

Rorty's Holism

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Rorty argues against both metaphysical realism and correspondence theory of truth. His picture of the world is holistic. We ourselves endorse holism, which however is different from Rorty's in that it is compatible both with metaphysical realism and with the correspondence theory of truth. This position is made possible by contextualizing. Rorty has context as well, but just one, the pragmatist context. As everything happens at one level for Rorty, common sense comes in opposition with his picture. Rorty is entangled into the following dilemma: either he gives up his picture of the world and keeps common sense realism, or he keeps his metaphysical picture of the world and appropriates the project of revising common sense. He decides for the later. We think that the price is too high. Rorty's dismissal of common sense is too quick, especially if there is an alternative holistic strategy available to explain common sense. Our alternative holistic strategy enables us to appropriate both common sense realism according to the regional normativity and truth as correspondence. We distinguish between direct and indirect correspondence. Truth as indirect correspondence allows for contribution of the world.

Keywords: Holism, atomism, metaphysical realism, correspondence theory of truth, common sense, contextualism.

Rorty argues against both metaphysical realism and correspondence theory of truth.

Rorty is not favorable to metaphysical realism. The existence of the mind and language independent world seems to him a remnant of Platonist and Parmenidean tradition which aims for the ultimate reality.¹ But this cannot be plausible, for it would push us to appropriate the ends in themselves without staying with ends that are set in front of us as we go. It is misguided to ask how the world is, for this leads us too far from the given pragmatically manageable circumstances. It seems much more plausible to ask whether the dinner is already served. But even this is too wide a shot, for it still incites us to aim for correspondence with a chunk of the world, and to ultimately acknowledge the world as a superthing. It would be even false to aim for truth as happiness, for this would still leave us with an ultimate aim. The truth is rather in the journey, in the *quest* for truth that happens in the dialogical situation.

So Rorty rejects metaphysical realism, the view that ultimately acknowledges the world as a superthing. And he rejects the correspondence theory of truth that would aim for correlation with the atomistic chunks of the superthing with whatever may be asserted about it.

Rorty's picture of the world is holistic.

In his paper "*Analytic Philosophy and Narrative Philosophy*" Richard Rorty rightly emphasizes the important distinction between atomism and holism. This distinction is introduced within the broader division, namely that between analytic and narrative (or Continental) philosophy.

¹ Rorty dismisses metaphysical realism in a seemingly much more radical way as this is the case with the anti-realist Putnam.

Rorty is clearly on the side of holistic approaches.² In this paper we want to focus on the first distinction and show how an alternative view to Rorty's conception of holism-atomism relationship is possible. Then we will look more closely to this opposition in the area of metaphysics and show that there is no special need for revising of "common sense natural realism" as Rorty suggests in his *"Putnam, Pragmatism, and Parmenides"* paper.

The label of atomism was and it continues to be used in a variety of senses. So it will be useful to specify the meaning and the scope of the term atomism. There are two basic points embraced by atomistic view in most areas of philosophy:

- (A1) an atomistic view of parts
- (A2) the simple rule-based and tractable compositional structure.

Rorty himself gives clues in this direction in the following passages:

"The ambition of the atomists is to explain, as they often like to put it, how the mind works and how language works. The holists doubt that this is a fruitful project, because they think it a mistake to treat mind and language as entities that have either elementary parts, or a structure, or inner workings." (Rorty, *"Analytic Philosophy and Narrative Philosophy"*)

and

"Atomists think that by breaking mind and language down into parts we can get psychology in touch with neurology in roughly the same way that chemistry has been brought together with physics and biology with chemistry. They find it useful and important to say that the mind is, in some important sense, the brain. So they spend much of their time analyzing concepts like "belief" and "meaning" in order to show how beliefs and meanings might reside within the collection of physical particles which is the human central nervous system." (Rorty, *"Analytic Philosophy and Narrative Philosophy"*)

ad (A1) An atomistic view of parts. Atomism posits parts as basic ontological constituents or again as basic semantic or epistemic units. Such parts are fixed in their content and cannot be affected by the context. In ontology these parts could be characterised as "atoms" in the sense of basic building blocks of the ultimate reality. It is then plausible to defer to the natural science the job of telling us what they exactly are. In semantics such parts could be the basic bearers of meaning. In epistemology they may come in form of justified beliefs or in form of reasons for justification.

ad (A2) The simple rule-based and tractable compositional structure. Once we have our basic building blocks fixed we can move on and make use of general, exceptionless and tractable rules in order to account for interrelations that are in place between these parts and for prediction of their behaviour in various compositional settings. In the area of ontology the rules in question could be construed by the usage of general metaphysical principles that are appropriate for the ultimate reality³, in semantics they come as systematicity and compositionality requirements, and in epistemology these are again those rules and principles that determine justification.

² "It will have by now become obvious that my own sympathies are with the holists, and with philosophers who tell stories rather than offering analyses." (Rorty, Forthcoming.)

³ Such as Peter van Inwagen's "Principle of Life" as a general answer to his Special Composition Question. See his 1990 book.

As Rorty says, holism or holistic approach to philosophy is opposed to atomism. But he does not characterise holism in a systematic way except in terms of opposition to atomism and in respect to the notions of understanding and narrativity⁴ whose importance he underlines. It will thus be useful to say something more about holism.

The starting point for our introduction of holism is moral particularism and especially holism of reasons as the view that is embraced by moral particularism in function of explanation about how moral reasons work. Particularism is the view developed in the theory of morals by Jonathan Dancy.⁵ The main claim of moral particularism is that moral action is not guided by general principles but by an appropriate adjustment to the rich and holistic non-repeatable circumstances. According to generalism valence of moral features stays the same over a range of cases, which results in a general pattern. Particularism buys just unique relevant patterns proper to single cases. It can be extended to all those areas that bear some substantial relation to normativity, of which language furnishes an example.

We can now broadly characterise holism by the usage of the following features:

- (H1) Holistic view of parts.
- (H2) Unique beautiful patterns based structure.

ad (H1) Holistic view of parts. According to holism parts are context dependent and so they can change along with the variation in context. Besides to that some contexts do not allow for any parts. Holism of reasons says that reasons are context dependent; holism of meaning claims that meaning is contextual. The meaning of the same part such as a word may thus change according to the context in which it appears. In some contexts the word "bucket" will have quite non-standard meaning, but it will still be a meaningful appearance of this word.⁶

ad (H2) Unique beautiful patterns based structure. Once one abandons general and tractable rules, one can still retain relevance and structure. This is then the kind of structure to which we give the name of beautiful patterns. This structure is not just explicit, for it consists of various background tendencies and assumptions, together with salient features of the context – and it can sometimes allow for soft generalizations. This kind of structure is emergent and narration is an important part of its explanation.

A kind of meta-holism would thus form an overall contextualist approach to philosophy. But Rorty limits his own holism to some sort of pragmatist thesis. We think that this Rorty's approach to holism is too narrow, and that the pragmatic considerations involved into it should themselves be contextualised. Rorty stresses that atomist philosophers think of holism as a danger for (analytic⁷) philosophy, while he himself is convinced into the opposite.

⁴ We think that narration is an important kind of explanation, especially as related to particularism which we endorse. We thus agree with most of the accents put on narration by Rorty. But we have two basic reservations. First, we do not think that narration should be predominantly understood as a historical teleological venture, bringing us from the past to the actual state of things. And second, we think that narration is *compatible* with analysis. In fact, narration *dominates* analytical methodology, by providing *direction* to it. We would like to make attentive at the quality of direction concept such as elaborated by A. Verdiglione. We also think that Rorty himself effectively combines analytic *and* narrative techniques, all in applying domination of narration over analysis. This is just the way creative philosophy is made.

⁵ See Dancy, J. 1983, 1993 and 2000.

⁶ Compare the discussion of "The man kicked the bucket" example in Fodor, J. and Pylyshyn, Z. 1988 and Potrč, M. and Strahovnik, V. Forthcoming.

⁷ He recognizes the important holistic shift in the works of late Wittgenstein. Quine and Sellars though, which are opposed to the Russellian theory of description as the prototype of classical analytic and atomistic approach.

Holism should not be viewed as a "highway to obscurantism and the denial of natural sciences". In fact we appropriate the big tent strategy and propose the views of science to be suitable for our approach as well. For both atomists and holists (at least in the area of the theory of morals) may stick to the minimal supervenience claims. We propose a view that includes immense complexity and diversity of our lives besides to being compatible with minimal requirements of science. We agree with Rorty when he denounces atomistic illusion of the necessity to have parts for serious analytical philosophy. But we also think that Rorty finishes up to be under illusion himself because he misses the importance of the context induced variability.

In order to get this point we may serve ourselves with Rorty's distinction between determinate and indeterminate being.

"The distinction between determinate and indeterminate being, as I am drawing it, is sociological. Determinacy is a matter of degree—degree of controversiality for the inhabitants of a particular time and place. To think of only determinate being as authentic is to replace a useful sociological distinction of degree with a useless metaphysical distinction of kind. To adopt the latter distinction is to think that there is a "matter of fact" about some topics but not about others, and to take seriously the debates about realism and anti-realism that analytic philosophers, but no one else, find profitable. Philosophers who think that only determinate being is authentic being are the only people who are interested in the question of how to situate values, or minds, in a world of elementary particles, how to make room for the inauthentic in the authentic world." (Rorty, *Analytic Philosophy and Narrative Philosophy*)

This kind of considerations can be linked with Rorty's thoughts in his *"Putnam, Pragmatism, and Parmenides"* when he says more on the topic of metaphysics. He argues against common sense realism and against the correspondence view on truth.

We ourselves endorse holism, which however is different from Rorty's in that it is compatible both with the metaphysical realism and with the correspondence theory of truth. This position is made possible by contextualizing.

We now propose our own view on these matters that adheres to the following points:

(i) Our view respects the difference between atomism and holism and it is by its nature holistic or contextual.

(ii) Our view retains correspondence view on truth and at the same time it shows full respect in relation to common sense when it is properly placed within metaphysical theory.

(iii) Our view emphasizes the importance of norms and normativity in metaphysics but retains a broadly realistic view of the world.

We think that it will now be useful to expose such a view of ours for the area of metaphysics, which has directly to do with Rorty's concern in respect to metaphysical realism. By using the features of normativity, this view enables us to appropriate even the superthing in a benign holistic context. Here is how it goes.

Metaphysical discourse usually centres at what we propose to call regional ontology in such a way that it applies generalist (or atomistic) normative standards to it. But there is the possibility of generalist normative principles matching the ultimate ontology and of particularist normative principles matching the regional ontology. A reason that this possibility is not noticed lies in the trivial sounding nature of ultimate ontology assertions

that push towards monism. The force of normative considerations in ontology can be viewed in the case of arguments for or against the existence of ordinary objects or Middle Sized Dry Goods (MSDG's). Holistic and rich regional ontology consists of relevant and varying situations dependent entities. But relevance is brought in just by particularist beautiful patterns that dominate regional ontology.

We think that the appropriate kind of metaphysics is *monistic*. This is the claim that there is just one spatio-temporal world or the Blob, as we call it.⁸ One reason to claim that there is just one world without any parts lies in the persisting difficulties to set appropriate standards for what these parts, such as ordinary objects, or Middle Sized Dry Goods would actually be.⁹ We think that it is on time to bite the bullet and to embrace truth about the monistic nature of the world. Despite that the world comes without any parts, we think¹⁰ that it is dynamical and richly diversified.

The following two main principles are also important for an appropriate recognition of metaphysical monism that we advocate:

The first is the principle of *Non Arbitrariness Of Composition (NAOC)* that argues for the impossibility of existence of a multitude of arbitrary composed objects.¹¹ This is the most general normative principle, which metaphysicians refuse to completely acknowledge because they many times continue to hold to the area of everyday objects as their basis. Just for this reason, they only partially acknowledge NAOC. Once the metaphysicians would recognize NAOC principle in all its consequences, as extending throughout the entire area that they are concerned with, they would have to recognize the existence of just one ultimate object, namely of the world. By the entire area we mean what is captured by the ultimate and regional ontology. Although NAOC is in value for both ultimate and regional ontology, its role and power is not equal in these. For the ultimate ontology, the only candidate satisfying NAOC is the Blob. In the case of the regional ontology, beautiful relevant patterns are satisfying NAOC.

The second principle that we find plausible is that of *impossibility of metaphysical vagueness*. We think that the world just cannot be vague. Vague objects thus cannot exist. Just one, non-vague object exists. But we may still *recognize* vague objects *in* the world. In this manner we use language and thought that, as our cognitive endowments, allow for vagueness, and we use them for the task of *cognitively* and thus regionally sorting out things from the non-vague world. This rootedness of what we recognize allows us to stay in touch with the world, and to affirm the truth about what otherwise comes as ultimately metaphysically inexistent. The appeal to normativity and to the normatively changing standards turns out to be of importance in order that this principle would be properly

⁸ Horgan, T and Potrč, M. 2000. Horgan, T. and Potrč, M. Forthcoming_a. Tienson, J. Forthoming. Potrč, M. 2003.

⁹ Perhaps the best rendition of what should be ordinary objects is given by Quine as he characterizes them as the approximately compact coming together of matter that fills a certain space throughout some amount of time. But this definition of ordinary objects is questionable on several counts, such as Quine's positing of spatio-temporal regions that are in disaccord with the rest of his ontology. (Horgan, T. 1991).

¹⁰ In opposition to Parmenidean monism which bought the difference between appearance and reality. Parmenides considered appearance to include parts. Whereas the real world is for him without any parts, immobile (not dynamical) and probably of the same dispersive quality along all of its texture.

¹¹ "The principle of Non-Arbitrariness Of Composition (NAOC): There cannot be a body of specific compositional facts that are collectively disconnected and unsystematic, and are individually unexplainable. Such ontological arbitrariness is not possible in the mind and language independent world." (Potrč, M. 2002: 202; See also Horgan, T. 1993.)

understood. It presupposes the division of metaphysics along two kinds of ontologies, the division that we appropriate as our *framework*.

The third issue that we mention here is to some extent basic for our project, and especially for the concern here with metaphysics. It is the assessment of *truth as indirect correspondence* that we introduce along with the more usual construal of truth as direct correspondence and in opposition to it. Truth as direct correspondence refers directly to objects, to states of affairs or whatever you suppose to be there in your preferred ontology. As we buy just one object, the world or Blob, truth as direct correspondence will be appropriate for the cases where we refer to this object, to the world, in a direct matter. Indirect correspondence is heavily normativity and context laden and is thus an important device which allows us to keep our monistic view compatible with many things relating to common sense. The respect for common sense and compatibility with it seems to us to be one desirable feature of a metaphysical theory.

Regional ontology thus presents one way of zooming onto the world. It is rooted in one world, although in an *indirect* manner. So language and thought are of importance to the regional ontology, in a pronounced way, besides that MSDG's, say, are entities *cum fundamentum* in the world or in the Blob.¹²

We suppose that theory of literature has its own Beautiful Patterns determining the ways to speak about the world in an *indirect* but true manner. Two possibilities open themselves here. You may either extend the world of MSDG's to capture other, not only folk ontological metaphysical entities. Or you may admit that there are several regional ontologies. The difference with the reification inclined metaphysicians would then be that regional ontologies *ex-sist* in the world.¹³ If goodness and what is morally right *ex-sist* only regionally, as beautiful particularist patterns the consequence will be that moral judgment concerning them will be correct or incorrect in function of its *indirect* relation to the world. It is difficult to claim that goodness is a part of the world anyway. The question should not necessarily be decided here, and we may just continue to refer to MSDG's. Then there would be a range of *ex-sisting* things, *indirect* correspondence allowing for truth or falsity of assertions concerned therewith, depending on their rootedness in the world or on lack of such a rootedness.

We skillfully master regional ontology. As van Inwagen discusses the question whether the room without the furniture is empty, he claims that for the inquiry of common sense metaphysics it is just *not relevant* whether atoms are in the room. If physicist would address the same question, this may then become relevant. Relevance in respect to us is thus determinant for the regional ontology. In this manner, van Inwagen recognizes the weight that is proper to folk ontology.

Common sense ontology is simply committed to a plethora of discourse independent objects. As common sense engages into the reflection concerning its commitment to ordinary objects however, deep internal tension arises. Explanation of object constitution seems to be

¹² Horgan, T. and Potrč, M. 2000. We think that MSDG's are at least partially constituted by language and thought and thus that their constitution involves phenomenology, *besides* to and supplementing their constitutional roots in the regional dynamical richness of the world. So MSDG's are ontology-with-psychology constituted entities. See Potrč, M. and Strahovnik, V. Forthcoming_e. But we also think that MSDG's do not exist – they do not exist in the ultimate ontology, for they evaporate under the pressure of generalist requirements. However MSDG's do *ex-sist*, i.e. they are regionally recognized by the help of particularist principles.

¹³ We distinguish between the ontic in-worldly *ex-sistence* and between the ultimate existence. We already used this distinction, say in the previous footnote.

a desirable requirement, which offers itself by an answer to the special composition question: under which conditions do parts compose an object? It turns out though that no general answer to the special composition question that would respect common sense ontology is really available. One may try to provide an answer by considering the original question to be too general and therefore by downsizing it to sortals.¹⁴ But this again does not help and it may face additional problems. The failure of the quest for a general answer to the special composition question that respects common sense now encounters the possibility that semantic and conceptual normative standards are particularistic, and that what soft generalizations there are turn out to be mostly summary generalizations, not constituent norms. There is also phenomenological dimension to ordinary objects constitution, going along with the experience presenting us objects that instantiate various properties and relations. A general answer to the special composition question is thus required by common sense, yet the construal of common sense ontology points into another, particularist direction, which is incompatible with the general answer requirement. Common sense seems to deconstruct itself. How to approach the tension and avoid the undesirable result of rejecting common sense as implausible? Common sense ontology should be rightly construed, under the recognition of two kinds of semantic normative standards. Recognition of variation in contextualist normative standards allows realizing that common sense is not really in tension with itself. Objects and other posits of common sense are denizens of the regional ontology that follows particularist norms for which the construal of truth as a default is that of indirect correspondence. Direct correspondence construal of truth involving ordinary objects rather presents a limit case that goes together with the ultimate ontology. Tensions that result from this last approach to ordinary objects indicate that it may not be a viable option.

Common sense is not a philosophical discipline. It is rather a pragmatic endowment that people are equipped with, allowing them to function well in their usual environment. Some claimed that common sense will eventually have to be substituted by more precise and reliable scientific means. But these views rest upon a possibly questionable presupposition that common sense may be measured by standards appropriate to science or by various forms of generalism coming along with science, which is far from being an established fact.¹⁵ Common sense may well be an autonomous enterprise in respect to science. Among other things, it possesses an important predictive power¹⁶.

Common sense has to be taken as fairly reliable although not as the ultimately trusted guide in the area of ontology as well. Common sense encompasses many beliefs about what exists that can be viewed as its presuppositions. It certainly seems to us that common sense should not be measured by scientific standards in the area of ontology, in the case that such standards would be available. If one takes just two frequent and quite unproblematic features of scientific theories like hierarchical structure and completeness, one can immediately see that common sense ontology is not complete (since it can not cover all instances of entities) and that it is not hierarchical (because it lacks the duality of basic and derived beliefs/facts in a way that the former would explain the latter). But it seems

¹⁴ For such an attempt, see Thomasson (Forthcoming).

¹⁵ We are aware that revision of common sense as proposed by Rorty has other sources that we try to make explicit in this paper.

¹⁶ Fodor has praised the efficacy of common sense power as planning and predictive practical tool. It is for example an amazing achievement when you call me and we agree that we meet at the airport, and that we subsequently indeed meet at the airport at a chosen time. This entire efficacy was due to the immense predictive and planning power of common sense. The eventual possibility that something would go wrong does not diminish the predictive power of common sense in most of the cases.

nevertheless that common sense tells us some truth in the matter of ontology or of assessment of what there is. What is thus the commitment of common sense in ontology? You just go on and ask folks what they believe is there. "There is my house, my car, there is the cup upon the table" will be one likely answer. But there are also books, stones, cats and much more. What are these? These are things to which common sense is committed. They are objects. Typically common sense will make us attentive at material objects first, which come as most salient for it. All the already mentioned objects are material objects. There is the tendency for common sense to mention these first. Clouds will be mentioned much later, with the added question mark whether they are objects at all. Numbers will be mentioned in quite special states of mind, eventually prompted by the artificial setting of elementary school and of other stages of education. Common sense primarily takes the existent to be whatever one is able to hold to, or whatever is useful to you. So much about cups, cars and houses. Whatever is salient to you also turns out to be useful to you in one way or another, and in this way objects that are supposed to exist by common sense are first of all material objects. These objects are many and they come as separated from each other. There are several houses around, and several cups, and many different cats, not to mention all the cars that you can observe in the streets of our cities. Again, a cat is not a house, and one house is not identical to another house.

Rorty has context as well, but just one, the pragmatist context. As everything happens at one level for Rorty, common sense comes as opposed to his picture.

We think that common sense will deconstruct itself in the case it will be measured by generalist standards proper to the ultimate ontology. But we can preserve common sense in the case where we apply particularist standards to it. In this way, common sense becomes *aufgehoben*, according to our preferred Hegelian trick¹⁷

Our tricks rely on the contextual normative variation, such as it is forthcoming in the case of the distinction between regional and ultimate ontology. We think that Rorty lacks this normative zooming and contextually variable ability, and that specifically in the area of metaphysics he is prone to be a victim of disrespect for the ontological difference. For him, the ontic stuff such as cats and chairs is just at the same level as is the ontological stuff or the superthing. Notice that we do not think that there is more than one world around. But normative variability allows us to perform different zooms at this world.

Our claim is that Rorty is not really contextual. This may look strange, for he seems to be a kind of *Ur*-contextualist, emphasizing the importance of pragmatic context. But this exactly is our point. His pragmatic context, say social communicative exchange in search for truth, leaves him just in *one* dimension in respect to the otherwise richly available contextual variability. This is also the reason why common sense comes in conflict with the one-dimensional pragmatic contextualist picture as it is proposed by Rorty.

Rorty is entangled into the following dilemma: either he both gives up his picture of the world and keeps common sense realism or he keeps his metaphysical picture of the world and appropriates the project of revising common sense. He decides for the later.

Because of his one-dimensional¹⁸ pragmatic contextualism, Rorty gets entangled into the following dilemma: either to give up his non-realist picture of the world and keep the common sense realism. Or to stay with his picture of the world and declare common sense to be in need of revision.

¹⁷ Potrč, M. 2003_a. Horgan, T. and Potrč, M. Forthcoming. See also Potrč, M. and Strahovnik, V. Forthcoming.

¹⁸ Marcuse, H. 1964.

We argue that common sense is in need of revision just in case where too high metaphysical standards are applied to it, and that common sense may easily be saved (or *aufgehoben*) by the use of the Hegelian trick featuring appropriation of particularist holistic standards for it. But this is not possible for Rorty who gets himself entangled into the one-dimensional all-or-nothing view of the context. He just sees *both* the ontic and the ontological as appearing at the same contextual level of what we recognize as the ultimate ontology.

It is natural that once he blurs the distinction between the ultimate and the regional stuff – treating the regional stuff as the ultimate thing and thereby also showing his disrespect for the real contextual variability and for *die ontologische Differenz*¹⁹ -- Rorty does not see any other possibility than appropriating the project of common sense *revision*. But this is a quite implausible move for all those who are committed to endorse the real contextual normative variability.

We think that Rorty's dismissal of common sense is too quick, especially if there is an alternative holistic strategy available to explain common sense.

Common sense thus becomes an ultimate corner stone for measuring the plausibility of Rorty's overall approach. We have given several reasons why we think that staying compatible with common sense is a desirable strategy. A philosophical position will only gain in its plausibility if it will be compatible with common sense. Such compatibility will come in a smooth and natural manner once one will endorse contextual variability requirements that are so sorely missing in the approach of many metaphysicians.

The ultimate discussion though in the case of Rorty should center at the way he treats holism. We think that Rorty's holism is just opposed to atomism, and that he sees the whole story to be happening at just one normative contextual level, that of the ultimate ontology for the case of realism and for truth as direct correspondence. This is why it seems to us that Rorty suffers under a heavy one-dimensional cognitive *illusion*: in the case that we have discussed he actually reduces all the potential richness of contextual variability just to the ultimate metaphysical context. His pragmatic contextualism is no real contextualism.

Our alternative holistic strategy enables us to appropriate both common sense realism according to the regional normativity and truth as correspondence. We distinguish between direct and indirect correspondence. Truth as indirect correspondence allows for contribution of the world.

We have proposed an alternative strategy about how to look at holism, featuring a holistic and particularistically based view of parts and the view of structure as involving relevant and again particularistically based beautiful patterns. This enables us to appropriate common sense realism. But the value of this realism is linked to the regional ontology and to the particularist ways of normativity, and it is opposed to the ultimate ontology and to the generalist normative patterns, which Rorty takes as his only measure of things, whether they would be ultimate and/or²⁰ regional. This also precludes him from seeing the possibility to appropriate truth as indirect correspondence in the regional ontology, as different from truth as direct correspondence, which is in value for the ultimate ontology. We do distinguish between truth as direct and indirect correspondence because we opt for the real normative

¹⁹ Rorty is not alone to practice disrespect for *die ontologische Differenz*. We have identified the same behavior in such prominent metaphysicians as Peter van Inwagen, Amie Thomasson and Roberto Poli. See Potrč, M. and Strahovnik, V. Forthcoming.

²⁰ This and/or expression trick we steal from Kristeva and Derrida. In the discussed case it indicates blurring of needed distinctions. But this does not exclude it to be eventually useful in some other domain.

contextual variability that stays precluded to Rorty's just apparent contextual liberalism. Appropriating truth as indirect correspondence allows us to recognize the contribution of the world to the truth of assertions, truth conceived as correct and not as warranted assertibility, under the appropriate contextual changing normative standards. We aren't afraid of no world. So we keep world and truth and common sense. Who would ask for more? We think that with this we are better off than Rorty who gets subtly confused over the role of normative standards and who is unbeknownst to him and in opposition with his explicit intentions pulled into the direction of higher normative standards.²¹

²¹ Compare Lewis, D. 1983.

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