
In Quest of *De Re* Identity: Whether Its Directly Referential or Attributive

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Abstract: We know that metaphysics deals with the ultimate reality: what there is, what really exist? What is the real nature or fundamental structure of the material world? What is the intrinsic property of an object that it could not lack, even if it lacks the property it could not be what it is. I am in quest of that essential attribute that an object must have. How to get that essence: through description or by mere ostension? Are they attributive or directly referential, bare substratum? Is there any real property at all by which we can identify an individual? Is there any real connection between proper name and the individual itself? As Aristotle said Substances are the ultimate subject of predication. There must be a single substance of which we see the attributes. Now among these attributes which one is essential and which properties are accidental? For instance, being human, is an essential property of Socrates but being snub-nosed is an accidental one. In order to search of that essential attribute I have gone through an extensive survey of literature where I have started with Aristotle and followed up with in the views of Quine, Kripke, Plantinga and Adams. For Quine, To Be is To Be the Value of a Variable, words do not have any meaning of its own. It depends on the way we describe it. Quine attacked the possibility of 'necessity' on open context. Quine rejected the possibility of de dicto necessity as it violates the principle of extensionality whereas necessity as expressed by a semantical predicate applicable on names of statement does not hold principle of substitutivity, it leads us to referential opacity. Kripke brought back names to their original nondescriptive status. I have discussed a controversy between proper names and definite descriptions, whether there is some definite description for every proper name or proper names are mere rigid designators. In this context, I have discussed Mill, Frege, Russell, Kripke Plantinga theory on proper names. Within this exercise I have tried to find out if there is any essentialist stance among the views of these analytic philosophers. Finally, I have sought to wind up this work with a leaning towards essentialism...

Keywords: Quantified Modal Logic, *De Re* Modality, Rigid Designator, Transworld Identity

1. Introduction

We know, metaphysics deals with the identity of things, what they are. Here I am in search of that identity that makes the thing what it is, by which we can single out or pick out an object and distinguish the object from other possible objects. There are two types of identity, self-identity i.e., trivial and contingent identity. We know, every object is necessarily self-identical. [1]

Contingent identity is that essential property of an object that an object must have, if it lacks this property it could not be what it is. Whereas there are some other properties called accidental properties that an object just happens to have. What properties are essential to Socrates? Socrates has self-

identities, however is snub-nosed accidentally, as he was not able to be self-diverse but he can be non-snob-nosed. To understand the contingent identity statement first, we need to understand the difference between the essential property and the accidental property of an object. We always tend to hold on to something very stable, basic, unique, intrinsic, fundamental, and discarding that is unstable or contingent. That means, there is a neat dichotomy between core vs periphery, central vs margin, permanent vs temporary, necessity vs possibility. That indicates that there is always a contrast in our mind between a name and what it stands for. A term is so bound up with its meaning that we often mean by 'term' the 'objects of thought' which has both subject and predicate where the subject is a concrete individual and predicate is only the detail of the

subject or its essential or constitutive being. Even according to Aristotle, the essence is a fundamental subject of predication which implies an entity that has no properties in itself. But is the bearer of the other varying properties of the object itself. They are impredicable. However, these primary substances are not bare particulars i.e., without qualifications. The primary substances are qualified by predicates that are called secondary substances that can alternatively be called genera and species that are the different kinds. Primary beings are individuals like Tom, Dick, Harry. Secondary beings fall within the category that includes the individuals like man, rose, gold, etc. Every single member of the given species holds their unique characteristic. Aristotle in *Metaphysics* related the essence with a kind of thing which was expressed by its definition or meaning in which the parts of this explanation are differentia and genus.

2. W. V. O Quine's Attack on *De Re*

According to W. V. O Quine, the meaning is when *it is divorced from the object of reference and wedded to the word*. It is fixed by the conventions for the use of expressions that we learn when we learn a language. W. V. O. Quine in his famous work *Pursuit of Truth* observes: "Words owe their meaning to their role in sentences, rather having meaning independently." An important connection exists between the world and the language and is not defined as a referential relation between sentence, complete utterances and sensory stimulations.

In an argument by Quine, he stood opposing the essences stating that, "*what makes something necessary are not some features of the object but rather some feature of the way we describe the object.*" [2] It is usually claimed that the meaning of a predicate determines its extension, in the sense that any two expressions with the same meaning must have the same extension. But Quine denies that our language contains expressions that refer to the world; Actually, what he denies is that reference is fundamental. His semantic thesis asserts that reference is pure in so far as it does not characterize the referent while meaning is not a property of expression, it is fixed by the conventions for the use of expressions. Meaning is what is associated with the rules of languages, like 'Copper is metal', 'Wood is not a metal'. These conventions determine the meaning of the word 'copper', 'metal', or 'wood'. What Quine adds is that there is nothing intrinsic to the term 'wood' or 'copper' which automatically makes it a name or renders its occurrence referential- ensuring it sticking to a supposedly corresponding piece of reality.

In this context, I have tried to discuss a highly controversial issue whether the essence belongs to a thing only relatively or whether it belongs to it absolutely or really - This has earned a full-mouthed technical terminology in the philosophical literature. If essence belongs to objects really or inalienably irrespective of any mode of conception, it would be termed as *de re*, whereas if essence belongs to an object only in so far as the object is conceived in a

proposition the essence will be termed as *de dicto*. Thus, when adverbs like essentially 'or necessarily' is coupled to a noun - say Paul or table, they (i.e., these adverbs) do not touch the extension (real referents) of Paul or table- they only pertain to an intension or mode of conceiving Paul and the tables. Speaking in philosophical terminology, the anti-essentialists would hold the adverbs essentially or necessarily as being referentially opaque, as these adverbs refer to the mode of conceptions that come as intermediary screens between the real object on the one hand and the subject on the other. An upholder of *de re* essence will hold these adverbs to be referentially transparent.

For Quine, admitting quantification within the modal framework is feasible provided that we admit the possibility of *de re* necessity. Quine rejected the possibility of *de dicto* necessity as it violates the principle of extensionality. Therefore, rejected the authenticity of quantifying into the context which is required by QML. In contrast, necessity, as expressed by a semantical predicate applicable solely on the names of statements, does not hold the principle of substitutivity, rather impels referential opacity. Quine does not limit himself within the scope of reference and its modes. His semantic thesis asserts that reference is pure in so far as it does not characterize the referent. He proceeds on with his program of limiting reference to pure reference that is the reference is free from the inference of language. To refer an object with singular terms like 'Plato', 'this book', 'the author of *Geetanjali*' - such terms do not refer to reality under their publicly reputed status as predicate less proper names, but because they fall under a concept. From the standpoint of language, we can uphold that the terms that appear to be singular are not at all singular terms, they are bound variables, there are no singular terms. Indeed, the task of referring is ultimately dependent on using some singular terms that roughly exemplify a general proposition. Singular terms like 'Socrates' and 'Plato' perform their referring function only in so far as the propositions like 'Socrates' refers to the individual known as Socrates (A) and 'Plato' refers to the man called Plato (B) come to exemplify the general proposition viz. 'Men, in general, refers to man'. (C) But as singular terms are having no reference, to solve this problem Quine favors the elimination of singular terms. [3]

For Quine, non-extensional contexts for singular terms are 'referentially opaque'; others he calls 'referentially transparent' or 'purely referential'. If what we are saying is simply true or false if the object then it should hold however that object is referred to. A singular term in a sentence would be referential, if and only if the singular term is interchangeable with all its co-referential terms. Expression of this proposition was given by a sentence that must remain the same, not depending on the name the object uses.

However, it would not stand true in case the 'mentioned' names are used instead. If we were saying that Quine, the man, rhymes with 'twine' then we would equally be saying that the well-known author of *Word and Object* rhymes with 'twine', for they are the same. But clearly what is being said is not about the man; it is about the name. The sentence,

however, contains a singular term naming the man and is to that extent misleading. Its wording suggests that it is about one thing, the man Quine, but is in fact about something else, the name 'Quine'. Canonical notation, designed to maximize clarity and to facilitate inference, will not regiment a singular term in such a position (viz. the position of naming a name or of mentioning) as referring to the object which we take to be designated by that term in ordinary cases. Quine objects to quantification in contexts of propositional attitudes like 'x knows or believes or doubts or wishes that...' [4].

So, we have seen most of Quine's efforts here deal with what he, following Russell, calls propositional attitudes. Propositional attitudes are mental states like a belief for hope or expectation that can be attributed to someone using a 'that'-clause. One believes or thinks that it will not rain on that day of the picnic, or fears that it will, or hopes that it won't, or doubts that the sun will shine, and so on. As we see, Quine takes it that a very wide range of ascriptions of mental states can be fitted into this category, including contexts that involve knowledge, belief, and epistemic modalities. Someone can be said to believe that a given proposition is true, or hope that it is true, or wonder whether it is true, and so on. But Quine, of course, does not accept this because, for him, quantification concerning a variable occurring in a context is possible only if the context is referentially transparent which means the singular term that is used in a statement can be replaced *Salva-veritate*. [4, 5] But as singular terms in a modal context cannot be replaced this use will not be purely referential. So, he needs to put forward another way of understanding the statement of propositional attitude. Propositional attitudes are of two distinct kinds, *de re* and *de dicto*. According to the sense-data given, it does not hold any of its meaning and depends on a suitable description. Therefore, for Quine, neither *de dicto* nor *de re* essence is possible. Objects do not possess property necessarily, these features are not the intrinsic feature of the object itself, for them, necessity was specific to a particular conceptual scheme, it is ultimately determined by a particular belief system imposed on the barrage of sensory stimulations. Necessity is dwelled not in the thing but in a way, we talk about certain things. Kripke brought back these names to their non-description type original status. [6] To identify 'Aristotle' as Aristotle, we do not require any of its properties. The object directly enters into our identification in the actual or possible world not via properties. Kripke was a no-sense theorist. For Frege, a sense of having a proper name exists in the presentation mode by which we can reach the referent. He felt that with proper names comes both reference and sense and what he meant by 'sense' comes close to what connotations are called by Mill and what descriptive meaning was called by Russell.

3. Kripke: Proper Names Are Rigid Designators

Kripke seeks to open up a new connection between the

nature and function of proper names and the issue of essence and necessity. He departs from both Frege and Russell, for whom proper names were reduced to definite descriptions (for different reasons) and from Quine for whom necessity (reduced to synonymy) was specific to a particular conceptual scheme – it did not have any space for a truth that is necessary for all possible worlds. Kripke when he brought the names back to their non-description type original status, opens up a way of rehabilitating essence and necessity. Kripke thinks that Mill rightly pointed out proper names to be non- connotative- they are arbitrary labels of an individual, they do not describe any of its property. For Mill, however, a common name does describe an abstract property or stands for a group of individuals. (We shall see that Mill and Kripke differ on the status of common names.)

Kripke uses the common term 'designator' which applies to both proper names and definite descriptions. Proper names are no more than 'empty tags' which directly label objects but do not connect to the referent in virtue of certain conceptual associations, they do not require any cognitive fix to get hooked into the reality.

Quine claims that QML (Quantified Modal Logic) connects essence to things that finally landed on *de re* essence. Rephrasing this it can be said that, QML is tied up with essentialism. The idea of *de re* necessity was rejected, consequently, the possibility of quantification in the modal contexts, as required by QML. [5-7] Kripke brought back essentialism by restoring names to their original non-descriptive status. For identifying "Aristotle" as "Aristotle" in actual or possible worlds, Kripke states there is no requirement of the properties, which shows that proper names rigidly designating the same trans-world entity-outgrowing all possible variations of observable properties across possible worlds. In Kripke's theory of *de re* essentialism the properties may not be analytical as they don't require to be connected. These were meaningful because it helps in underlining the different properties of an object in different conceivable universes and not under its conceptual content. A natural extension to the interpretation of possible-worlds into *de re* is called "identity across possible world" or "trans-world identity". [8]

For Kripke *de re* modality comprises essentialism with an introduction of a concept of trans-world identity. As already noted, Kripke said that proper names signify nondescription of the same object in every possible world. Hence, the proper names are "rigid designators". According to him, even if the object does not exist in the actual world, that particular object if there be any, will assign this object in every other possible world and not via any properties. Hence, he presented a wide variety of utilization of an idea of a possible world while defending the modality eloquence for both *de dicto* and *de re*. [8] Though Kripke did not answer directly to Quine's antiessentialism - not at least in his *Naming and Necessity* – we can develop his theory of possible worlds and rigid designation to construct a plausible refutation of Quine's pointed arguments against *de re* modality. The terms 'rigid designator' and 'non-rigid designator' and their

corresponding notions as introduced by Kripke are markedly technical and are sufficient to combat the Frege-Russell model of semantics.[6]. Kripke denied Frege-Russell's theory and claimed that proper names cannot be reduced into definite descriptions. Nor are there any extra-ordinary or logically proper names (as in the scheme of Russell) standing for bare individuals. So, by holding that proper names refer rigidly and non-descriptively to the same object in all possible worlds Kripke revived *de re* essences on the one hand and got rid of bare particulars on the other by bringing back names to their original non-descriptive status. To repeat, names for him do not refer to bare particulars, they are rather non-descriptive or non-qualitative – in so far as they are not available for use in an analytic proposition.

So, the key principle of Kripke was that if in this particular universe everything is inherently such and such, then in any imaginable world in which it occurs, we must designate the same entity. Beyond people, Kripke applied the principle of the essence to categories of items like gold and water. For Kripke, H₂O is not only regulation or regularity but rather the nature of the natural form. These ideas were already there in Aristotelian Essentialism. [8]

The dominant status of the essence for Kripke consists in its persisting beyond all attempts of conceiving a thing differently, all attempts of thinking it to have different properties – for all such attempts of de-essentializing an object ironically feed on its essential identity. And this essence is constituted by its non-qualitative identity – its origin or its atomic structure. And Kripke has pursued the main line of his contention consistently till the extreme point. He insists that all apparent possibility that a thing may be exactly alike in its observable properties and yet come out of a different material origin in a different world is not a genuine possibility. Such seeming disruption of an object's essence is a counterfactual on the actual world and not a counterfactual on the origin or the atomic structure of the object. What such de-essentializing moves propose is that – our actual world might have contained an exact facsimile of this object where the facsimile has a different origin or a different atomic structure. Similarly, if one proposes that a thing may undergo complete metamorphosis in its atomic structure, Kripke will still insist that such a possibility is a possibility about the actual universe – *that the universe may be such that it changes the nature of objects over time. For Kripke, such a counter-factual does not affect the non-temporal essence of the objects.* [8]

4. Mill, Frege-Russell's Controversy on Proper Names

According to Locke and Mill, proper names such as 'Socrates', 'Plato', 'Aristotle' denote an object denotatively that means it denotes the object of which it is the name, but there are some proper name "Pegasus" for example have no denotation. For Mill, "*a connotative term is one that denotes a subject and implies an attribute*". [9, 10] But "proper

names" do not indicate any attributes (it opposes definite description, does not express properties which he calls connotative individual names). A right name is merely a name. It refers clearly to its bearer and has no other linguistic feature. A name does not define its bearer as having any unique distinguishing features, unlike a definite definition.

Russell would say, the only true proper names that we would provide are names in our immediate meaning records, items of our own 'immediate acquaintance' if we want to reserve the word 'name' for items that just label an entity without defining it. The only such names which occur in our language are demonstrative "this" or "that". Russell agrees with Mill by saying that proper names are devoid of connotations but it varies from him in asserting that the words known by Mill as proper names are not at all proper names, they are just an abbreviated definition.

"Socrates" means "The master of Plato" or "the philosopher who drank Hemlock". Like Russell Quine also said that the terms that appear to be singular are not at all singular terms, they are bound variables, there are no singular terms. Singular terms like 'Socrates' and 'Plato' perform their referring function only in so far as the propositions like 'Socrates' refers to the individual known as 'Socrates' & 'Plato' refers to the teacher of Aristotle. But as singular terms are having no reference, to solve this problem Quine also favors the elimination of singular terms.

On the other hand, Frege assumes that a language speaker associates any property or conjunction of properties to each proper name, which defines the relationship as the unique thing that fulfills the related property (or properties). These properties constitute the 'sense of the name'. For Frege, a proper name has both context and connection, and what he means by 'sense' is very similar to what Mill considers connotation and what Russell calls descriptive importance. The meaning of a proper name is the display mode of the object whose name it is.

"The morning star" & "the evening star" not only does 'Venus' apply to a single sun, but they also have their respective senses. The two terms share the same relation, 'The Venus,' but they do not have the same significance and each of them has a particular manner of presentation. [11, 12]

Quine said, objects do have meaning but not in Fregean sense. Morning star & evening star both have different intentions but the same extension. If the intention & the extension were alike then the statement would be analytic. A context is extensional if and only if replacing any expression within that context by another of the same extension leaves the truth-value of the whole unchanged. It is called 'substitutivity of identity'.

Hesperus = Phosphorus has to be an ordinary contingent, empirical truth. A certain mountain can be seen from both Tibet & Nepal. When seen from one direction it was called 'Gaurishankar' when seen from another direction it was called 'Everest' And later empirical discovery was made that Gaurishanker is Everest.

Bertrand Russell would say as because statements like "Hesperus is Phosphorus" and "Gaurishanker is Everest" is

contingent, we can see that the names in question are not purely referential. Here, we just don't name the item we're discussing. So Russell concludes that the only true proper names we should use are names of our own 'immediate association' if we wish to reserve the word 'name' for items that just identify an entity without defining it.

The only names which occur in language are demonstratives like 'this' and 'that'. So, a proper name in ordinary sense cannot make identity statement. [13]

Kripke denied Frege-Russell's theory and claimed that proper names cannot be reduced into definite descriptions. Nor are there any extra-ordinary or logically proper names (as in the scheme of Russell) standing for bare individuals. The terms 'rigid designator' and 'non-rigid designator' and their corresponding notions as introduced by Kripke are markedly technical and are sufficient to combat the Frege-Russell model of semantics. So, by holding that proper names refer rigidly and non-descriptively to the same object in all possible worlds Kripke revived *de re* essences on the one hand and got rid of bare particulars on the other by bringing back names to their original non-descriptive status. To repeat, names for him do not refer to bare particulars, they are rather non-descriptive or non-qualitative – in so far as they are not available for use in an analytic proposition.

So, the key principle of Kripke was that if in this particular universe everything is inherently such and such, then in any imaginable world in which it occurs, we must designate the same entity. Beyond people, Kripke applied the principle of the essence to categories of items like gold and water. For Kripke, the nature of the natural kind is not just a statute or regularity that water is H₂O, but rather. These ideas were already there in Aristotelian Essentialism.

Kripke holds that proper names refer rigidly and non-descriptively to the same object in all possible worlds; so proper names are rigid designators. According to Kripke, even if the object does not exist in the actual world, that particular object if there be any, in all other imaginable worlds and not by any properties, it will designate the same object. In order to defend the eloquence of modality, both *de re* and *de dicto*, Kripke allowed a broad variety of usage of the concept of a future universe. Though Kripke did not answer directly to Quine in his Naming and Necessity. Here we can assume that Kripke might have replied to Quine's challenge as follows: For Kripke, the terms cyclist and biped are non-rigid designators. Therefore Quine's assumption that all cyclists are necessarily biped is unwarranted. Likewise, morning stars 'and evening stars 'also non-rigid designators. that is, that the property of being a morning star or an evening star get instantiated in one individual is contingent. Morning Star is identical to the evening star is contingent. Similarly, the property of being a cyclist and that of being a biped get necessarily instantiated in the same set of individuals is unwarranted i.e., all cyclist is biped is wrong.

Now I shall discuss an overview of Plantinga's treatment of essence. For Plantinga, any object should have a property that it does not share with others, that the person who has it owns the property uniquely. If Socrates is an essence

embodied by Socrates, therefore it is instantiated by the actual Socrates and no other in the conceivable universe in which it is instantiated. There is no conceivable universe in which Socrates might have had the name of someone other than Socrates. For him, by description, an essence implies important properties. The world-indexed properties of Socrates are central to Socrates. So the nature of object x is that which not only resides in any conceivable universe, but its essence must therefore be determined by that same object and by nothing else in every particular world.

5. Plantinga's Non-qualitative Essence

Proper names for Plantinga do not stand for bare records, they convey assets. But one aspect that Plantinga attaches to proper names is that their referents are rigidly named. Descriptions typically do not communicate essences, although certain descriptions convey essences. There is also a need for contingency for Plantinga, an individual having a property in this world is necessarily determined by that world to have that property. This world-bound contingency becomes a required property from one world to another that it can pass on. So, we have seen, Kripke recognized that trans-world identification is non-qualitative, but Plantinga accepted the individuals connected to the world. In the context that it does not fall back on a more basic property or partnership, Adams also points out that *de re* identity or trans-world identity is primitive. And the characteristic of an identity that is primitive or non-derivative is the power to justify whether two persons are one or the other.

Adams exposes a certain problem in Leibniz's notion of individual identity in so far as it is claimed to be purely qualitative. As for Leibniz, each quality is non-repeatable, i.e., it exhausts in a unique individual, the same individual recurring in possible worlds will amount to alternative sets of qualities or suchness – with no non-qualitative thisness spilling over these sets or clusters. Adams points out that in Leibniz's scheme it is not clear as to what constitutes the Transworld qualitative identity of an individual, for there seems to be no underlying general principle that would govern which qualities or suchness are to be pooled together to form the individual in W1 and which are to form the identity in W2, nor will it settle the borderline cases between a set of qualities in one world (say tallness, baldness, and intelligence in W1 and their opposites in W2.) To leave this matter entirely to conventional definitions will go against our intuitions. Hence Adams declares that while the identity relation in the same world is primitive and goes beyond the qualitative or non-qualitative character of thisness when it comes to Transworld identity – this is must better explain in terms of non-qualitative thisness. Without the latter, no basis for identifying the same individual across the different and even contradictory sets of suchnesses can be secured. [1, 14]

6. Adams' Transworld Identity

Adams contrives a special argument to demonstrate the

Transworld identity to be nonqualitative. He asks us to conceive three different worlds – W1 W2 and W3 - and places two objects viz. a and b in W1, preserves a and annihilates b in W2, and finally, preserve b and annihilates an in W3. (I have used diagrams to give an explicit representation of Adams's argument in this connection.) Leibnitz cannot argue that the two b-s in W1 and W2 are qualitatively different – the non-existence of b in W2 rules out that possibility. Hence a non-qualitative thisness of b irresistibly juts out as the Transworld identity across W1 and W2, similar remarks apply to an as well.

According to Adams Leibnitz labored under the presupposition that the only way to secure two (or more) indiscernible (i.e., qualitatively identical but numerically distinct) individuals is to conceive different instances of the same qualities recurring in different positions of the same space-time framework – which would virtually inject qualitative differences in the putatively indiscernible objects. Leibnitz did not explore the other possibility of placing the individual outside its actual spatio-temporal relations and thereby failed to hit upon world-differences that would preserve the same individual - purified of all differences of qualities about its different spatio-temporal positions.

For Kripke too, the Transworld identity of an object consists in its being free from the spatial interactions and the historical vicissitudes it enters into in the actual world. World-differences cannot be the difference between objects that are qualitatively the same but have different origins, i.e., have different spatio-temporal positions within the same framework. Adams points out that any proposal that an individual may be born at a different moment or go through a different stretch of time - will load that individual with a different history and a different repertoire of memory – which will make him virtually different from the original. Further one cannot posit that the individual in the actual world i.e., W1 carries his history or memory content in W2 as well, for that would imply that the object in the possible world being causally linked to the original in the actual world. Adams affirms that possible worlds are in *logical* space, not causal space - i.e., there cannot be causal relations among possible worlds.

According to Adams to say that the actual world is constituted by the actual space-time coordinates is not to say that different worlds will be constituted by alternative spacetime frameworks i.e., alternative space-time geometries or topologies. Between a linear time and a non-linear time, or between Euclidean space and a non-Euclidean space the crucial Transworld identity of individuals will not be preserved.

Thus, overall Adams agrees with Kripke that Transworld identity should be constituted by the individual's freedom from spatial positions, interactions, and temporal history, and also insists that Leibnitz should have constructed his theory of possible worlds on this freedom. It is this freedom from relational suchness that would turn out to be the non-qualitative Transworld identity.

But Adams at the same time points out that *to admit that there are Transworld identities and differences – there has to be necessary ground that would explain why a given thisness also incorporates certain suchness*, say for instance why I fall under the category of a human person and not under those of dream, musical performance or football games. For Adams, a non-qualitative thisness does not hold itself aloof from all qualities and their possible variations, but the necessary connection between a nonqualitative thisness and the possession of its certain properties cannot be laid out in the form of an analytic proposition. Kripke's reservation against a qualitative thisness consists in the fact that all objects may be falsely represented by inappropriate qualities – which renders all qualities as contingent and dispensable. But the need for this non-conceptual ground of possible variation of qualities was not explicitly appreciated in Kripke's scheme in *Naming and Necessity*. [8, 14]

7. Wittgenstein's View on Proper Names

In *Tractatus* Wittgenstein talked about the underlying structure that links logic, language and the world. He also argued about the need for an analysis of ordinary language in terms of a perspicuous symbolism that would display a one to one relationship between a proposition and a fact – when both of them are broken down to their simplest components – viz. to atomic propositions and atomic states of affairs. All propositions are ultimately truth-functional combinations of atomic propositions – thus all language is resolvable to a unique constant. So for early Wittgenstein, though there is an apparent complexity and diversity of propositions still there lies a uniform, essential structure of truthfunctional propositions and that can be reduced to a single constant. And language to have a determinate sense must be ultimately based on objects – the absolutely simple logical atoms of the world. These objects imbibe their range of combination with other objects, which implies that any genuine propositions – however unusual and unconventional it may seem to be – must ultimately be constrained by the permissible range of combination of the objects. In this way early Wittgenstein sought to secure an essential metaphysics via an essential structure of language. However in *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein attacked essentialism by rejecting the picture theory, and the search for commonality and uniformity. He denied essence, the universal, the common element present in all the objects of a class and accepted only an indeterminate and incomplete flow of the criss-crossing, the overlapping features. For him language is constituted by an ever expanding flow of uses, which he called language-games. The significance of the term 'language-game' lies in the fact that like games language too is not based on any ontology that would confer a common essence across all the widely divergent uses. Nor did Wittgenstein accept any hidden essence behind appearance. In fine the later Wittgenstein denied both analysis and essence and propagated description of usage and behaviours as the only method of philosophy. Later Wittgenstein will neither

commit himself to ontological necessity, nor to necessity being a matter of scheme-relative propositions in the Quinean sense. Quine's claim that necessity becomes relative to a conceptual scheme, that 'bachelors' and 'unmarried man' or that '9' and the 'number of planets' become synonyms in a particular conceptual scheme, itself becomes further relative. That is to say the so-called scheme-relative necessity itself turns out to be opaque, for one can never extract a necessity absolutely from a particular mode of relativisation. To ensure how necessity is being generated as relative to a conceptual scheme – Quine had to invest the relativisor and the relativised with transparent identities or essences - and within Wittgenstein's later writings one can gather insights for problematising this Quinean commit at while all the anti-essentialists have been trying to reduce *de re* necessity to *de dicto* necessity, or *de dicto* necessity further to a scheme of beliefs, Wittgenstein will be saying that we cannot lay out this realising exercise in the form of a neat hypothesis – i.e. in the form of a proposition. On the other hand we have seen that all attempts to establish *de re* essences hark back on changeless a historical identities of objects - that are manifestly claimed to lie beyond any spatio-temporal relations and interactions. For later Wittgenstein all attempts to establish essences, or the contrary exercises to relativise them to a particular set of presumptions, are themselves language-games – they boil down to usage and practices that do not rest on any foundation. The vital fall-out of Wittgenstein's non-essentialism seems to be aspiring tension between two parallel endeavours. The more you try to disperse essences, make them relative or peripheral, the more the essentialists will try to show the underlying essence as exploding through such anti-essentialising exercise. And parallelly, more the antiessentialist will seek to project the multiple characters and relativise them under different schemes more will later Wittgenstein seek to disperse the essentialist frames underlying these schemes themselves. And more will he try to show that the claim of an underlying identity spilling over all modes of conceptions is simply an architectonic or formal requirement, i.e., a language-game having no ontological content. However I have sought to wind up this work with a leaning towards essentialism. The fact that indeterminacies do not go on forever, the fact that even machines can be trained to be sensitised to certain quantitative boundaries and qualitative identities, speak in favour of underlying essences – that are independent of human needs, interests or forms of living. Besides later Wittgenstein had himself suggested that there are certain 'rock bottom' of our usages – which are not the material origin or atomic structure of objects, but are the forms of living that are the conditions of possibility of all phenomena. Any investigation into essences should be geared to a ruthless task of problematising essences and not presuming them at the outset. Otherwise we cannot ensure that we achieved our outcome through an honest and laborious exercise, and not through a popular rhetorics or the common-sense imageries of a permanent beyond temporary, an abiding beyond the transient, or a core beyond the husk. [15]

8. Conclusion

To sum up the report it can be said that a few of certain arguments worked in the favor of an essence presented by Aristotle, Adams, Kripke, and Plantinga. All of them state that the essence which is more general and real but not in the sense of haecceity and neither in the Platonic form of sense. Such features used together work as a symbol of essentialism. Essentialists will say that generating their differences in an effort of breaking the essences is rooted in real essence already. However, I have sought to wind up this work with a leaning towards *de re* identity. The fact that indeterminacies do not go on forever, the fact that even machines can be trained to be sensitized to certain quantitative boundaries and qualitative identities, speak in favor of underlying essences—that are independent of human needs, interests, or forms of living. There are certain 'rock bottom' of our usages which are not the material origin or atomic structure of objects but are the forms of living that are the conditions of possibility of all phenomena.

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