

EXPLANATION AND INDIVIDUAL ESSENCE*

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I show that a novel ontic reading of explanation, intending to capture the de re essential features of individuals, can support the qualitative view of individual essences. It is argued further that the putative harmful consequences of the Leibniz Principle (PII) and its converse for the qualitative view can be avoided, provided that individual essences are not construed in the style of the naïve bundle theory with set-theoretical identity-conditions. Adopting either the more sophisticated two-tier BT or, alternatively, the neo-Aristotelian position of taking essences as natures in the Aristotelian sense, can help to evade these main charges against the qualitative view. The functional parallels with the alternative haecceitistic view of individuation and individual essence will also be considered.

Keywords: *qualitative individual essence, bundle theory, Identity of Indiscernibles, Aristotelian essentialism, ontic explanation, explanatory-gap argument*

The qualitative view of individual essence assumes that an individual has, apart from its specific or kind essence, an individual essence as well, one that is unique to it, which can be spelled out in terms of qualitative features. Authors working on the topic further assume that the qualitative features can be captured by sets of nontrivial essential properties (Forbes 1985, 99; Lowe 1995, 69-70). The set-theoretical construal of the qualitative features, however, has the risk of excessive rigidity when it comes to the issue of identity through worlds and times: any change, even the most trifling one, in the set of qualitative features would result in the numerical change of the individual. This is precisely what the converse of

the Leibniz principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles (**PII**) says: property-discernibility entails numerical difference.¹ The highly disputed (**PII**) itself guarantees that property-indiscernibility is sufficient for numerical identity. Though (**PII**) is typically not formulated for modal cases, the qualitative view seems to lose much of its appeal under the potential risk of its being committed to (**PII**) and its converse.

The present account markedly deviates from the set-theoretical reading of the qualitative view. My claim is that the qualitative features constituting the individual essence or nature of an individual make a structured, function- and goal-oriented constellation. Individual essences cannot be captured by a mere conjunction of properties. Therefore, this account does not invoke the mere listing of the features obeying set-theoretical identity conditions. To note, (**PII**) and its converse concern the mere listing of properties. I suggest that by adopting a version of the qualitative view that is more refined than the naïve bundle theory, one can avoid the main charge that the qualitative view is vulnerable to objections that stem from (**PII**) and its converse.

Apart from evading this charge, a positive support for positing qualitative individual essences can be found in the form of the ontic or metaphysical version of explanation. The explanatory role of the qualitative features has already been explored (Ujvári 2013a), but now I think that the explanatory approach can be strengthened with the metaphysically committing version. In this version the epistemic reading of explanation is replaced by its ontic reading; this represents also a decisive step in the essentialist-explanatory account of modalities.² The point is that once *de re* essentialism has been liberated from the modal-logical view of necessity, explanation in the ontic sense could be given a crucial role in determining the essential features of things.³ And the ontic reading of essential features is naturally coupled with conceiving ‘individuation in the metaphysical sense (as opposed to the cognitive or epistemic)’ as it is recently stressed by Lowe.⁴

Admittedly, the nature of support for qualitative individual essences on the part of explanation in the ontic sense is not a strict, compelling argument: it inclines rather than necessitates its conclusion in virtue of

¹ The converse of (**PII**) often referred to as Leibniz’s Law is obviously impeccable in the context of classical logic as a characterization of identity. However, the metaphysical problems of counterfactual identity and identity through times situate the converse of (**PII**) into another perspective.

² Kment (2014, ch. 4-5), Gorman (2005, 276-289). As a forerunner of the view, see Salmon (1984, 84-134).

³ See Fine (1994) and Gorman (2005).

⁴ Lowe (2014, 216).

the fact that the notion of qualitative individual essence coheres well with the essentialist-explanatory conception. ‘Cohering well’ means that once this conception is adopted, the significance of the very notion of qualitative individual essence increases.

The familiar alternative account of the identity of individuals through worlds and times is the haecceitistic account. Concerning the contemporary versions of haecceitism, I take them as elaborations on Kaplan’s original claim that individuals can be identified through counterfactual situations without making recourse to their attributes or qualitative features (Kaplan 1975). While not denying the relevance and particular suitability of haecceitism in certain contexts, I think that much can be claimed in favor of the qualitative view of individual essence as well. The paper does not intend to contribute to any current debate between proponents of the qualitative view of individual essence and proponents of its haecceitistic view. Rather, the goal is only to bolster the position of the qualitative view by underlining its role in explanation in the ontic sense and by evading the main standard charge of the view being committed to **(PII)** and its converse.

In the first section of the paper, I consider the prospects for the qualitative view of individual essence backed by the ontic reading of explanation. I also show here that **(PII)** is not a real threat to the tenability of this view. In the second section, I point out that individuation in the metaphysical sense requires that individuation should be told apart from mere particularization of the type. In the metaphysical sense individuation is separated from mere identification, say, by ostension. Consulting the literature, one finds a striking overlap between the functions and roles attributed to haecceity by advocates of haecceitism, and the functions and roles attributed to qualitative individual essence by supporters of the qualitative view. So, in the third section, I explore the parallels, and in the assessment, I find that the explanatory function is a further crucial factor in the comparison. Turning to the tenable versions of the qualitative account, I shall present only briefly the two-tier view of **BT** (bundle theory) since it has already been discussed in the literature (Simons 1994; Cleve 1985; Ujvári 2013b). The neo-Aristotelian version of essentialism has also been spelled out many times; therefore, I shall add only, in the fourth section, a further point about how this position is applicable to a sound theory of individuation and individual essence.⁵ To anticipate, I shall argue that Aristotelian natures can fruitfully be explored as bearers of the qualitative aspect of individual essence. In the last section of the paper, I visit the question of relationality, and clarify what I take to be ‘genuine’ individuals.

⁵ See Gorman (2005), Fine (1994), Oderberg (2011), Lowe (1999).

1. The ontic reading of explanation and the threat of (PII)

When it comes to the task of explaining the actions, behavior, dispositions, etc. of individuals, it seems that this task requires considering individual essences in addition to their specific essences. Otherwise our purported explanations about individuals would remain hopelessly incomplete and gappy. According to the *explanatory-gap argument* suggested in the literature, certain possibilities of individuals would remain unexplained, and even unexplainable, if sortal essences plus accidental features were the only candidates for the explanans.⁶ Say, the sortal essence of ‘being human’ admits a wide range of possibilities that humans are capable of realizing. But considering the actual possibilities of determinate human individuals, the sortal possibilities should be tailored to the idiosyncratic character of the given individual aimed at explaining why, for example, certain future developments are open to this individual, and some others are excluded, while both are tolerated by the specific human essence.

The significance of the explanatory function can get further support from the familiar symmetry-thesis concerning explanation and prediction. It is a truism that a good explanation could function as a prediction as well. Predictions, if they are not mere projections of past regularities to the future in the Humean fashion, should rely on explanatory connections. It is hard to imagine how our predictive practice could manage successfully without analyzing and assessing the qualitative features of the items, including those of the individuals, that show up in the predicted scenario.

The explanatory approach to positing individual essences can be strengthened with the metaphysical version of explanation. This version presupposes a departure from ‘logical’ modalism: as Kit Fine has argued in his criticism of the modal view of *de re* essentialist claims, the logical-modal notion of necessity cannot fully capture the metaphysics of *de re* essentialist locutions. Since these locutions should do with the very nature of things whereby they receive their identity, therefore, *de re* essentialism enjoys a distinctive metaphysical status not to be reduced to logical necessity. Departure from logical modalism continued with Gorman’s suggestion that ‘explanation’ is the clue to decide whether a given feature of a thing is essential. He says that ‘F is essential to x just in case F is (i) a characteristic of x and (ii) not explained by any other characteristic of x’ (Gorman 2005, 284). Not being explained by other characteristics of x does not, however, render the notion of ‘essential’ mysterious: features which are fundamental, and thus unexplained relative to the very nature of a given thing, may require explanation in some other contexts.

⁶ Ujvári (2013a).

The notion of 'explanation' applied here is 'ontic'. As Gorman says, 'to speak thus of explanation is to use the word in its ontic and not in its epistemic sense.' The key to this ontic use is that 'explanation is a real relation between things' (Gorman 2005, 283). The mind-independence of such real explanatory relations was also stressed long ago by Wesley Salmon. Recently, Kment has argued in a similar way: when the issue is that 'x explains y' or 'x is the reason why y obtains' then 'explanation in this sense is a metaphysical relation, not an epistemic one' (Kment 2014, 5).

It seems to me that the best way to render explanation intelligible as a metaphysical relation is to associate it with *grounding*. Grounding and explanation (in the metaphysical sense) are relations which are constitutive of things, and they may be contrasted with projected regularity patterns in the Humean epistemic sense. As Maurin has argued quite recently, grounding is 'involved' in 'metaphysical explanations' in virtue of grounding being 'tracked' by these explanations (Maurin 2017). Though the precise nature of the grounding - metaphysical explanation link is currently still disputed, it is clear from the discussions that it is metaphysical explanation about the real nature or essence of things that constitutes one of the relata and not explanation in the epistemic sense (Thompson 2016). Advocates of the metaphysical theory of grounding are keen on avoiding the epistemic sense of explanation: although 'grounding is often called an *explanatory* notion ... to us it seems advisable to separate the objective notion of grounding which belongs to the field of metaphysics from an epistemically loaded notion of explanation', emphasize Correia and Schneider in their introduction to the topic (Correia and Schneider 2014, 24). Congenial to these efforts, we can witness Kment's recording a 'shift of focus from the modal to the explanatory domain'. The shift covers concerns about 'grounding, essence, fundamentality'. These new concerns change the direction of entailment: according to Kment, 'entailment seems to hold only in one direction – from the metaphysical claim to the modal one' (Kment 2014, 14).

Without taking a position about these essentialist-explanatory concerns, I argue conditionally: *given* these concerns, particularly the emphasis on the priority of explanation in the ontic sense *and* the metaphysical reading of *de re* essential features, one might feel a temptation to consider seriously the qualitative account of individual essence and individuation. Clearly, the qualitative view cannot be dismissed, since, how could a non-qualitative haecceity, a bare 'thisness' constitute the metaphysical nature of a thing, let alone the explanatory role of that nature in the ontic sense. The special virtue of the ontic reading of explanation is that it can help ruling out a possible objection to the explanatory-gap argument: one might object, for example, that a mere epistemic point is irrelevant from the metaphysical perspective.

A further argument, in favor of the qualitative view, rests on the presumed *analogy* between *modal explanations for continuants* by appealing to their individual essence and explanation of *singular event causation* by appealing to individual event essences (Ujvári 2013a). Though the analogy has some appeal, it has not gained universal acceptance. For example, Diekemper has claimed that events, unlike continuants, can be shown to have a primitive nonqualitative thisness or haecceity essential to them⁷ (Diekemper 2009).

Here I am not going into the event-continuant dispute. Haecceitistic commitments just mentioned, it is worth considering though what would count, from the perspective of the haecceitistic position, as a sound objection to the positing of qualitative individual essences. It is not only Diekemper who seems to hold that Leibnizian **(PII)** is lethal for the qualitative view; Penelope Mackie also considers **(PII)** and its converse from the point of view of Leibnizian individual essence (Mackie 2006, 22). Let us see these arguments in turn. Diekemper's strategy for defending non-qualitative thisness with events centers around seeking sound counter-examples to the Leibnizian Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles. His point is that by demonstrating the numerical distinctness of Leibniz-indiscernible individuals with the help of such counter-examples, there opens the path to account for their distinctness in terms of a primitive, non-qualitative thisness (Diekemper 2009, 260). This treatment of Leibniz-indiscernible individuals seems to be one of the main merits of the haecceitistic approach. I think Diekemper's point can be conceded with the proviso that it applies only to particulars that are merely tokens of some common type; typically, mass products qualify as such particulars. However, individuals with their unique essences do not illustrate the failure of **(PII)**. One can feel here the need for spelling out the distinction between mere particulars and individuals; this will come in the next section.

It is also implied in these discussions that the qualitative view of individuals, presumably fleshed out in terms of bundles of qualitative features, is vulnerable to the converse of **(PII)** since any change in the bundle or set of properties would, according to the converse of **(PII)**, yield a different individual. Penelope Mackie explores this sort of critical

⁷ It is noteworthy that the way Diekemper describes nonqualitative features does not match the standard approach in the literature. Briefly, he identifies nonqualitative features with impure qualitative features. See Diekemper (2009, 256). One can consult the literature about the distinction between purely qualitative properties and impure ones: see Adams (1979, 7), Armstrong (1978, 146-147; 2004, 13), Loux (1997, 128, footnote 19). They all point out that a qualitative property mixed with referential devices essentially occurring in the reference to that property qualifies only as an 'impure' qualitative property. While 'being the son of a king' is a pure relational qualitative property, 'being the son of an Anjou king' is an impure relational qualitative property. Now Diekemper's example for nonqualitative property exactly matches the examples given by these authors for impure relational qualitative properties.

reasoning. Her starting point is the Leibnizian notion of individual essence which is characteristically super-essentialist. As she remarks, ‘Leibniz holds that *every* property of an individual is essential to it’. This amounts to the position of ‘super-essentialism’ which is standardly attributed to Leibniz with respect to the notion of individuals. Mackie then goes on to show how this essentialist notion of individuals naturally gives rise to the Leibnizian identity condition in terms of complete property-indiscernibility governed by **(PII)**. ‘The Identity of Indiscernibles guarantees a non-trivial distinction between the properties of any two individuals. But the consequence of this view – that of rendering false all claims to the effect that anyone or anything could have had a history in any way different from the actual history – is one that, for obvious reasons, most philosophers find unacceptable’ (Mackie 2006, 22). Though Mackie refers here to the ‘Identity of Indiscernibles’ **(PII)**, obviously, what she takes to be ‘the consequence of this view’ is the consequence of the converse of **(PII)**. The latter states that the identity of things rules out any change in their properties; a claim found unacceptable by philosophers who are concerned about identity through worlds/times.

While I do not deny problems with **(PII)** and its converse in metaphysical contexts, this is not the last verdict on the issue. If it were, the qualitative view would be doomed to failure, and even the explanatory reading with the ontic notion of explanation could not help to save it. Mackie is right in claiming that Leibnizian super-essentialism and the converse of **(PII)** are tailored for each other; but it does not follow that qualitative individual essence should be taken as coinciding with the complete set of properties of an individual. In fact, the individual essence does not cover the whole qualitative space for locating the individual. For example, some Leibniz scholars take efforts to point out that the complete notions of the individuals contain ‘incremental’ features as well apart from their essential features (Grimm 1970, Ishiguro 1979). The incremental features comprise the spatio-temporal location and other contextual aspects of the individual according to Grimm. Further, the individual essence *within* the qualitative space characterizing an individual need not be seen as a set of features whose members are supposed to be listed in agreement with **(PII)**. Fortunately, the qualitative view has the appropriate resources to avoid the forced track of **(PII)**. First, as I have said, the qualitative character of individual essence does not have to be captured by the Leibnizian complete notion of the individual. Recall that Leibnizian completeness is understood as the completeness of the set of the properties of the individual. Second, the qualitative character need not to be fleshed out in terms of a set-theoretical construal, since the structural aspects of the individual essence require a different approach. The qualitative account recommended here avoids falling prey to the vulnerable set-theoretical construal: i. e., that even a trifling change in the

set of properties amounts to shifting to another individual. This uncomfortable consequence follows only if a naïve bundle theory is adopted with set-theoretical identity conditions.

It is a false dilemma, however, that either one opts for qualitative individual essences, - but then one has to buy into a naïve bundle theory - or, in view of the failure of the naïve (**BT**), one is compelled to accept the haecceitistic account. In fact, there are more options. For example, the friend of the qualitative account can embrace a more sophisticated, two-tier version of the bundle theory which is not vulnerable to the risks of the Leibniz Principle, or, alternatively, (s)he can appeal to the Aristotelian notion of nature or essence.⁸

As to the first option, a core of essential features can be posited in the relation of tight bundling going proxy for an individual nature. Simons has adopted the notion of bundling from Husserl and he made an amendment to that notion by replacing Husserlian bundling on the specific level with tropist bundling on the individual level. The result is a two-tier (**BT**) with a qualitative nucleus in the core and accidental features in the outer fringe (Simons 1994). The crucial point is that the qualitative features in the tight bundling are not to be analyzed with the Leibniz principle.⁹ The same can be vindicated, perhaps even more directly, for Aristotelian natures leading to the second option. Here, again, the claim is that Aristotelian natures or essences, while qualitative, cannot be resolved into sets of qualitative features. In fact, a distinction can be made between a mere *list* of the properties and the qualitative essence (Oderberg, 2011). The details of the non-set theoretical construal of individual essence come a bit later. So, we can anticipate the conclusion that the tenability of the qualitative account of individual essence and individuation does not hinge on the tenability of (**PII**).

2. Individuation vs Particularization

By ‘individual’ I do not mean just an arbitrary token of a type. Though instantiation captures the tokening of the type, it cannot serve as a clue to the individuation of the particular. The reason is that instantiation of a type yields only a bunch of particular tokens such that each token indiscriminately illustrates the type. In other words, each token is just a particularizer of the type. But particularization itself is indifferent to the issue which of the tokens of the relevant type fills the slot since any arbitrary token would do the same job. Further, ‘individuation’ of the par-

⁸ It is worth noting that the Aristotelian natures are natures of kinds, that is, they are about specific essences. The present suggestion is to explore the Aristotelian approach to individual natures as well.

⁹ The claim that the bundle theory is not committed to **PII** is discussed by Matteo Morganti (2011, 37-40).

-ticular is ambiguous: it can mean the process or the result of securing unique reference to a particular or, alternatively, it can mean the grasping of the particular through its unique nature. The supposed unique nature is vital to counterfactual discourse and explanation about the individuals. Obviously, ‘uniqueness’ is a requirement on both readings: but, on one reading, only *referential uniqueness* is achieved while, on the other reading, the goal is to secure the *uniqueness of the individual nature*, that is, attributive uniqueness. In short, the referential/attributional ambiguity, very much familiar in the semantics of definite descriptions, is operating behind the metaphysical issues of individuation.

The ambiguity inherent in the very notion of individuation is captured by Lowe in a similar vein. He recommends taking ‘individuation’ as an ontic notion, rather than as an epistemic one. He notes that corresponding to the two notions of individuation there are two principles of identity: the one which yields criteria *for us* to distinguish entities, while the other principle hangs together with ‘genuine individuation’. According to the latter principle, the identity of things ‘is received from that what makes them the very things what they are’, as Lowe quotes Locke. While agreeing with Lowe about this ontic notion, I am inclined to take the first as purely *referential* identification, used, in the first instance, for telling things apart. However, Lowe’s ‘genuine individuation’ targets the specific essence of things and not their individual essence. When explicating individuation as a ‘determination relation between entities’ Lowe says as an illustration, that ‘x determines or “fixes” *which* of its kind y is’ (Lowe 2014, 216). So, individuation, for him, is the selecting of a particular token from among other tokens of a given specific type. It seems to me that this approach tells us about the *particularization* of the universal type rather than accounting for the individual as such. The latter task, however, requires separating individuation from mere particularization.

There is still a temptation, at least in the Platonic tradition, to think of particulars merely as instances of types or species. The question, in that tradition, is what it is to be the particular instance of a type or species; and the answer, according to Boethius, is that the particular instantiates the species by virtue of ‘dividing’ it. Say, particular rabbits divide the species ‘Rabbit’. An equally important other question would be what makes some of the particulars genuine individuals, over and above the mere instantiation of the species. This question is typically ignored, or, even worse, individuality is practically identified with particularity as it can be illustrated by Jorge Gracia’s account of individuation. For him ‘particular’ and ‘individual’ are ‘coextensive’, and he devotes a book to defending this position. The extensional overlap between being a particular and being an individual suffices for explanatory purposes as well according to him, since he explicitly says that ‘there is no great advantage in making a distinction between particularity and individuality’

(Gracia 1988, 54).¹⁰

Gracia's effort is directed to draw the line between universals and particulars in a realist way which is obviously a legitimate enterprise; but it falls short of being a complete metaphysical theory of individuals.

Obviously, for a thing to be a particular, and for it to be an individual, are two different aspects that can be told apart. The question arises then, what account can be provided for individuality, once particularization is well-explained by the realist theory of instantiation. I think genuine individuality requires the notion of qualitative individual essence and individuation as supported here. The account that can fill the slot explores a 'thick' notion of individuals as opposed to the 'thin' notion of being an instance of a species, i. e., a mere particular. How 'thick' the notion should be is a further question. Presumably, not as thick as for Leibniz for whom only the complete set of the properties is individuating. It would be safe, though a truism, to say that the qualitative account of individual essence and individuation should avoid the Scylla of bare haecceity, and the Charybdis of the Leibnizian complete-concept notion of individuals.

3. Roles of Haecceity and Qualitative Individual Essence Compared

So far, I have been arguing for the qualitative view of individual essence. If one visits though the functions/roles attributed to haecceity and the functions/roles attributed to non-haecceitistic individual essence in the literature, one finds a substantial overlap between the two lists. A comparison will be illuminating.

Rosenkrantz records the various functions of *haecceity* (Rosenkrantz 1993). These are the following: 1. As a primitive thisness, it helps securing identity through worlds (see, also, Adams' account); 2. In its semantic role, it turns *de re* discourse into *de dicto* eliminating thereby the problematic *de re* locutions (see Plantinga 1974); 3. In its epistemic role, discussed by Chisholm, the special status of self-knowledge is explained by grasping one's own haecceity; 4. It functions as the intension of proper names (see Plantinga 1974; Chisholm 1976).

Lososky summarizes the functions of *individual essence* (Lososky 1987). His item 1' is the same as 1. at Rosenkrantz, i. e., to secure transworld identity. 2' says : individual essence fills the slot at those worlds where a certain individual fails to exist. Its role is to match *de re* claims with the contingency of empirical existence. Say, Socrates is essentially/necessarily human, but he does not exist in every possible world. However, his individual essence, as an abstract and necessary existent, exists at those other worlds where he fails to exist. 2' has no equivalent in the haecceity-list. 3' says: individual essences as qualitative

¹⁰ On Gracia's position see, also, Ujvári (2017).

bundles illustrate the property-bundle view of individuals and, consequently, they fall under (PII). This use has no matching item - a pendant - in the haecceity list. 4' matches with 2 and 3 of the haecceity-list: i. e., 'to account for the knowledge we have of ourselves and other persons'. 5' says: individual essence is used as the principle of individuation: historically, the principle was applied to continuants, and recently the application is extended to events as well. 6' says: individual essences are used as senses of proper names. This semantic function has its pendant in the haecceity-list under 4.

The survey shows that haecceity and qualitative individual essence as metaphysical posits are both supposed to explain: a) trans-world identity, b) self-knowledge and other *de re* attributions, and c) the intension of proper names. Assessing the functions, one finds that securing transworld identity is the strongest support for both posits. The essential nature of the individual without which it would not be what it is, saves identity-claims from the fragility of accidental changes. Haecceity can achieve the same goal albeit with relying on direct referential devices instead of qualitative aspects. The idea is that a thing can never lose its haecceity, and we can keep track of the same individual with referential devices.¹¹ As to the role they are supposed to play in self-knowledge and also in turning other *de re* attributions into *de dicto* claims, I am rather skeptical.¹² It seems to me that the reductive move of eliminating *de re* locutions is a misapplication of haecceity and/or individual essence since both are the vehicles of *de re* metaphysical claims. As to their involvement in self-knowledge, I do not see any reason why they should be involved. We enjoy privileged access to our mental items and their ownership, but it would be false to think that there must be something with entitative status that is responsible for this immediate grasp. And the last point, motivating the posit of both haecceity and individual essence,

¹¹ It seems to me that the distinction between the 'strong' and the 'weak' versions of haecceitism suggested by Cover and Hawthorne can help the haecceitist in accounting for this function. According to them strong haecceitism does not supervene on general propositions in explaining transworld identity, while weak haecceitism accepts the role of some general propositions in the explanation of transworld identities. See Cover and O'Leary-Hawthorne (1999).

¹² The reductive move is conceived by Rosenkrantz in the following way: when a person S directly attributes F-ness to an object X, S grasps the conjunction of the haecceity of X and F-ness. Thus, one can eliminate *de re* beliefs in favor of *de dicto* beliefs with the help of haecceity (See Rosenkrantz 1993, 34). Haecceity is claimed to have a role in self-knowledge as well: it is Chisholm who makes a Kantian start by noting that first-person reference is indispensable to knowledge of external things and that reference is secured via grasping one's own haecceity. Thus, haecceity becomes, in his account, a precondition of knowledge of external things (Chisholm 1981). However, I think that the necessary self-ascription of knowledge-claims with Kant is not an epistemological K-K thesis. Rather, it is a transcendental precondition of knowledge in general; thus, it is a *de dicto* claim and not a *de re* one.

is that they serve as intensions of proper names. I am not going to get into the semantic issue.

It has become clear from the survey that the explanatory role has not been taken into account either by Lososky or Rosenkrantz. However, with the explanatory role in mind, the significance of the notion of qualitative individual essence increases.

4. Aristotelian Natures, Individual Essence and Existence

In one version of the qualitative view individual essences are closely connected to the property-bundle construction of individuals (Plantinga 1974; Forbes 1985). As I have said earlier, the qualitative aspect of individual essences is not to be fleshed out in terms of the set-theoretical construction of the naïve bundle-theory taking every qualitative feature homogeneously, as equally contributing to the identity of the individual. This approach is vulnerable even to trifling changes in the members of the bundle or set: this is a familiar defect of the set-theoretical construction. As a result, excessive essentialism ensues with the naïve bundle theory. In view of this problem it seems more reasonable to hold that qualitative individual essences are either tight bundles of essential properties with the special gluing relation of mutual foundation, as it was suggested in the first section, or, one might hold that they are natures in the Aristotelian sense. Let us consider now the virtues of this latter.

Nature or essence in the Aristotelian sense, though qualitative, is clearly not identifiable with a set of properties. Aristotle seems to be aware of the difference. He says, that by giving the essence of a thing the 'what' question is answered; but this important question is not answered by specifying some, or all, of the properties of the thing. He writes in the *Metaphysics* Book Z: 'when we say of what quality a thing is, we say that it is good or beautiful ... but when we say *what* it is, we do not say "white" or "hot" or "three cubits long", but "man" or "God"' (Aristotle 1984, 1028.15.).

The Aristotelian notion of essence is the specific essence of substance-kinds captured by definitions: 'there is an essence only of those things whose formula is a definition' (Aristotle 1984, 1030.5.). So, a definition captures the specific essence of a thing since a thing is *what* it is, by its specific essence. What about those other properties, including propria and accidents, that are not covered by the definitions? According to Aristotle these features have less substantial roles. While things 'participate' in these other qualitative features, they do not have their essences in this way: things do not 'participate' in their essences since they are what they are just by their specific essence. As Aristotle puts it: 'nothing, then, which is not a species of a genus will have an *essence* – only species will have it, for in these the subject is not thought to participate in the attribu-

-te' (Aristotle 1984, 1030.10.). It is clear, then, that for Aristotle, to have a (specific) essence is not tantamount to participating in a set of features. I would say that the same applies for individual essences. These, while qualitative, cannot be *analyzed compositionally* for the same reason that specific essences cannot be so analyzed: they are natures, and not simply sets of properties.

Non-compositionality does not mean, however, that the usual significance-conditions are disobeyed, and that we cannot meaningfully talk about the properties being entailed by the specific and/or the individual natures. As to the latter, one can say that an individual essence or nature entails each and every essential property of the individual including the specific essential properties. I can only agree with Plantinga who endorses such entailment (Plantinga 1974, 73; 2003, 56). But it does not follow that the individual nature itself could be analyzed reductively in terms of the *conjunction* of the component essential features. This point is important if we consider that the functional/teleological unity of the whole individual is under-determined by the mere conjunction of its component features. A conjunction is neutral with respect to the structure responsible for such unity. An anti-reductive claim, similar to mine, is put forth by Loux with respect to kinds or specific essences in his 'substance theory of substance' (Loux 1997). Recently, Oderberg defended the same point, by making a distinction between a mere *list* of properties and (qualitative) essence. He says that 'an essence is more than a list: it is a structural, organizational unity'. He takes this distinction between properties and essence 'a key feature of Aristotelian essentialism' (Oderberg 2011, 99).

To note, the compositional analysis, discarded here, is accepted by Rosenkrantz. He says, that 'a conjunction of a haecceity and a universal essential property is an individual essence' (Rosenkrantz 1993, 43). However, I have doubts as to whether individual essences can be resolved into such conjunctions.

A further feature to be considered is the dependence of individual essences on the existential condition since it would be highly problematic to postulate individual essences for merely possible individuals. Let us visit now the existence-claim from the perspective of individual essences. While specific essences may remain unexemplified, at least in the Platonic tradition, most authors agree about the requirement that individual essences should be exemplified. In short, essence goes with existence in the case of individual essences. Even Plantinga, construing individual essences in a Platonic way, claims that 'an essence is necessarily instantiated in some world or other' (Plantinga 1974, 76). So, individual essences must be exemplified somewhere. But the contingency of existence is still preserved, on his account, since each world is such that it is not necessary for any individual essence that it should be exemplified there.

Still, there is something faulty with this solution that purports to provide for the contingent existence of concrete things. First, if instantiation is a trait common to specific essences and individual essences, as Plantinga holds, then the distinction between general existence-claims and singular existence-claims is obliterated. In this case, it applies to both kinds of existence-claims that to exist is to be instantiated. But the obliteration is hardly acceptable. The metaphysical difference that species are instantiable while individuals are not, has to be reflected in the logical distinction between the two kinds of existence. While common natures or forms have a threefold existence, at least according to medieval Aristotelians, as existing in themselves, and by ‘informing’ the things and the minds respectively, concrete individuals have only one ‘mode of existence’, and it is their bare existence. It would be mistaken to describe such existence as the *instantiation* of an individual essence.

Second, Plantinga's scheme implies a Leibnizian arrangement of existent beings at a world. The existent beings as the instantiations of their individual essences must be compossible. Thus, the individual essence of each individual must contain a clause about the essences of every other individual at a given world, precisely in a Leibnizian way. Plantinga incorporates such clause into his definition of individual essence. He says, that the individual essence *E* of Socrates must be such that it is essential to Socrates; that it incorporates all the other entailed essential properties of him; ‘and finally, the complement of *E* is essential to every object distinct from Socrates’ (Plantinga 1974, 76). It seems to me that this clause invites an unnecessary abundance of individual essences. Moreover, their abundance is promoted by Cambridge changes. Say, if a new contingent being comes into existence, then the rest of the population at that world acquires a new essence: the complement of essence *E* of the newborn individual.

The upshot is that individual existence should not be conceived as the exemplification of an individual essence, rather, individual essences can be seen as having an existential precondition. I recommend here the existence-conditioned characterizations of individual essence given by Kit Fine, and developed by Roca-Royes (Fine 1994; Roca-Royes 2011). Though their position is formulated for the essential properties of individuals, it surely applies to individual essences as well. These properties are supposed to help ‘answer the question “what is *a* ?”’ where *a* is the individual whose nature is to be discovered. According to the characterization ‘if *P* is an essential property of *a*, *a* could not exist without being *P*’ (Roca-Royes 2011, 66). It is evident that being *P* is not tantamount to *P*’s being instantiated, for individual essences make sense only on the precondition of the existence of the individuals. As to the unrealized possibilities, we can say that the virtual realm of singular possibilities is something that actually does not obtain, rather than remaining ‘uninstantiated’.

5. Qualitative Individual Essence and Relationality

I owe the reader the support of my claim that some particulars are 'genuine individuals'. After all, what makes some particulars to be so? Also, it is time to consider what features are entailed by the qualitative individual essences. Are their features all monadic such that a 'relational individual essence' sounds like a *contradictio in adjecto*?

Individual essence or nature is thought to belong so intimately to the thing that it is typically construed as an *intrinsic* feature. Obviously, it cannot be external to the thing; it cannot depend on its relation to other things. Thus, relationality seems to be undesirable in this context. Chisholm draws our attention to an ambiguity in referring to haecceity that seems to threaten with an undesirable relationality. "That thing" could be taken in relational sense i. e. "the thing I am now looking at". When it is taken in this way, then, of course, it does not intend the individual essence or haecceity referred to' (Chisholm 1976, 35). Reference to haecceity obviously cannot be indexical reference though it takes the same form. Fortunately, the ambiguity cannot even arise in connection with individual essences of the qualitative sort since they can be referred to only non-indexically in virtue of their qualitative aspect.

So, the problem of indexical reference is not a real threat to qualitative individual essences, but the issue is still open whether relational properties in general can be entailed by them. I do not think that relationality should be dismissed across the board. The reason becomes clear if we consider what the 'genuine' individuals are. Here, I have talked about some particulars being 'genuine individuals' but the criterion for being 'genuine' was left open. It seems that this criterion cannot be afforded by inspecting carefully the physical world. A promising criterion, however, needs the acknowledgment of some relational aspects in the notion of 'genuine' individual. Persons are undeniably genuine individuals - except for those who deny the existence of composites, and admit in their ontology only particles arranged in a certain way. But once persons are acknowledged, then those works of art and engineering, or even natural phenomena, that are endowed with features projected by persons, should also be considered as genuine individuals. To be an individual is thus derivative from being a person. Applying the notion of grounding, personhood *grounds* our claims about individual essences/natures. The relational character of attributed or *projected individuality* is not conceived here in a Humean manner. Rather, I think that to be a genuine individual is a feature determined ultimately by our prevailing cultural scheme. The only safe point to start with is that being a person entails being a genuine individual. As to the further question what other things count as genuine individuals in the derivative mode, the answer depends on the prevailing cultural scheme.

To sum it up, I have argued that the recent emphasis on the ontic notion of explanation increases the significance of qualitative individual essences. The explanatory-gap argument strengthened with the ontic variant supports postulating qualitative individual essences. It was claimed further, that their qualitative character is not to be conceived as the mere conjunction of properties; that is, it is not to be conceived in the way characteristic of **(PII)** and its converse. The alternative view recommended here takes individual natures or essences as structured, organizational units in the Aristotelian sense thereby exempting individual essences from falling under **(PII)** and its converse. Similarly, applying the two-tier bundle theories of individuals, instead of the naive **(BT)**, would achieve the same result. It was also argued that individuation should be told apart from mere particularization of the specific nature. When comparing the roles of qualitative individual essence and haecceity, one finds that securing trans-world identity is the strongest argument in favor of both. However, if the explanatory role is considered, the notion of qualitative individual essence becomes increasingly important.

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