds against all Relational analyses of what it is for an object to have a property or relation. If a-s being F is analysed as a-s having R to a f, then Raf is one of the situations of the sort that the theory undertakes to analyse. So it must be a matter of the ordered pair (a, f) having R- to a new f-like entity: fR. If R and R- are different, the same problems arises with R- and so ad infinitum. If R and R- are identical, then the projected analysis of Raf has appealed to R itself, which is circular." (D.M.Armstrong, *Universals and Scientific Realism*, Volume I, page 70-71)

Now, we will see where the mistake lies, and where multiplication of entities should be blocked. Many things have something in common. To explain the common property we introduced the Form. Now, there are many things which participate in the same Form (i.e. there are many pairs thing - Form). Each thing that participates in one Form constitutes a pair with the Form in which it participates. Therefore there are as many pairs thing - Form, as there are particular

things which participate in the Form. If there are many pairs which have something in common, we have to explain that common feature. Mistake has been made at this point. WHAT MANY PAIRS HAVE IN COMMON IS NOTHING ELSE BUT THE FORM THAT ALREADY EXISTED (WAS INTRODUCED) IN ALL THE PAIRS. The Form is one and the same in all the pairs, so if we look for what is common in all those pairs, all we can find is that Form.

. As we seen the argument is the same as the one used for the refutation of the "Third man". What is different here is the fact that in the refutation of the "Third man" we were concerned with only one pair thing - Form, while in the refutation of the "Relational regress" we have been concerned with many pairs thing - Form. In both cases what is common is the Form.

In set theory notation it looks like this:

$$1) P(e) \cap F(P) = F(P)$$

$$2) /P(e),F(P)/ \cap F/P(e), F(P)/ = F(p)$$

etc)

We proved that the Forms of pairs thing - Form do not exist as independent entities. Therefore, nor the relations which connect them with particular pairs thing - Form can exist. So, there is neither regress i), nor regress ii).

At this point there could be the followinf objection: when we think about pairs thing - Form, then the concepts of that pairs exist,therefore, the Forms of that pairs also exist, so we are antangled in troubles again. Such counterargument is invalid because for such forms (Forms of psychological provenance, redeced to concepts) there is no room in our ontology. The only principle for introducing Forms into ontology (into existence) is the explanation of properties common to at least two things. Therefore, all Forms which are not introduced into ontology according to the platonist principle must be thrown away.

We showed that none of all the four presented arguments is valid. To refute them means to refute a part of refutation of platonism.

By the same token we hope to have made relations ontologically more respectable.

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Boran Berčić: BESKONAČNI REGRESI U PLATONIZMU

S a ž e t a k

Osnovna ideja platonističke ontologije jest da je takva-i-takva stvar upravo takva-i-takva zato što učestvuje u ideji takve-itakve stvari Postoji mnogo argumenata protiv ove pozicije. Četiri od tih argumenata imaju regressus ad infinitum oblik. Jedan od tih četiriju jest poznati argument Treći čovjek. U ovom radu autor pokazuje da niti jedan od ta četiri argumenata nije valjan. Dakle, platonistička ontologija je imuna na argumente ovog oblika.