

# Why there are tropes<sup>1</sup>

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*Abstract:* If you think that there are concrete particulars and that concrete particulars have a complex constitution, you must solve (or dissolve) the Bradleyan problem of the One in Many. There are basically two ways to do this. You may, *pace* Bradley, claim that the constituents of the concrete particular are, by their nature, such that they must be related. The price to pay for such a move is, however, (too) high. Only if a deep-seated intuition – DISTINCTION – is rejected, can it succeed. But you need not choose between solving the Bradleyan problem and retaining a plausible intuition. You can have your cake and eat it too. All you need to do is reconsider the different ways in which a relation may stand to its relata. Again *pace* Bradley, you may then posit relations which stand in the ‘right’ kind of dependence-relations to their relata, and you will, as a result, have added something to the mix able to turn what are many distinct constituents into one thing, without either contradiction, nonsense or vicious infinite regress. As it turns out, however, the only kind of relational entities for which we can get this result are trope-relations. This is why there are tropes.

Meet Sam. Sam is a red, round, and soft ball. He is what we metaphysicians would like to call a concrete particular.<sup>2</sup> That there are concrete particulars is a Moorean fact.<sup>3</sup> That Sam exists is certainly less evident, but will nevertheless be assumed in what follows. Compare the concrete particular with the abstract universal, and you

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to...

<sup>2</sup> Our notion of a concrete particular may appear especially resistant to analysis. In our non-philosopher capacity, we tend to think of all sorts of entities as belonging to this category. But when wearing our philosopher’s hat, we find it hard (perhaps impossible) to come up with a list of necessary and sufficient conditions for ‘thing-hood’ able to cover all of those entities. For the purposes of this paper, it is enough if we accept that the concrete particular is something of which it is true that it can occupy at most one place in space at each moment in time; that it monopolises this place in the sense that no more than one concrete particular can ‘fit’ into one and the same position in space at each moment in time; and, finally, that it has a nature that may differ in certain respects (but perhaps not in others) over time without it thereby ceasing to exist. This, I think, is *prima facie* acceptable to everyone (pending a deeper analysis of what the above entails in terms of ontological commitments). For a nice discussion of our notion of a concrete particular (as well as a first introduction to our friend Sam) see Loux (1998).

<sup>3</sup> A Moorean fact is, I assume, a self-evidently true state of affairs (*Cf.* Moore, “A Defence of Common Sense” (1959)).

will find that these are more or less each others' opposites.<sup>4</sup> They do, however, share one important feature; they are both *Ones that run through Many*. Both for the concrete particular and for the abstract universal, but in slightly different ways, this feature may appear mysterious. How, many have asked about the (immanent) abstract universal, can it exist as one and the same entity in more than one place at one moment in time?<sup>5</sup> How can it be a One *over* Many? How, one may similarly ask about the concrete particular, can it consist of many distinct and different parts and/or constituents, yet at the same time be one unified thing? How can it be a One *in* Many? In my view, it is only the latter question which presents a real challenge.<sup>6</sup> This paper is an attempt to stand up to that challenge.

*Preliminaries: Three Assumptions and One Clarification*

The discussion conducted in this paper rests on a number of assumptions. Three of these need to be stated explicitly. The first is a meta-assumption. It is assumed that our ontological posits should be such that satisfactorily fulfil the truthmaking function.<sup>7</sup> The second assumption is that concrete particulars are ontologically complex entities. The third assumption is that there is a separate and ontologically fundamental property-category and that entities belonging to this category at least partly constitute the concrete particular. I take it that these are all reasonable assumptions.<sup>8</sup> They are compatible, both with the view that a concrete particular is a substrate in which properties are instantiated, and with the view that it is a bundle of its properties. The third assumption, moreover, is compatible both with the view that properties are universals, and with the view that they are tropes.

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<sup>4</sup> The abstract universal *is* rather than *has* a character. It exists (or, at least, it *may* exist) in more than one region of space at each moment in time. Several distinct and different abstract universals may exist simultaneously in the same region of space. And so on.

<sup>5</sup> Most critics of universal realism (or, at least, of *immanent* universal realism) have at one point or another asked this question.

<sup>6</sup> For reasons of space as well as of relevance, this claim will not be defended in this paper.

<sup>7</sup> The finer points of Truthmaker theory will not be discussed here (but see, e.g. Simons (1992); Armstrong (2004); Beebe and Dodd (2005); Cameron (2008), etc.).

<sup>8</sup> I also believe that they are more reasonable than existing alternatives. Arguments for this contention will, however, have to wait for another occasion.

Now for the clarification: To ask how the concrete particular can be a one in many is *not* the same as to ask for an account of the nature of a concrete particular. Before we can investigate more carefully the nature of something that can be many, yet one, we must first settle that anything *can* be many, yet one. This is what I will do in this paper. We should not expect a *pre*-investigation of this kind to answer every question relevant to the investigation it is supposed to pave the way for.

### *The Problem of the One in Many*

To ask, about the concrete particular, how it can be a one in many is to ask a potentially problematic question. Why is that? The answer can be found in the beginning of F. H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* (1908). Bradley's argument, reconstructed and abbreviated, is in essence this. When asked what it means to say of Sam that he is red, round, and soft, i.e., when asked what it means to say of One thing that it is Many things, the following answers exhaust all possibilities:<sup>9</sup>

It means that Sam is identical with each of his constituents taken separately

It means that Sam is identical with each of his constituents taken severally

It means that Sam is identical with his constituents related<sup>10</sup>

According to Bradley, however, none of these answers will do. The first answer – that Sam is identical with his constituents taken separately – obviously cannot give us what we want. If Sam is identical with his form, and then with his colour, and then with his texture, there will be contradiction. Nor can Sam be identical with his constituents taken severally, for then nothing will have been added to his constituents

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<sup>9</sup> This argument, in unabbreviated and original form, can be found in Bradley (1908: 17-23). Notice that, as Bradley understands the problem, it concerns predication and, more precisely, the 'is' of predication. Crucial to Bradley's reasoning is that he understands predication as ascribing identity. Today, this understanding of predication is perhaps not the norm and so, to avoid misunderstanding, I will throughout understand Bradley's talk of predication as talk of *constitution*. Although Bradley (and perhaps Bradley-scholars) might object to this reading of Bradley, it serves its purpose (which is not an analysis of Bradley's argument but rather of the "Bradleyan" argument).

<sup>10</sup> Bradley talks of a lump of sugar being identical with its *qualities*, either separately, severally, or related. Besides changing the subject from a lump of sugar to Sam, I have also decided to exchange talk of qualities with talk of *constituents*. This is because, although Sam may be something that is (somehow) constituted by his many qualities, he might also be something that is (somehow) constituted by a substrate instantiating his many qualities. It is in order not to rule out any possibility beforehand we should replace talk of Sam's qualities with the more ontologically neutral talk of his *constituents* (where these might, depending on how we understand the nature of the concrete particular, include also a substrate).

that can plausibly account for the existence also of Sam.<sup>11</sup> That we must reject an answer according to which Sam is identical with each of his qualities taken separately seems obvious enough. Whether or not we can identify Sam somehow with the sum of his constituents is more controversial and I will have reason to return to that issue below. For the moment, however, let us assume that Bradley is right. This leaves us with the third alternative: Sam is identical with his constituents *related*.

According to Bradley (but, again, in my words) to say of the constituents of Sam that they are related means either:

1. that each constituent, by its nature, is such that it is related to the other constituents of Sam, or
2. that although Sam's constituents are not "naturally" related in the sense of (1), they nevertheless manage to constitute one thing because there exists something in addition to them, which operates on them, and so "makes" them into one thing

Another way of putting the same thing is if we say that the relating of Sam's constituents is either *founded* in their nature and existence, or it is not.<sup>12</sup>

Bradley thinks that we must reject the idea that the relating of Sam's constituents is founded in those very same constituents, because if it is, we end up with what he refers to as 'the old dilemma' (1908: 17):

If you predicate what is different, you ascribe to the subject what it is *not*; and if you predicate what is *not* different, you say nothing at all.

The problem, in less Bradleyan terms, is this: To say of the relating of Sam's constituents that it is founded in their nature and existence amounts to no more than saying that their being related does not require the existence of anything distinct and different from that which is being related (i.e. it amounts to saying nothing). But then this answer will for all intents and purposes be the same as the second (and (at least provisionally) already discarded) answer according to which Sam is identical with his constituents taken severally.

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<sup>11</sup> "Sugar is obviously not mere whiteness, mere hardness, and mere sweetness; for its reality lies somehow in its unity" (Bradley (1908: 19)).

<sup>12</sup> *Founded*: Sam's constituents are such that their relating is entailed (it "flows from their nature" to use an Armstrongian turn of phrase). *Unfounded*: For Sam's constituents to be related there must exist, in addition to, and independently of, the original constituents, also a *relation* which holds between them.

So it seems as if we must say that the relating of Sam's constituents requires the existence of something distinct from (and so, not founded in) them. This view may seem initially promising. If the relation is an entity 'in its own right' it seems to be precisely the thing that, when added to Sam's original constituents, turns them into something apt to make true <Sam exists>. Appearances are deceptive, however. To add a relation to Sam's constituents does not give you Sam, only a vicious infinite regress. If relations exist independently of that which they relate, Bradley points out, "qualities and their relation fall entirely apart, and then we have said nothing". We must therefore come up with a new relation between the old one and its terms. This move, however, does not get us very far. The new relation "either itself demands a new relation, and so on without end, or it leaves us where we were, entangled in difficulties" (Bradley, 1908: 21). In other words; relations can only succeed in relating if they are somehow "affiliated" with their relata. But a relation that is unfounded does not, precisely for that reason, seem to really have anything to do with what it supposedly relates. To explain how it nevertheless manages to relate, it seems as if the relation must be somehow *related* to its relata. But this means that further relations, relations which, if we accept the reasoning that led us to this point in the argument, must *not* be founded in that which they relate, should be added to the mix. But this does not help. Our new relations suffer from the same lack of natural "affiliation" with their relata as did our old one. Again, new relations must, therefore, be posited. And so on, *ad infinitum*. This regress is vicious. At no point is relating actually obtained. The infinite regress therefore contradicts the original claim that Sam's constituents exist related.<sup>13</sup>

But now we seem to have run out of options. If Bradley is right, therefore, what is many *cannot* also be one. If you disagree with this contention, proving Bradley wrong becomes a 'Moorean' task.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For a more thorough discussion of the distinction between vicious and virtuous regresses, see my (2007).

<sup>14</sup> According to Armstrong (1980: 441), a 'Moorean question' is one that *must* be given a (substantial) answer if our theory is to be deemed acceptable. A 'Moorean task' is then a task that *must* be performed and brought to its successful conclusion, for us to be able to hold on to certain cherished theoretical posits (like the posit that there is (true) distinction and plurality in reality).

### *A Crucial Assumption*

The Bradleyan argument is a kind of *reductio* that departs from what may be characterised as a piece of metaphysical folklore. Consider Sam again. According to well-known metaphysical theories of concrete particulars, Sam is a complex entity, a One in Many, whose constitution may be characterised in one of two ways. If you are a bundle theorist, then Sam is nothing but the bundle of his (compresent) tropes/universals; if you are a property-substrate theorist, he is nothing but a substrate instantiating some tropes/universals.<sup>15</sup> On either of these accounts, if it is true that Sam exists, (at least) the following propositions are also true:

- A. <Sam = red<sub>1</sub>, round<sub>1</sub>, and soft<sub>1</sub> bundled with each other>, alternatively <Sam = Redness, Roundness, and Softness instantiated in substrate<sub>1</sub>><sup>16</sup>
- B. <red<sub>1</sub>, round<sub>1</sub>, and soft<sub>1</sub> exist>, alternatively <Redness, Roundness, Softness, and substrate<sub>1</sub> exist>
- C. <red<sub>1</sub>, round<sub>1</sub>, and soft<sub>1</sub> exist bundled with each other>, alternatively <Redness, Roundness, and Softness exist instantiated in substrate<sub>1</sub>>

Now, how does the truth of each of these propositions relate to the truth of the others? An intuitive (albeit partial) answer is this:

A and B may be true without C (thereby) being true

This answer nicely captures an important intuition, explicitly held by many, and implicitly accepted (at least sometimes) by more or less all philosophers. In truth-maker theoretical terms, it is the intuition that whatever must exist in order to make true B cannot, at least not on its own, also make true C. In modal terms, it is the intuition that there is at least one possible world in which Sam's constituents exist, yet

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<sup>15</sup> In view of the many and convincing objections that exist against the idea that concrete particulars are bundles of universals, this alternative will be disregarded in what follows. As the view that concrete particulars are substrates instantiating tropes involves (I believe, unnecessarily) the existence of mysterious substrates, it will be likewise ignored. Nothing in my argument really depends on my making these restrictions (other than the ease with which I can represent the different alternatives) and so the reader is free to disregard them. With these restrictions in place, we are left with two ways of conceiving of Sam; as a bundle of his tropes or as a substrate instantiating his universal properties. To distinguish these views, I use subscripts when what is being referred to is something particular (whether it be a trope (red<sub>1</sub>) or a substrate (substrate<sub>1</sub>) and capitals when the property in question is a universal (Redness).

<sup>16</sup> Otherwise put: <If Sam exists, then he is the bundle of his properties (i.e. the bundle theory of concrete particulars is true)>, alternatively, <If Sam exists, then he is a substrate instantiating his properties (i.e. the universal-substrate theory of concrete particulars is true)>.

Sam does not. In essentialist terms, finally, it is the intuition that Sam's constituents are not essentially, but only accidentally, Sam's constituents. This intuition I call DISTINCTION.<sup>17</sup> For our present purposes, it is perhaps most transparently put as follows:

DISTINCTION: The constituents of Sam might exist and not constitute Sam<sup>18</sup>

It is often overlooked that the success of the Bradleyan argument *depends* on our unwillingness to give up DISTINCTION. That this is so is however easily seen; it is only if we insist on DISTINCTION that we can so readily dismiss the alternative according to which Sam is identical with his properties taken severally (or, what, as we have seen, more or less amounts to the same thing; the alternative according to which he is identical with his qualities related, where relating is founded). Only if DISTINCTION is true is there anything left to account for once we have established the existence of Sam's constituents. And so, only if DISTINCTION is true, can the Bradleyan *reductio* be brought to its "successful" conclusion.

In view of the important role played by DISTINCTION in generating the problem of the One in Many, it may seem as if the easiest way out of that problem is to simply dismiss the intuition. This, although perhaps not put in those terms, is in fact the most common response to the Bradleyan challenge.<sup>19</sup> To reject DISTINCTION amounts, not surprisingly, to our accepting its opposite. In truth-maker theoretical terms, it means holding that what makes it true that e.g. <red<sub>1</sub>, round<sub>1</sub>, and soft<sub>1</sub> exist> also (and thereby) makes it true that <red<sub>1</sub>, round<sub>1</sub>, and soft<sub>1</sub> exist bundled> and, hence, makes it true that <Sam exists>.<sup>20</sup> In modal terms it means holding that there is no world in which Sam's constituents exist yet Sam does not. In essentialist terms, finally, it means holding that the constituents of Sam are essentially, not merely accidentally, such that they constitute Sam. On the upside, if we reject DISTINCTION

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<sup>17</sup> I name it so to call attention to the fact that this is an intuition which supposedly reflects the way we think about what we may call 'true' distinction.

<sup>18</sup> Mutatis mutandis for every other entity like Sam (i.e. every other concrete particular).

<sup>19</sup> Among those opting for this solution you find e.g. Molnar (2003); Simons (1994) – at least partly; and, recently, Armstrong (2005; 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Alternatively (if you are a universal-substrate-theorist) what makes it true that <Redness, Roundness, Softness, and substrate<sub>1</sub> exist> also (and thereby) makes it true that <Redness, Roundness, and Softness exist instantiated in substrate<sub>1</sub>> and hence, makes it true that <Sam exists>.

nothing has to be added to Sam's constituents in order for our theory to be able to account for his existence. If whatever makes true B also makes true C, Sam somehow supervenes on the existence (and nature) of his constituents; if his constituents exist, so *must* he. No vicious infinite regress can be generated and the Bradleyan problem consequently dissolves. On the downside, it (obviously) means having to deny DISTINCTION, which, as I will now try to convince you, should not be so readily dismissed after all.

*Why accept distinction?*

There are several reasons why one should not reject DISTINCTION. First, it is an intuitive assumption that seems to represent what most would consider to be a non-empty possibility. If what there is, fundamentally speaking, is what constitutes the concrete particular, it seems natural to suppose that what now constitutes Sam could have existed and constituted something or someone else instead. Second, and perhaps more importantly, rejecting DISTINCTION has clearly *unintuitive* consequences. If DISTINCTION is denied, not only could no thing have been different from what it actually is, since no thing could have had a different set of constituents than those it actually has. Worse, it also follows that no constituent of a particular thing could have been the constituent of a different thing. Rejecting DISTINCTION therefore seems to entail an implausibly static and necessitarian world-view.

If you believe that the world is a world of states of affairs, moreover, you have an especially strong incentive to want to keep DISTINCTION. To see this, consider the role played by precisely that assumption in one of the most important and influential arguments for the existence of states of affairs (Armstrong, 1989: 88, *my italics*):<sup>21</sup>

Why do we need to recognize states of affairs? Why not recognize simply particulars, universals (divided into properties and relations), and, perhaps, instantiation? The

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<sup>21</sup> The argument can be found also in his (1978 and 1997). Armstrong refers to this argument the "truth-maker argument", Molnar (2003) calls it the "master argument". In this argument, Armstrong in effect claims that the problem of the One in Many is solved if we accept the existence of States of Affairs. I will not discuss this particular "save" in this paper as I do not think it works. For some arguments to this effect see my (2002: 141-145).

answer appears by considering the following point. If  $a$  is  $F$ , then it is entailed that  $a$  exists and that the universal  $F$  exists. *However,  $a$  could exist, and  $F$  could exist, and yet it fail to be the case that  $a$  is  $F$  ( $F$  is instantiated, but instantiated elsewhere only).*  $a$ 's being  $F$  involves something more than  $a$  and  $F$ . It is no good simply adding the fundamental tie or nexus of instantiation to the sum of  $a$  and  $F$ . The existence of  $a$ , of instantiation, and of  $F$  does not amount to  $a$ 's being  $F$ . The something more must be  $a$ 's being  $F$  – and this is a state of affairs.

Even if we have to reject *DISTINCTION* as it stands, it might be wondered whether we could not hold on to something like it and still dissolve the Bradleyan problem, i.e., if we could not (so to speak) quasi-retain it. Of course, we need to retain it in more than name only, but perhaps there is a sense in which it can be maintained that is still substantial enough to satisfy our intuitions, but which can be had at a cheaper price. The idea that there is this possibility might be strengthened by the fact that such a move is feasible with respect to another assumption that is in fact related to *DISTINCTION*. As we have seen, one of the consequences of rejecting *DISTINCTION* is that we must also deny that concrete particulars, like Sam, could change. While we could actually reject the possibility of this kind of change and still hold on to *DISTINCTION*, an inevitable consequence of giving up the latter is that we must also give up the following, *prima facie* non-empty, possibility:<sup>22</sup>

IDENTITY: Sam could have been different(ly constituted)

*IDENTITY* comes in both a weaker, temporal, and a stronger, modal, version. As stated above, it is of the modal kind. Put in temporal terms, it is the following intuition:

IDENTITY<sub>temporal</sub>: Sam could change yet not (thereby) cease to exist

As it turns out, whether or not we are willing to give up *DISTINCTION*, *IDENTITY*, both in its stronger and in its weaker form, must be given up.<sup>23</sup> If Sam *is* the bundle of his qualities, then any change in Sam's qualities brings into existence a new bundle, distinct from the original one (and distinct, therefore, from the bundle with which Sam was originally identified), *mutatis mutandis* if we identify Sam across possible worlds. Unnoticed to some, *IDENTITY* must go even if Sam is identified instead with

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<sup>22</sup> Like before, 'Sam' here functions as a place-holder.

<sup>23</sup> Provided, in the modal case, that we accept the thesis of the necessity of identity.

a substrate instantiating universals; if Sam is identified in *any* way with his constituents and if among his constituents you count his properties, there will be a sense in which he could not have been different from the way he in fact is.<sup>24</sup>

To have to give up IDENTITY may seem at least as costly as giving up the assumption of which it is one of the consequences, but is not so costly after all. For even if IDENTITY, strictly interpreted, must be given up it may still be that, loosely interpreted, it can be retained; it can be *quasi*-retained. When considering Sam *over time*, we might say that what exists at  $t_1$  (a certain bundle of tropes, or a certain substrate instantiating universals), although not strictly identical with what exists at  $t_2$  (a slightly different bundle of tropes, or a certain substrate instantiating a slightly different set of universals), is nevertheless *loosely* identical with what exists at  $t_2$ .<sup>25</sup> When considering Sam across possible worlds we might likewise say that although a possible world  $w_1$  which contains a ball very much like our Sam, does not (indeed cannot) contain Sam, it may very well be that the ball in question is a *counterpart* of our Sam and that, therefore, Sam could (loosely interpreted) have been different after all (*cf.* Lewis, 1986). Now, why could we not formulate an analogous ‘save’ in the case of DISTINCTION?

It is hard to find an explicit defence of rejecting DISTINCTION, formulated along these lines, in the literature. One philosopher comes close, however. In some of his more recent papers, David Armstrong defends the view that exemplification is

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<sup>24</sup> This point is made by Loux (1998: 106-107): “Although the central premise of the argument (“Difference of attributes entails difference of bundles”) was formulated in bundle-theoretic terms, that premise is merely an instance of a more general principle governing the constituent-whole relation; for if it is true that difference in attributes entails difference in bundles, it is true only because it is true that difference of constituents entails difference in constituted wholes or complexes. But the substratum theorist no less than the bundle theorist construes the attributes associated with an ordinary object as its constituents. Accordingly, if the bundle theorist is committed to denying that the concrete object emerging from a change is ever numerically identical with that entering the change, so, it would seem, is the substratum theorist.” In his (2006: 241), Armstrong claims (against Loux) that: “It is not quite so obvious that subject/attribute analyses of particulars must yield the necessity of predication. This is because a subject/attribute analysis creates a certain ‘distance’ between a particular and its properties, a distance not present in bundle theories /.../ given a subject/attribute analysis, the subject, the particular, seems to stand in some way or degree outside its properties.” It is clear from this quote that the only way in which a subject/attribute theorist may avoid giving up CHANGE is if she is willing to identify the concrete particular with the *substrate* only. But then CHANGE is saved at the expense of a whole host of other, just as respectable intuitions.

<sup>25</sup> What criteria must be fulfilled for us to be able to say that something has persisted as loosely the same thing over time (or across worlds) is of course the next question. The answer will presumably refer to such relations as e.g. similarity, causality, contiguity etc. *Cf.* Chisholm (1976).

partial identity.<sup>26</sup> In this connection, he asks: “Is the theory forced to say that, given the actual universals and the actual particulars, each intersection, each state of affairs, is then necessary?” (2005: 144). Armstrong finds that he *must* say this (and, hence, in my terms, that he *must* deny DISTINCTION). This clearly goes against Armstrong’s old views, and so it is no surprise that he is careful not to leave the thesis without justification. This is the justification he provides (2005: 144-145):

...the intersection theory can largely follow Lewis here. Where *a* is in fact F, this is strictly necessary. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which *a* might not have been F. Object *a* and property F might not have existed, but instead there might have been counterpart *a'* and F' where *a'* is *not* F'. These close counterparts are very like *a* and F respectively, but would lack this particular intersection.

And, again, in his (2006: 240):

I concede, rather grudgingly, that...*a* sense can be given to ‘it is contingent that *a* is F’. But the point to be insisted on is that it is not a sense that stands in any *contradiction* to ‘it is necessary that *a* is F’...For, after all, *a* without F is something less than *a*, and therefore *is not a*. All that is true is that there is something genuinely contingent involved. I grant that the particular *a* is a contingent being. The proposition ‘*a* exists’ is contingent, hence *a* might not have existed. Furthermore, I grant there might have existed, at the same place and time, a counterpart of *a*, something that closely resembles *a*, although it is not *a*...I argue that this story about counterparts, a story that I accept, does no more than explain why...we might *wrongly* think that ‘*a* is F’ is contingent.

Unfortunately, what Armstrong says here only works as a defence of the view that a state of affairs has its particular constitution necessarily and not the view that the constituents of a state of affairs necessarily constitute that state of affairs, i.e. he merely succeeds in defending the rejection of IDENTITY, not DISTINCTION. And, although a rejection of DISTINCTION certainly does entail a rejection of IDENTITY, the opposite relationship does not hold.<sup>27</sup> DISTINCTION is true or false independently

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<sup>26</sup> Armstrong (2005; 2006). I will not discuss this view here. In fact, Armstrong (personal communication) informs me that he has now changed his view. As this is not a paper on Armstrong’s views, that circumstance makes no difference to the present argument.

<sup>27</sup> To give up distinction means saying that the constituents of the concrete particular are *necessarily* bonded. That is, if they exist, they must be bonded to one another. If distinction is rejected, therefore, there is certainly a sense in which it is necessarily true that ‘*a* is F’. Likewise, if a concrete particular *is* its constituents, and so could not change (at least not strictly speaking) it is, once again, necessarily true that ‘*a* is F’. But these are not the same truths. In its first instance, *a*, in ‘*a* is F’ refers to one of the concrete particular’s constituents (presumably its substrate). In its latter instance, it refers to something completely different, namely the concrete particular itself.

of the truth or falsity of IDENTITY. Its rejection must, therefore, be separately defended.

Now, only a little modification of Armstrong's original argument is needed for it to turn into a justification of the rejection of DISTINCTION. To paraphrase Armstrong, we could say that there might have existed some counterparts of Sam's constituents, i.e. *some things that closely resemble Sam's constituents although they are not in fact Sam's constituents*, where these things did *not* constitute Sam. As soon as we put the story explicitly in terms of the counterparts of Sam's constituents, rather than in terms of the counterparts of Sam himself, however, it is clear that the analogy is not a perfect one.

Suppose we want to identify Sam's counterparts. We presumably do this by considering some possible world in which a concrete particular that is exactly similar to our Sam in certain respects, and perhaps sufficiently similar in others, exists. That is, we look for a concrete particular which shares some (but not necessarily all) Sam's properties. Think now of what it would mean to identify the counterparts of Sam's *constituents*. Suppose, e.g. that we want to identify the counterpart of Sam's constituent Redness (or his red<sub>1</sub>-trope, if Sam is a bundle of tropes). How do we do that? Do we look for something sufficiently like Redness? A slightly different shade of Red perhaps? That seems strange. To be able to cater for the intuition that the constituents of Sam could have existed and yet not constitute Sam, we imagine a possible world which is as far as possible exactly like the actual one, but where (exactly!) similar counterparts of Sam's constituents exist, yet Sam does not. But what does it mean to say of Redness that it is exactly similar to Counterpart-Redness? Now things become complicated. The universal realist understands resemblance between concrete particulars in terms of the number of universals the concrete particulars have in common, and she understands resemblance between universals in terms of overlapping or partial identity (an idea first introduced by Armstrong: 1978b). For our present purposes, neither of these analyses of resemblance will do. Sam cannot resemble Counterpart-Sam because they share some (or all) their constituents. What constitutes Sam *must*, if DISTINCTION is rejected, constitute him, which means that Sam, as well as his constituents exist only in the actual world. Sam's constituent

Redness, moreover, cannot resemble Counterpart-Redness in the sense that Redness and Counterpart-Redness partially overlap. Redness and Counterpart-Redness *cannot* overlap, because Redness exists in the actual world only, whereas Counterpart-Redness is exclusively bound to some possible world, distinct from the actual one. Resemblance between possible worlds, between concrete particulars and their counterparts, and between the constituents of concrete particulars and their counterparts, must therefore be treated differently from the way resemblance is treated when it occurs between concrete particulars or between universals *in* the actual world. Most probably, the universal realist will have to say that resemblance between possible worlds (and so, between the constituents of possible worlds) is primitive. This leaves the universal realist in a worse position than where she started as her theory now features two different notions of resemblance; a terrible blow to the theory if you, as Armstrong, think that the fact that the universal realist, but not the trope theorist, can do without a primitive notion of resemblance is what counts most strongly in favour of universal realism (*Cf.* Armstrong 1997: 22f). Worse than that, if we consider each possible world as itself a (very complex) concrete particular, then the properties that characterise these concrete particulars may be “the same” and still, if properties are world-bound, we must say that they are distinct. The properties that characterize worlds considered as single concrete particulars, therefore, can be rightly characterized as universals in name only. For all intents and purposes, they are tropes.

Not surprisingly, your prospects look considerably brighter if properties actually *are* tropes. According to trope-theory, tropes are particular qualities that may resemble one another to different degrees (up to exact similarity). Trope-theorists generally treat resemblance as an undefined primitive and so, from this perspective, resemblance should cause no problem (i.e. resemblance across possible worlds will not force the trope theorist to further complicate her theory of resemblance). The counterpart of Sam’s constituent red<sub>1</sub> is simply the (primitively) exactly similar trope red<sub>2</sub>. If properties are tropes, therefore, it seems as if some sense can be made of the claim that DISTINCTION can be quasi-retained. This is one reason for believing that there are tropes but not, I believe, the best reason. In general, if a deep-seated

intuition can be *genuinely* retained, this should always be preferred to merely quasi-retaining it (unless the view in question is horribly “expensive” in other departments, of course). DISTINCTION *can* be genuinely retained, as I will argue next, but only if we accept at least the existence of relation-tropes.

*Asymmetric dependence*

To see if there is some way in which to solve the problem of the One in Many while genuinely retaining DISTINCTION, we must explore, once again, if there is some way in which to say of Sam that he is identical with his constituents related, and where this relating is unfounded, which does not end up in vicious infinite regress. We must, in other words, consider once more the nature of relations. More precisely, we must investigate how a relation may stand to its relata. Bradley’s reasoning, remember, rests on the assumption that relation and relata may stand to one another in only two ways; that relation and relata are either symmetrically dependent upon, or symmetrically independent of, one another. If the relating is *founded* in the nature and existence of its terms, it is such that, if the relata exist, their relating obtains, and *vice versa*; relation and relata mutually depend on one another for their nature and existence. If the relating is *not founded* in the nature and existence of its terms, it is such that if the relata exist, the relation may or may not exist, and if the relation exists, the relata may or may not exist; the relation and its relata are, in this case, mutually independent of one another. Figure 1 depicts the different ways in which relation and relata may depend on one another, given that their relating is founded and unfounded, respectively:<sup>28</sup>

	Founded	Unfounded
$a, b \rightarrow_{\text{depend}} R$	X	—
$R \rightarrow_{\text{depend}} a, b$	X	—

Figure 1

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<sup>28</sup> ‘*a*’ and ‘*b*’ = the relata of the relation; ‘*R*’ = the relation; ‘ $\square_{\text{depend}}$ ’ should be read as ‘whatever precedes the arrow depends for its nature and existence on whatever succeeds it’; an ‘x’ means that relation and relata exhibit this particular sort of dependency; a ‘—’ means that relation and relata do *not* exhibit the dependency in question.

It is easy to see how the possibilities captured in this figure could be multiplied. If relation and relata can depend on, or be independent of, one another symmetrically, they should be able to stand in these sorts of dependency-relations also *asymmetrically*. At least, any argument set out to prove that there is *no* way in which relation and relata may stand to one another that does not end up in either contradiction, infinite regress, or which runs counter to DISTINCTION must, to be convincing, consider (and reject) *all* the possibilities. Let us therefore see whether it is true that on no understanding of the way a relation stands to its relata can relations be such that they manage to explain how the concrete particular can be a One in Many without contradiction or vicious infinite regress. In figure 2, what I take to be all the available alternatives are depicted:

	Founded	Semi-Founded	Semi-Unfounded	Unfounded
$a, b \rightarrow_{\text{depend}} R$	x	—	x	—
$R \rightarrow_{\text{depend}} a, b$	x	X	—	—

Figure 2

Relations that depend asymmetrically on their relata (and *vice versa*) appear in the two middle-most columns. In the first of these columns, the relation depends for its existence on the existence of the relata, whereas the relata have an existence that does not likewise depend on the existence of the relation. In the second, the relata depend for their existence on the existence of the relation, yet the relation may exist even if the relata do not.<sup>29</sup>

If relations are semi-founded on their relata, Bradley's problem disappears. On this account, and more precisely, a relation able to account for the existence of Sam while respecting DISTINCTION is a relation such that although its existence is contingent, if it does exist, it must relate what it in fact relates. That is, there is no possible world in which the relation exists and relates some other entities than those it relates in the actual world or where it exists and relates nothing at all (a farfetched possibility I admit). The relation is *by its nature* such that it relates some specified relata. Most importantly for our prospects of (dis)solving the problem of the One in Many, even if the relation thus depends for its existence on the existence of its relata,

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<sup>29</sup> I will make no further use of this understanding of the relating of what are many into one here, but leave it in for completeness.

the opposite does not hold true. There is, in other words, some possible world in which the relata exist yet their relation does not.<sup>30</sup> The presence of a semi-founded relation in a world which also features Sam's (other) constituents, is now enough to account for the truth of <Sam exists>.<sup>31</sup> The relation cannot *not* relate Sam's constituents, relating them is part of its essence. This means that no infinite regress can be generated. In virtue of being semi-founded, the relation which supposedly binds Sam's constituents together is already sufficiently "affiliated" with its relata, and so does not require the existence of yet further relations in order to be properly tied to them. The right amount of unity is not obtained at the expense of DISTINCTION, moreover. There is still some possible world in which it is true that what happen to be Sam's constituents in the actual world exist, yet Sam does not. Problem solved.

#### *Why there are Tropes*

What more can we say about the nature of a relation able both to account for the existence of Sam, and to respect DISTINCTION? On the present suggestion, relations must be such that they relate some particular relata. In this, they are like "hooks" fit for not just any loop. If concrete particulars are bundles of tropes, this means that, because that which the relation essentially relates is particular, at no time can it exist in more than one place at one moment in time.<sup>32</sup> This is also true if concrete particulars are substrates exemplifying universals. Because substrates are particular, it follows that the whole constituted by a substrate and the universals it instantiates

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<sup>30</sup> Even if the relata do not depend *specifically* on the relation R, they may very well depend for their existence on the existence of *some* relation in which they stand. They may, in this sense, be *generically* dependent on the existence of some relation. Generic dependence cannot be used to solve the problem of the One in Many however (which is why I believe that Armstrong's attempt (1997) fails).

<sup>31</sup> *If* the relation exists, so must Sam. To say this is not to give a full account of what is required for Sam to exist, however. We still need an account of the circumstances necessary (and sufficient) for the existence of the *relation*. No such account is given here, and so the aim of this paper is *not* an account of the circumstances under which concrete particulars in fact exist. The aim of this paper is more modest (but still very important), namely to prove that that there *can* be concrete particulars in the first place.

<sup>32</sup> If concrete particulars are bundles of universals (which is a problematic view to begin with) it seems as if a case could be made for saying that a relation might exist in more than one place at one moment in time. However, this can hardly be said to make the universal-bundle any more attractive. Quite the opposite, it now appears as we cannot even say that, although identically constituted, two indiscernible concrete particulars could still be distinguished by their being distinct "bundlings".

cannot exist in more than one place at each moment in time. This means that relations are particular. They are however not *concrete* particulars. Among other things, they do not monopolize their place in space-time. Relations are abstract. So, relations are *abstract particulars*. They are tropes. This is why there are tropes.

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