

Metaphysics: Ultimate and Regional Ontology

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Summary: There are problems in metaphysics that relate to its normative conditions. The first distinction designed to explain this is that of the ultimate and regional ontology. Further, normative conditions may be divided into generalist and particularist ones. Metaphysical discourse usually centers at the regional ontology by applying generalist normative standards to it. But there is the possibility of generalist normative principles matching the ultimate ontology and 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 is presented in the case of arguments for or against the existence of ordinary objects or Middle Sized Dry Goods. Holistic and rich regional ontology consists of relevant and varying situations dependent entities. But relevance is brought in just by particularist patterns that dominate regional ontology. The distinction between ultimate and regional ontology does not tend to be thematized. One follow-up is reification of ultimate and regional ontologies. Regional ontology is rooted in the world, although in an indirect manner.

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Monistic metaphysics

As a prelude to the following discussion, we first set out our basic metaphysical beliefs. 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.¹ One reason to claim that there is just one world without any parts lies in persisting difficulties to set appropriate standards for what these parts, such as ordinary objects, or Middle Sized Dry Goods (MSDGs) would actually be.² We think that it is on time to bite the bullet and to embrace the

¹ Horgan, T and Potrč, M. 2000. Horgan, T. and Potrč, M. In press. Tienson, J. In press. Potrč, M. 2003.

² 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

truth about the monistic nature of the world. Despite that the world comes without any parts, we think³ that it is dynamical and richly diversified.⁴ This allows us to account for ordinary objects not as the ultimate constituents, but as features that we recognize as ex-sisting *in* the world and that in fact are regionally rooted in the world. But we still deny to them the recognition to be genuine parts or entities. We thereby deny the rendition of ordinary objects as appearances, and thereby the distinction between truth and appearance. We substitute this division by differences in normatively based approaches to the same one world. If I refer to a cat, I do not aim at appearance, and I still refer to the world – just that now I refer to the world in a rather indirect manner, by zooming in at some salient regional area of the world. This normatively underpinned assessment of the relation between the world and between whatever ex-sists *in* the world in a regional manner seems to be much more realistic account than is, as we believe, the now defunct distinction between reality and appearance. So there is just one world, but there are several possible manners to zoom at the world, to talk or think about it. This brings along with it diversity in normative standards that are employed in different cases. Normativity is thus inherent to our assessment of the world and to the kinds of metaphysics that we may recognize.

We thus believe that metaphysical monism is true, and that it is a plausible view if supported by the appropriate account of possible different areas of metaphysics and of their relatedness to the normative issues. Normative issues only recently began to come⁵ into the focus of metaphysicians at all. But the normative issues continue *not* to be appropriately recognized because the important possibility of the particularist normativity, such as it is forthcoming in what we call particularist Beautiful Patterns, is not even considered. And this continues to happen despite that, as we believe, particular-

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 discord with the rest of his ontology. (Horgan, T. 1991).

³ 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.

⁴ Horgan, T. and Potrč, M. 2000, use the metaphor of undulating jell-o in order to illustrate the very possibility and conceivability of diversified and rich dynamical entity without any parts. Considerations in favor of exactly this being the case with our world come additionally from the possibility that the basic worldly constituent matter may be rather force and wave like than particles based. This is then the support from the part of science for our position.

⁵ Thomasson, A. In press, considers some principle and thus normativity based approaches to metaphysics that she characterizes as comparably recent items entering into discussion. She shows how the arguments for or against MSDGs are basically normativity related.

ist Beautiful Patterns have the potentiality to properly account for what the metaphysicians are mostly concerned with, namely for the regional ontology. We will explain this in what follows. We will actually argue for the distinction between the ultimate and regional ontology as the *framework* that may allow us, through the normative singularity of Beautiful Patterns, to untear an important veil that hides the truth about metaphysics.

Let us summarize the monistic metaphysical credo in a preliminary manner. It is the belief that there exists just one spatio-temporal world, without any parts, but dynamical and richly intertwined. Despite this, many everyday statements concerning ordinary objects are true, although the truth in their case is not a direct kind of correspondence with the world, but rather an *indirect* kind of correspondence.

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 impossibility of existence of a multitude of arbitrary composed objects.⁶ 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 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.⁷ Just one, non-vague object exists. But we may still

⁶ “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.) See also further discussion of NAOC in this text.

⁷ The proof that vague objects cannot exist starts with the presupposition of their existence and by the usage of RAA reasoning that then derives their impossibility. See Horgan, T.1991, Horgan, T. and Potrč,

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 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, as we will refer to this object, to the world, in a direct matter. As basically there is no other object as the world around, according to us, we still refer to it, and we still manage to assert something truthfully if we assert something about the cat, say, both as the function of how the world is, and as the function of how our cognitive means of assessment of it work and contribute to the evaluation of the assertion. Truth as indirect correspondence is an important device because it allows us to keep our monistic view compatible with many things relating to common sense. And respect to and compatibility with common sense seems to us to be one desirable feature of a metaphysical theory.

There are problems in metaphysics, and they are related to the normative conditions.

Metaphysics is the teaching about what there is. Peter van Inwagen tells us that the best definition of metaphysics that he ever heard is the simple assertion "Metaphysics is the study of the ultimate reality."⁸ It seems a reason-

M. 2000. Barry Loewer proposed the name sobjects for the putative vague objects, and snobjects for non-vague objects that may come in multitude.

⁸ See the introduction to van Inwagen, P. 1993.

able front up claim that what there is cannot depend upon conventions⁹ or upon various forms of normativity. This is certainly true in the following sense: the existence of the world cannot depend upon conventions and normative principles. But consider that our recognition of *how* the world is can depend on normative principles.¹⁰ The world certainly is intertwined in its constitution and it is rich. It is also rich to the extent that it is probably simply impossible for us to recognize the world as it is, in all the miniature of its detail. This is one way to start explaining how whatever exists – the world – does not depend upon matters of convention or normativity, but that the things in the world, and in a certain sense their existence that we *recognize* do in the indicated manner depend upon convention and normativity. For convention and normativity are related to language and thought and to our cognitive abilities. And cognitive abilities are normativity dependent, contrary to the world. The zooming-in onto the world is normativity dependent, although the world itself is not normativity dependent.

But there is a powerful pull in the direction of not recognizing normativity as an important issue in metaphysics at all. It is believed that metaphysics is simply the teaching about what there is. And rightly it is thought that whatever there is cannot be normativity, i.e. language and thought dependent. This certainly is a plausible view about the world. But consider that the world, although recognized as solidly existent, is quite an abstract determination from this point of view, a determination that finds itself as far away from richness of our cognitive or normative capabilities as possible. If there is just a very thin and almost disposable normative cover posed upon the ultimate metaphysical assessment of the world, this cannot be the case with all the details – roses, cats and cars – that we encounter on the everyday basis in the world. These objects are of course rooted in the world¹¹, but also they heavily depend on our cognitive capacities of recognizing them. This simple fact tends to be obscured. Metaphysicians take just the first presumption – that whatever exists cannot be straightly normativity dependent. They then go on to slice away from this assertion any imprint of normativity, and they extend it to the matters that we *recognize* as existent on everyday basis in our

⁹ See van Inwagen, P. 1990.

¹⁰ This means that Middle Sized Dry Goods (MSDGs), as for that matter, are the province of *how* the world is. They are *in* the world, although they even do not exist as separate entities and they are vague. The vagueness and lack of the ultimate existence of MSDGs is also the mark of their language and though dependent constituency, for language and thought are vague, in counterdistinction to the world.

¹¹ At least those objects that were mentioned are all spatio-temporal.

dealings with the world. Then they wrongly recognize the cat, say, as something ultimately existing.

The main point is that this problem is not even thematized, and so it does not appear to be a problem at all for the metaphysics as it is mostly practiced. But if we go along with this insight, it may have the potential to reveal some preconditions of metaphysics, and perhaps to put metaphysical investigation on an interesting and as we believe correct track. The insight in the very possibility of *particularist* patterns in metaphysics, and also the insight why they were neglected may then become important. In the actual metaphysical discussion however it is not even thematized that there is this problem with normativity and that normativity is important for metaphysics because one has not laid importance onto particularist patterns. So particularist patterns seem to have a normative and possibly even an ethical dimension to them, as far as the direction of the basic research in metaphysics is concerned.

Which are actually the main problems with metaphysics, the problems that we began to mention? These problems should first be illustrated by some instances, and then they should be related to their normative backgrounds. The beginning problem is that of identifying the area of metaphysics, and therewith the entities with which it is preoccupied. Does the area of interest for metaphysicians include only the world, or does it include other entities besides to the world, such as cats and cars? The problem is to set criteria for recognizing these, and these criteria by their nature are normative. For determining what belongs into certain metaphysics proceeds from setting norms in respect to this matter. Some proposals about what exists are based upon principles. Peter van Inwagen, in his *Material Beings* book, for example, accepts the proposal that just elementary particles and living beings exist. Thus there are no cars and mountains, but there are cats and people. This is an example where principles and normative criteria are set to determine whatever exists, even if consequences may not necessarily coincide with the criteria and normativity proper to common sense, or proper to that of other metaphysicians. Other beginning metaphysician's problems involve vagueness: just when does a cat come into being? It seems that cats are vague. But vagueness is a normative consideration. So we end up with normativity again as determining one of basic metaphysician's issues. The next metaphysical problem that one may discuss is that of the existence of Platonic or abstract entities. Do the numbers exist, and if they do, in what

sense? Again, the answer seems to depend upon the nature of normativity involved. For Platonic entities such as numbers heavily depend upon normative issues, according to several possible interpretations. We mentioned just a choice of problems for metaphysics, and we discovered that they all seem to be normativity related. So normative issues seem to form the basic background for the discussion in metaphysics. The very basic metaphysical issues, such as whether someone prefers to be a realist or a nominalist, seem to bear normative imprints. Problems of metaphysics have to do with *normativity*. But the very beginning stumbling block consists in recognizing the effectiveness of normative conditions in the discussion pertaining to metaphysics. Lately the shift is towards awareness of the importance of principles in metaphysics, as Amie Thomasson has pointed out. But it is not the case that all or even the most general principles would be considered in the metaphysical praxis. And principles of course are normative. Anyway, there are problems in metaphysics, and these seem to be related at least in a big part to the *normative* issues.

The first distinction designed to explain problems in metaphysics is the distinction between ultimate and regional ontology.

In order to approach a problem, and first of all a philosophical problem, a useful procedure recommends to introduce some distinctions. We have seen that there is a difference in metaphysics that we have touched repeatedly in our tiny introductory discussion, that between the world, and between the features that we distinguish or encounter in the world. This is a distinction in ontology between several things that exist, the distinction imposing itself at least in the beginning as we try to approach the problem. Most of the problems in metaphysics are related to the separate entities that we encounter in the world, and to their existence, their individuation and their vagueness, besides to several other issues. But digging a little bit further into this, just in the way that we started, shows the dependency of two main forms of ontology on normative issues. We have introduced normative dimension by the device of zooming onto the world along several varying magnitudes approach. The plausible intuition about what exists that we embrace is that of one spatio-temporal world, which stays one irrespectively of how complex it may happen to be. And it seems how things that we encounter *in* the world, such as cats and cars, are important enough to deserve a separate category

and treatment.

So we say that (A) Metaphysics consists of two brands of ontology: (a) Ultimate ontology, and (b) Regional ontology.

The ultimate ontology consists of the world itself. Whereas the regional ontology consists of the features that we find and recognize *in* the world. This is a distinction that is not appreciated at all or at least not sufficiently appreciated. It has to provide a framework for any possible metaphysics, as we understand it. This distinction may go under the name of *ontological difference*. Difference itself means that there is a distinction. And ontology means the teaching concerning whatever exists. So there is some kind of difference in respect to that whatever exists. What should be this difference? Ontological difference simply tells you that ontology is different in respect to the ontic. Ontology in this sense refers to the world, whereas the ontic refers to what may be encountered in the world. A useful approach to this question is to proceed along the following lines. Ontology has high standards involved into it. At the time as we think about the world or as we mention it, our standards certainly get a lot higher than this is the case with the items that we find on the everyday basis in the world. One contemplates high and abstract ontological issues, principles and arguments about externalism, individuality and vagueness. It is not difficult to understand that our ontological standards will rise if we talk about the world, in respect to the standards concerning the existent, that we use at the time as we talk about the cat or about the vegetarian hamburger. In the first case, in the case as we talk about the world, our standards perform the zooming out of the ordinary and everyday concerns of existence. We get ourselves into the distant mood, the mood that is distant at least in respect to our everyday concerns.¹² At the time we think about the vegetarian hamburger, our standards get lowered in respect to the standards such as they were discussed previously. We zoom out of the world inspecting distant way to handle things, and we zoom *into* whatever is of our everyday concern *in* the world. Actually, usually we do not need to perform this zooming-in operation in this last case, for in the conditions of the everyday we just stay with whatever we encounter *in* the world.¹³ Whatever is there on everyday basis, the vegetarian hamburger say,

¹² If we have a toothache, we will most probably center at our condition, and not on the world.

¹³ Notice that we do not need to zoom-in in the case of the ontic everyday concern at all. This is an interesting feature, perhaps not appreciated enough in discussions of metaphysics. We do need some zooming-out effort however in the case we deal with the matters of ultimate ontology. But nothing similar

is the matter that *we already find* in the world. We may just adopt a *lazy* ontological attitude in its respect. This lazy attitude *tends to confuse* the two areas of ontology: it tends to confuse the ontic and the ontological. In order to understand this confusion, we have to tackle the matters of normativity though. The reason that we need to do this is the simple truth that the difference between the ontological and between the ontic is a *normative* one, or it is the difference of various manners of *zooming-in* and of *zooming-out* in respect to the world. In the case our interest is dedicated to ontology, we *zoom-out* of the matters of everyday existence and we *zoom-in* onto the world. This certainly requires some *effort*. In the case we are concerned with the ontic, we do not need to do anything, actually, in most of cases. We just need to stick with whatever we find around us in the world, on the everyday basis. We just stick to the *lazy* everyday attitude. In the quite unusual case where we are already concerned with the matters of the ultimate world, we must *zoom-out* of our ontological attitude however. But this simple maneuver that just invites you to adopt simpler attitude as compared to the one that you now adopted turns out to be interestingly enough a challenging and insurmountable task for most of philosophers. We can call ignoring the importance of this maneuver *stupid*. It is namely stupid not being able to change your view and attitude in respect to adopt what is obvious and simpler than the attitude which you are engaged in. It is stupid to persist in believing that things are more complicated than they actually are.¹⁴ Now, most philosophers, such as van Inwagen and Thomasson, actually adopt a mixture of *lazy* and *stupid* maneuvers when performing metaphysics. They adopt as the area of their interest the *regional ontic* stuff, in a *lazy* manner. And they adopt in a *stupid* manner the highest standards that they somehow feel they have to retain and continue to stick to as philosophers. But being *lazy* and *stupid* amounts to *disrespect of the ontological difference*. Van Inwagen and Thomasson do not respect the *ontological difference*.

But *respect for the ontological difference* is a *must* if you take metaphysics seriously, and if you wish to encounter difficulties that appear in it. In simple terms, you should not confuse the world for a vegetarian hamburger. The distinction between ultimate ontology and between regional ontology, between the ontological and between the ontic, is not appreciated to a suffi-

is required in the case of the ontic attitude. This is why we may call the ontic attitude the *lazy* metaphysics. We simply stick to the norms that we already find.

¹⁴ It would be *stupid* to use the highest table bon-ton related standards appropriate for the court or for the company of the president at the time you find yourself in the local McDonalds.

cient extent, and many times it is not appreciated at all.¹⁵ But there are ways to at least recognize the difference between the ontological and the ontic, although in an implicit manner. So van Inwagen asks the basic metaphysical question about what is there that actually exists. When is it true that there is some y such that x 's compose y ? In what circumstances do several material things add up or compose a single material thing? He considers as possible candidates several objects of the commonly accessible everyday world. He appreciates the normative dimension in trying to deliver an answer to this question, as he claims that there has to be some *criterion* to determine conditions for existence. His answer is that several material beings compose something iff the collective activity of these several beings constitutes Life. So, many entities that we suppose to exist in our everyday attitude, such as chairs and stones, do not exist according to him, for they do not match the criterion for existence that for van Inwagen is delivered as the principle of Life. So cats exist, but tables don't. But consider now that this maneuver is at least *partially stupid*, for it fails to recognize the difference between the ontological and the ontic for all the items of the everyday ontic metaphysical attitude. This is then just another manner of claiming that van Inwagen does not actually respect a wider metaphysical principle, such as Non Arbitrariness Of Composition (NAOC).¹⁶ Van Inwagen wrongly thinks that *some* items of the ontic everyday existent things are the *ultimate* ontological stuff. This is what we call being *partially lazy* in the matters of metaphysics. Van Inwagen namely stupidly and stubbornly holds to the highest normative standards of ultimate ontology and applies them to the area of the everyday metaphysical stuff or to the ontic. He rightly sees that this cannot get through in most of the cases. But he stubbornly persists in his claim that ultimate ontology applies to at least *some ontic* cases, namely to those that satisfy the requirement of the principle of Life. But this is arbitrary and it is *partially stupid*. It is arbitrary because it is not clear why exactly the principle of Life should single out an exceptional lot of existent entities, in counterdistinction to the entities that do not really exist, although folks may suppose that this would be the case. It is *partially stupid* because this arbitrary maneuver is propelled by the

¹⁵ Perhaps Heideggerians may seem to be able of appreciating ontological difference. But this is not the case. The difference in question is of normative nature, and they are mostly unable to recognize this. Although Dreyfus, H. in his 1991 may be read as arguing for the normative approach to the ontic in respect to the ontological. Skills, for example, have the precondition to happen in a setting where they are *recognized*, which of course is a normative approach to things.

¹⁶ See Horgan, T. 1993, Potrč, M. 2002.

disrespect for the ontological difference. Van Inwagen obviously accepts the view that there are differences in metaphysical recognition of existence. If he would be consistent, he would have to go with the ultimate existence for the area of the world, and for the regional existence in the area of what we encounter on the everyday basis as existent, for the ontic. Now, he makes some effort to adopt this special philosophical attitude. He feels that there is something else as just the everyday mode of existence. So he would deny the special philosophical existence status to most items *in* the world, such as chairs and stones. But he would then *arbitrarily* and thus in a *partially stupid* manner adopt some special area of the *ontic*, namely whatever complies with the principle of Life, as *ultimately* existent. But this is *stupid*, for a *cat* or even a *human being* just cannot be ontological: they are the ontic everyday matters that we encounter *in* the world. The *partial* stupidity of van Inwagen maneuver is due to the commendable move to recognize *most* of the ontic features (chairs, stones) as not being ontological. But van Inwagen is confused even in this basic respect. He somehow feels that this chair is not ontological, that it is just ontic. But he does not say this in so many words. He does not say that the chair does not exist as an ontological entity (just the world does), he claims that it does not exist, in a simple manner.¹⁷ Is van Inwagen *lazy*? Yes, he is, in the sense that he lazily sticks with a *part* of the ontic being-*in*-the-world as with something ontological. He lazily refuses to step out of the ontic area when dealing with ontology, i.e. with whatever there ultimately exists, with the world. Van Inwagen is thus partially stupid and lazy in his disrespect for the ontological difference. Van Inwagen is *partially lazy* because he does not consider *normativity*, he does not continue to embrace NAOC all the way down once he has appropriated it for non-living objects. Van Inwagen is *partially stupid* because there is no real reason for limiting entrance rights into the existence club that he proposes, i.e. there are no real reasons that just chairs do not exist in the ultimate ontology. You take at least some MSDGs as actually existing if you go van Inwagen way, the living MSDGs.

Notice that if van Inwagen would consider NAOC as ranging all the way through the areas of metaphysics, then the answer to his Special Composi-

¹⁷ Horgan, T. and Potrč, M. 2000, will have to improve their approach as well from this point of view. As they say that chairs and people do not exist, they do not go arbitrary, because they do recognize the difference between the ontic and the ontological in a non-arbitrary manner. They extend the treatment of the ontic over all the area. But it should be added that chairs and people do not exist as ontological entities, yet they may ex-sist as the *ontic* stuff, *in* the world, without that they would be *parts* of this world.

tion Question (SCQ): “When does exist an y such that x ’s compose this y ?” would be different. Van Inwagen’s answer is: “The y exists when the x ’s that compose it are guided by the principle of Life”. But if NAOC would be considered thoroughly, then the answer to SCQ would be: “As the world does not have any parts, no parts, i.e. no x ’s are able to compose a y . So parts do not compose living beings either.” Additional underpinning of our standpoint is that from the point of view of ultimate ontology the principle Life is arbitrary.

Here is a more general remark about *lazyness*. Lazy metaphysician leans towards the following reasoning about the world. Let us start with the ontic, with what is around here. *If general* principles may be found, or at least if we attempt to effectuate the search for them with a sufficient hope, we may justifiedly talk about the *ultimate* reality, about the *world* in general, as we tackle this ontic stuff. Thus, if generalist principles are *expressible*, this will be reason enough to talk about the ultimate reality. Both Thomasson and van Inwagen have this kind of approach when tackling the SCQ issues. But van Inwagen is closer to NAOC as Thomasson is in respect to this issue. This all happens because they do not consider our presupposition according to which general principles dominate one and rich world.

Van Inwagen and Thomasson both share with us the belief that general principles belong to the ultimate reality. But they search for generalities in the area of the ontic. Another example of such proceeding is Quine’s definition of objects as the matter filling some space and time region. This is supposed to be then a general principle that determines what exists and what does not exist. And ultimate reality is supposed to exist. But this is again the application of general principles to the area of the ontic. Thomasson does not appreciate ontological difference as she persists in applying general principles, although somehow adapted general principles, to the area of folk ontology. She does not appreciate that folk ontology is guided locally by what we call beautiful particularist patterns. As van Inwagen asks about what exists, he goes on to explain it in terms of SCQ, which is for him the basic metaphysical question. However this is *generality* based approach to what really exists and to what does not really exist in the *ontic* world. He does not divide between high standards appropriate for monism and between the area of entities ex-sisting *in* the world. Van Inwagen just claims that it is impossible for something to exist in the ontic world unless it satisfies some criteria, and most folk ontology supposed things do not satisfy those criteria.

From this point of view, van Inwagen's SCQ divides into the question about what actually exists (cats for him) and into the question about what does not actually exist (chairs). Thereby he just confirms the usage of *general* question.

We have taken the case of van Inwagen, a philosopher and metaphysician whom we appreciate very much as a leading authority in the area. We agree with the opinion somehow known in philosophical community that a positive response to someone's view from the side of van Inwagen is practically the ultimate endorsement of this view. Yet exactly this respect that we show for van Inwagen demonstrates how the framework that we wish to point towards, that of distinction between the ultimate and regional ontology, the framework that we adopt, together with the ensuing appreciation of the ontological difference, still stays a not recognized although basic item in metaphysics. Most metaphysicians are lazy and stupid. They are lazy in that they do not sort themselves out of the area of the everyday ontic stuff as they treat the questions of the ultimate ontology. And they are stupid when, once as they adopt the special philosophical attitude, they continue to stick to it no matter what, even if they clearly see that this special philosophical attitude, close to the generalist standards, will probably not be in power for the everyday area in metaphysics. They just stubbornly persist in the high standards adopted philosophical arrogance that makes them blind for the obvious. They persist with the highest normative standards, in our case with the ontological standards, and they apply them to the area of the ontic. Thereby they show their disrespect for the ontological difference. They stay in regional ontology, applying ontological ultimate standards to it.

The second distinction claims that normative conditions may be divided into generalist and particularist ones.

The distinction between the ultimate and regional ontology is our framework. It is a very basic and simple distinction. But it is not appreciated enough¹⁸. It is simply the distinction between the world, under the high criteria or standards of extreme zooming-out at what exists¹⁹, and between whatever exists *in* the world, where we may lazily stay with the things that we already find to exist around us, on the everyday basis. The techniques of zooming in and out of things introduced something such as varying *stan-*

¹⁸ Or as we claim, many times it is not appreciated at all.

¹⁹ Zooming-out of the everyday existent and zooming onto the world as a general category.

dards.

Now these varying standards or normative conditions may be divided into generalist and particularist ones. This distinction will be our framework in as far as *normativity* or normative conditions get concerned. So here is our second distinction in respect to (B) Normative conditions: (a) Generalist normative conditions, (b) Particularist normative conditions.

Generalist normative conditions are set up in such a manner that they should be used for all the cases in question concerning a certain domain. Consider that this task is easily and trivially satisfied with the monistic ultimate ontology. As there is just one world out there, according to the ultimate ontology, this world and a certain normative condition that is in power for this world will of course range over *all* the cases in the respective domain. Of course, for there is just one world out there, and so there is nothing else in this domain. Ultimate ontology thus satisfies the requirement of generalist normative conditions easily, for there is no special procedure needed here given that the domain involves just one object, namely the world. And the generalist normative condition requirement is satisfied trivially, for one world cannot fail to satisfy it.

Particularist normative conditions, as this is indicated by their very name, are such that they will not range over a multitude of cases, but preferably over a unique case. The following confusion is often committed. One presumes that there exist a number of cases to which particularist normative conditions apply. From the point of view of all of these cases, particularist normative conditions would apply to this particular case only. Say, indexical determinants would determine uniqueness of such a case, and sort it out from many different similar cases. But notice that contribution of a feature will vary and it will have a possibly quite different role from one case to another one, depending on very hard to be tracked shape of the context that will each time determine the contribution of this feature. Indexicals are important. But that a feature shares the same time and space makes it context dependent how we see the indexical determined regions. Another possibility about how to understand this comes from the way holism is present in metaphysics. Context itself determines what is the ontology we are talking about: whether regional or ultimate. Is there just the MSDGs ontology, or are there inside the area of the regional ontology also other contexts present?

Metaphysical discourse usually centers at the regional ontology by applying generalist normative conditions to it.

How does metaphysical discourse proceed? Which normative conditions and which areas of ontology does it center at? We have already taken the example of a distinguished metaphysician van Inwagen and we have affirmed that his procedures in metaphysics are lazy and stupid. We do not mean to say something morally disappreciating thereby, for we have introduced the terms *lazy* and *stupid* in a technical manner. Van Inwagen procedures are lazy in that the area at which the usual metaphysical discourse centers is the area of the regional ontology, of the ontic *in-the-world* stuff. It is namely lazy to just stay with whatever is pushed before your nose or with whatever appears in front of your nose in the everyday take on things. You are lazy if you do not do any effort to come out of the circumstances in which you find yourself in or into which you are pushed. As far as metaphysics is concerned, everybody finds herself in the everyday existent, in the area of the ontic. Now, to stay with the ontic, with whatever is pushed in front of your nose, to stay with ordinary objects, say²⁰, is what we call *lazy*. This is what people tend to do. But after a while, people see that it would be also good for them to take some more kosher or sophisticated method, given that they are metaphysicians. So riding this *transcendental push towards what is kosher in metaphysics*, metaphysicians then try to adopt *generalist norms*. This is perhaps not bad at all. But here comes the stupid part. It is namely *stupid* to apply these generalist normative standards to an area that really does not fit to them, namely to the area of existent in the everyday sense. This second time move comes because one wishes to stay with the high metaphysical attitude, without undoing the result of the earlier *lazy* proceeding whose tendency was to remain with whatever you first encountered in the area of the existent, the *ontic* stuff.

The usual and actual practice of the metaphysical discourse is to take what is most available in one's vicinity, the Middle Sized Dry Goods (MSDGs), in a lazy manner. Metaphysical discourse then treats these MSDGs as that what exists – in the meaning of that what exists in an ultimate manner. So the actual metaphysical practice applies generalist normative conditions to MSDGs, i.e. to the regional ontology. The arguments defending the existence of MSDG's are at least partially built from the general

²⁰ See Thomasson, A. defense of ordinary objects.

principles that we talk about. Amie Thomasson's SCQ proposal seems sensible at least from the point of the ontic, from the point of view of the regional ontology. The problem arises because her proposed SCQ's are incompatible with even more general and basic principles that are there in their background: NAOC and principle of the impossibility of ontological vagueness. The actual metaphysical discourse proceeds in a lazy and stupid manner, and it is marked with the disrespect for the ontological difference.²¹

Metaphysical discourse usually centers at generalist normative conditions, but to a very *limited* extent. According to Amie Thomasson, we do not know what precisely normativity has to do in metaphysics. Notice also that metaphysicians do not use all normative conditions. And neither do metaphysicians use the most general normative conditions, such as NAOC. This is in force for van Inwagen and for Amie Thomasson.

Amie Thomasson aims at specific normative conditions, at the regional ontology. But she uses these as if they would be generalist. This is wrong. It is wrong to apply bunch of different generalist normative conditions of metaphysics to several areas of ontic domain of ordinary objects. Ordinary objects would need particularist normative treatment, which means that some structure is still necessary for them, although this should not really be generalist structure. Amie Thomasson does not even thematize that we have to do with the normative conditioning of metaphysics.

Ordinary objects are things that surround us and that we deal with on a daily basis, such as chairs, cats, sticks and stones. There are several metaphysical arguments against the existence of ordinary objects however. In more positivistic minded times the existence of ordinary objects was denied because of their incompatibility with the scientific outlook. More recently, we witness diverse sources of their denial: either that MSDGs as posits of common sense are of an inherently contradictory nature, or again that they are taken to be in disaccord with some general metaphysical principles. The statement that MSDGs are inherently contradictory may come from their ac-

²¹ The actual metaphysical discourse best representatives such as van Inwagen, P. and Thomasson, A. are just *partially lazy* and *partially stupid* because they see that they have to use some normative effort, that they have to establish normative criteria and that they have to apply them. Van Inwagen certainly is only *partially lazy* in that he notices the need to overrule most of MSDGs with normativity. Many Heideggerians, we presume, tend to be *completely stupid* (in French: *ces fous complets!*), in that they just push for a special high normative attitude, forcing it to be applied to ontic data or not appreciating the importance of the specific area of ontic data for metaphysics at all. Some representatives of common sense defenders in metaphysics, on the other hand, would be *completely lazy* in that they would not do any effort to push themselves out of the metaphysical area that is in front of their nose.

knowledge of vague nature²², which is itself an issue having to do with normativity, for vagueness is a phenomenon stemming from normativity.²³ But let us call this a non-explicit normative denial of MSDGs. There is also an explicit normative denial of MSDGs, resting upon principles. For principles are normative matters.

Amie Thomasson²⁴ considers five explicitly normatively motivated arguments against the existence of ordinary objects with the agenda of rejecting them. It is significant that she does not count arguments against the existence of ordinary objects as based on vagueness to be normatively grounded (or principle grounded). This lack of spotting normative issues in the phenomenon of vagueness shows that she is not sufficiently attentive at the normative dimension, which will unfortunately turn out to be the case in her treatment of the argument reviewed and considered here.

The first normative argument against ordinary objects that Thomasson mentions is the argument from composition, to be dealt somewhat more extensively in what follows. In short, the argument denies the existence of ordinary objects because they do not comply with the general principle such as Non Arbitrariness Of Composition (NAOC), as underlying the reply to the Special Composition Question (SCQ). The second is the causal redundancy argument, which treats MSDGs as epiphenomenal upon their basic physics constituent and causally efficacious stuff. In the case of the ball breaking the window, causal efficacy is the attribute of atoms, but it just cannot come with anything else. Co-location argument denies existence of ordinary objects because of their multiplying at a single location. A generalization of the second argument is the affirmation that there is nothing *over and above* the basic stuff. The final principled consideration involves parsimony, with the proposal to reduce the ontologically not really needed entities, of which MSDGs form a patent example.

The argument from composition proposes a general normative criterion as an answer to the question of composition. Because MSDG's do not satisfy this criterion, they are affirmed not to exist.

(SCQ) When is it true to say that there is a y such that x 's compose this y ?

²² Some people, such as Meinongians and other Platonists tend to deny vagueness of ordinary objects.

²³ Potrč, M. 2002a.

²⁴ Thomasson, A. In press.

Peter van Inwagen considers several answers to SCQ, starting with contact, and then continuing with external (say, teleological) or internal criteria of composition. He rejects them all and affirms that the only appropriate answer to SCQ may be provided by the principle of Life. His answer to SCQ is thus that the only time it is true that x 's compose a y is in the case where the composition succeeds according to the principle of Life.

This has the consequence that many posits or MSDGs that we postulate according to the everyday attitude – chairs, cars, stones, houses – do not exist, because nothing is really composed in their case. What is then there where I think that there is my chair? According to the criterion of Life as an answer to SCQ it may only be a bunch of elementary particles acknowledged by physics – let us call them atoms – bunch of atoms coming together in a chair-wise manner.²⁵ But there is no chair. However there are alligators and people, and other living beings, if the principle of Life is able to propose an answer to the SCQ.

Peter van Inwagen actually uses a general *normative* criterion in order to determine what exists beside to the atoms. This criterion has the consequence that many posits of common sense and of science finish up to be denied ontological right to existence. There is thus a normative criterion that is more important than our pre-theoretical intuitions about what should be there. Such a criterion may be called Non Arbitrariness Of Composition:

(NAOC) It is implausible to build one's ontology upon a bunch of unexplained facts or ontological surds. Some general normative principle should answer to such questions as SCQ.

This means that for someone accepting the principle of Life, NAOC will reply to SCQ by allowing living beings into ontology, as the only ones where something metaphysically respectable gets composed.

Once as one accepts NAOC thus as the criterion determining an answer to SCQ and finally as an answer to the question "What exists?", one may plausibly ask whether it is not the case that the Life itself also provides an

²⁵ Van Inwagen claims that despite that there are no chairs, one may still talk about chairs, and say something sensible, as this would be in the case "This 17th century chair I saw yesterday is beautiful and expensive." According to Van Inwagen, such kind of talk is misguided, and practically used nonetheless, in a similar manner as the affirmation "The sunset will be at 4:52p today" may be practical although strictly seen it is false. It is not the case that the Sun circles around the Earth; it is just another way round.

arbitrary answer to the SCQ²⁶.

Does this then mean that nothing exists, except atoms? Several principled questions are possible here, such as: Nihilism or the view that simples never compose anything. Then the view that each possible combination of simples composes something. None of these seem to have metaphysically desirable consequences. One may also put into question a presupposition underlying SCQ, namely that there are parts. At least according to some interpretations of physics, it is questionable what exactly should be counted for simples and perhaps also whether there are any simples out there. There may be just forces constituting our world, and no simples. All these possible answers obviously presuppose a general metaphysical normative principle of a sort. NAO is such a proposed principle that answers to the SCQ.

Thomasson in her attempt to save the existence of MSDGs has the following proposal on offer as an answer to SCQ: SCQ is just too general and therefore it can not be a sensible question.²⁷ It is not a sensible question to ask when in a general sense it is true that some *x*'s compose a *y*. There cannot be any appropriate answer to such a broadly construed question. It is however sensible to ask such questions as "When do planks compose a ship?" In fact, the trimmed down SCQ question, according to Thomasson proposal, will finish up with a plethora of sortal-attuned questions.

This sounds nice, but here are some problems. These sortals somehow already presuppose the acceptance of ordinary objects. Sortals determine parts in the world. And parts may either be chunked in a more general or in a more individual manner. If in the individual manner, we are left with a bunch of our MSDGs, so the *circulus* is apparent. If the criterion of chunking proceeds according to several general questions, we are left with the same stuff as this was the case with the first generalist appearance of SCQ. SCQ presupposed a general normative principle. Now if SCQ gets trimmed down to several sortal attuned SCQ's these are still *general* principles. So Thomasson in this case buys some sort of normativity, still general normativity.

But this is not all. Thomasson seems to deny generalism and normativity altogether when it comes to the matters of metaphysics. Why? Because she falls under the illusion of ultimate reality. The illusion under which Thomasson succumbs is to pretend that metaphysics does not ultimately have to do with *normativity*, despite that she acknowledges normative principles as an

²⁶ Horgan, T.1993.

²⁷ Thomasson relies about this on Sanford, D.1996, Hilpinen, R. 1996, who defend a similar line.

important challenge to the existence of MSDGs.

Here is what she thinks. The business of metaphysics is in *description* and not in *explanation*. So a metaphysician should accordingly just describe things, and answer to such questions as “Does the cat there exist?”, “Did Moses exist?”, “Does this chair exist?”. The metaphysician’s lot is not that of explanation however.

In this sense Thomasson denies the plausibility of Horgan and Potrč (2000) requirement put on the explanation in the area of metaphysics. Explanation would come to the fore if there would be questions related to normativity pertinent in metaphysics, such as the NAOC supported questions. But as description is the real job of metaphysician, she cannot go along with the matters of explanation that are appropriate for such an area as that of a physical science.

But this seems kind of shaky. If for example I wish classify dolphins as distinct from sharks in my metaphysics, a lot of explanation will be needed in order to make an appropriate description. Even more, it seems impossible to have description without that it would also include explanation.²⁸ Thomasson, according to her own schedule, has to defend ordinary objects. And so the explanatory principles must be involved into her choice of ordinary objects. It just does not seem honest to say that ordinary questions are not asking for explanation of anything. Sortal terms have determining conditions. We sort out whales from the fish as being of a different nature. But why? It is not obvious that there is no explanatory principle that Thomasson would use herself.²⁹ Ordinary ontology, whatever it may be, is thus not just a matter of description, but also of explanation. You must have explanation for the principles you use, and you have some of these in the area of ordinary ontology.

What Thomasson does seems to follow this procedure. First, she is set up to defend the existence of ordinary objects. So she is set up to claim that these objects are ultimately real. But if they are ultimately real, there is no place for normativity in an approach to them. They just exist out there, without really following any general principles.

According to the framework we propose, MSDGs do exist (in fact they exist upon the Blob and this is why the assertions about them are still capable to be true), but only in a regional manner. In this case lower normative

²⁸ Thanks to Danilo Šuster for discussion concerning this.

²⁹ And that she promises to elaborate in Chapter 10, which was not available to us.

standards are responsible for them. MSDGs do not exist however in the manner of the ultimate ontology.

Thomasson now confuses the natural order of things. She presupposes MSDGs to build the realm of the *ultimate* ontology, and of course in this case they should come so to say without any normativity. Even this is wrong by the way because this no normativity claim should be spelled out as the normativity according to the highest metaphysical normative requirements. But appropriating the ultimate standards in the area of the regional – leaning towards the more language and thought and thus to the more normativity adjusted – is stupid and will leave an uncomfortable feeling.

A blobjectivist is sensible to the SCQ question, and she supposes that such a question together with the normativity that it implies is in accordance with the generalist kind of principle appropriate to the ultimate ontology. SCQ and the normative principle NAOC are thus appropriate for the ultimate ontological stuff, where the only object, the Bobject is to be found. If MSDGs are the ultimate metaphysical stuff, then just the ultimate ontological norms are appropriate to them. But they aren't; they are actually particularistically accountable beautiful patterns that ex-sist upon the Blob.³⁰ Because of the lack of thematizing normativity, the illusion is produced that MSDGs belong to the ultimate ontology.

What are MSDG's then? As already stated, they are the beautiful – relevant – patterns that ex-sist upon the Blob. They are supported by the most holistic stuff of them all, by the world or by the Blob. Because of this holistic background, MSDGs as regional metaphysical stuff comply with particularist metaphysical norms. According to our understanding MSDGs not only do exist. They actually ex-sist upon the Blob in a regional manner.

Van Inwagen and Thomasson somehow recognize the role of normative principles in metaphysics. But normativity is not really thematized by them. They do use generalities, but to these who use them these do not seem to be normative principles at all. So much still needs to be clarified in metaphysics

The best performing metaphysicians, as we have seen, use lazy and stupid procedures, and they use the mix of such procedures to some extent. They proceed in partially lazy or partially stupid manner, or again in totally lazy or in totally stupid manner, in extreme cases. Being lazy was determined as staying with what is given, with the regional ontological or with

³⁰ If MSDGs are particularistically accountable this is by itself a sign of their regional – metaphysically beautiful and holistic background supported – nature.

the ontic stuff. The laziest ones just stay with this ontic given, without thematizing its relation to the normative. Less lazy ones adopt some normativity to approach this area. But again as the first kind of normativity that appears in front of their heightened metaphysical attitude is generalist, they may finish to apply this generalist normativity in the *stupid* way (stupid, because inadequate to the specificity of the area under question). In the best case though, the metaphysicians will apply adequate normativity to the area in question. But this is not what they usually do, and we have to sort it out as a special logical possibility. But metaphysicians also do not need to behave in a lazy manner at all. They may look for a metaphysical area that transcends whatever is metaphysically given, the everyday *in-worldly* stuff. They may acknowledge the area of the *ontological*, quite different to the area of the ontic. They may acknowledge the importance of the world. So they are not lazy. But they certainly act stupidly if they apply the *normativity* that goes with the world in an irresponsible manner to the area of the ontic. They act *wisely* though if they respect an adequate match between the generalist and particularist normativities and between the areas of the ultimate and of the regional ontology.

Thus there is still the following logical possibility. (1) The *ultimate* ontology matches the *generalist* normative conditions. (2) The *regional* ontology matches *particularist* normative conditions. Or the other way round: Generalist principles match the ultimate ontology. And particularist normative principles match the regional ontology.

We have approached the explanation of the ultimate ontology as a normative matter, as the manner of zooming out of the everyday ontic existent stuff onto the world as if it would be observed from the distance. Then just general assertions may be adequately made in this kind of normative mode, such as "There is one spatio-temporal material world". These kinds of assertions are general, and they seem to adequately match the ultimate ontology.

Regional ontology or the ontic stuff, on the other hand, tends to be a metaphysical mess. At least this is the impression if one will proceed on the basis of generalist patterns, which form the customary currency of the metaphysical discourse. If, on the other hand, one acknowledges viability and relevance of *particularist patterns*, one will notice that they are exactly the normative basis for the regional ontology, which tends to be a holistic and richly intertwined dynamical matter, into which cognitive forces of language and thought are actively involved.

The first reason that was already hinted at is that the *ultimate* ontology as the *area* under investigation only boils down to trivial assertions (such as “There is just one world out there”). But this does not seem to be a very exciting area of investigation then. Besides to this, there is a fear related to recognizing the possibility of monism, which would be a quite natural outcome once one would consider the match of ultimate principles to the area of the ultimate ontology. This *monism-phobia*³¹ is then the reason why the ultimate ontology is *not thematized* at all. Generalist principles matching ultimate ontology lead towards trivial sounding nature of assertions that go in face to what metaphysicians usually appropriate as their *area* of study. As the world happens to be one, in the spatio-temporal sense, everybody appropriating ultimate ontology has to conclude in favor of monism (the existence of just one spatio-temporal world, because this is what ultimate ontology shows). But monism is not compatible with the area that metaphysical discourse usually appropriates as the field of its study, namely the rich and common sense compatible world of everyday objects and events.

Generalist principles tend to set very high normative standards. It is natural then however that not much content is coming along with these standards. This is the reason of trivially sounding already mentioned assertions such as “There is just one world”. These assertions are still conducted under normative pressure, although the normative standards involved into it are the highest of their kind. The zooming at the situation in their case is quite distant and so no or almost no details of content come displayed under this approach.

We have seen that there are some reasons for the customary metaphysical discourse not to appreciate the match between the generalist patterns and between the ultimate ontology. The second difficulty for the customary metaphysical discourse is that of recognizing the match of *regional* ontology in conjunction with the *particularist* normative conditions. It turns out that this logical possibility is *not* thematized either in the customary metaphysical discourse. One reason for this is that in practice we manage to skillfully handle *particularist* normativity in each *area* into which we happen to be involved. But there are difficulties with *explanation* of the particularist normativity. The reason is that the form of explanation we use is *generalist*. Most people certainly skillfully master all intricacies of meaning such as those that appear in the everyday discourse. But we are not able to *explain* this skill that

³¹ Monism-phobia is consequence of lazyness.

we master in such an effortless manner. The explanations that are proposed for the area of meaning, in philosophy, are not very enlightening though. One reason for this is that these explanations come in the *generalist* shape. But generalist shape of explanation is not very appropriate for an area such as that of meaning or matters of ethics and aesthetics that is by its nature holistic and rich. Some other form of explanation would be needed than the generalist one. This would be *particularist* form of explanation, perhaps the explanation in some form of *narration*. But such particularist proceedings are not even thematized in an area that naturally shifts into the direction of general patterns, such as the area of the discourse dedicated to metaphysics, to what exists.

Regional ontology matches particularist patterns. MSDGs are rich and holistic: they are then best accounted for by particularist patterns. But they actually do not exist; at least MSDGs do not exist if properly looked at from the perspective of generalist patterns. Particularist patterns are appropriate for an account of MSDGs as the relevant regional stuff, and this cannot be accomplished by any generalist patterns. We should recall the troubles for the trials to use generalist patterns in accounting for the regional MSDG stuff. Just what does actually count as an entity, what does count as an object? Notice for example Quine's curious generalist patterns propelled determining of objects as whatever fills out a spatio-temporal region.

Holistic and rich regional ontology consists of relevant and varying situation dependent entities.

Regional ontology is holistic and rich. The world that we encounter on the everyday basis is extremely intertwined. There are no clear borders for the things that ex-sist *in* the world. Cats are vague entities for all that we know and these vague entities do not even exist – they certainly do not exist as the ultimate ontological stuff.

A fact is that there is *holism* appropriate for the common sense everyday world. There is the *richness* of the ex-sistent world that we encounter. Besides to this, regional ontology is composed out of things that are *relevant* for us in each respective situation. If there is a situation of everyday life, then there are MSDGs at which we focus. If there are other kinds of situations, other kinds of entities will enter as ex-sistent into the area of the regional ontology. We argue that *relevance* is only brought along with the help of par-

ticularist patterns. But if this is the case, then particularist patterns dominate the regional ontology.

Generalist patterns do not bring the relevance along with them at all, except for shallow repetitive relevance. So, relevance has to be brought in by particularist patterns. The area of regional ontology is relevant. So this area of regional ontology has to be dominated by particularist patterns.

An already mentioned counterexample is provided by Amie Thomasson when she explains the regional ontology with the help of generalist patterns. SCQ's*, i.e. the sortally specified SCQs are applied to the specific kinds. Do chairs exist? Do nations exist? Do organisms exist? We transform these starting questions into SCQs. These are: When do parts of a chair compose the chair? When do citizens form a nation? When do cells form an organism? This move of Amie Thomasson is generalist, for it completely preserves the normative authority of the general, through the promotion of dominance from the part of generalist patterns. A sortal claim would be that a chair is such that it is composed from the parts of the chair. Amie Thomasson has the best brand of examples in this direction. If these examples are intuitively false, this seems to be an explanation that this generalist take on things is *not* and cannot be an appropriate strategy.

Reification of ultimate and regional ontologies.

One consequence of not appreciating the distinction between the ultimate and the regional ontology, or what amounts to the same, of not respecting the ontological difference, tends to be, in a curious twist, *reification* of this distinction. Ultimate ontology and regional ontology then try to appear as two separate and metaphysically independent areas. So there would be the world, the area of the ontological. And there would be the metaphysical stuff as encountered on the everyday basis, such as cats and stones. But consider against this multiplication of regions that there *is* just one world. The ultimate and the regional ontology are normative aspectual zooms onto the world, which is just one world. So items of regional ontology just *ex-sist in-the-world*, and are *regions* that are recognized as so *ex-sisting*. The reification of the ontology/ontic distinction is the consequence of a basic mistake of not appreciating the distinction between ultimate and regional ontology as the metaphysical *framework*. This mistake may be close to the proceedings in ontology adopted by Roberto Poli, who wrongly thinks that there are real rei-

fied strata where there are just the diverse regional zooming-ins onto the world and *in* the world.³² The mistake that is committed because of the lack of thematizing the distinction between ultimate and regional ontology boils down to the reification of these areas: so there should be the ultimate world, and besides to this there should also exist the regional world, or regions of regional world. This mistake is propelled by not considering at all normative questions to be decisive in the discussion related to the ontology and metaphysics.

Regional ontology is just one way to zoom onto the world. It is rooted in the one world, although in an *indirect* manner. So language and thought are of importance to the regional ontology, in a pronounced way, beside that these MSDGs, say, are entities *cum fundamentum* in the world or in the Blob.³³

Regional ontology as well is rooted in the world. It produces entities *cum fundamentum* in Blob, the assertion about which figures truth considered as *indirect* correspondence.

Is regional ontology just folk psychological ontology attuned matter? We may suppose how theory of literature has its own Beautiful Patterns that determine 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 MSDGs to capture other, not only folk psychological 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. Thus, how should we understand regional ontology? Should there be just folk psychological metaphysics attuned understanding? Or should we include aesthetics, ethics: do goodness and what is morally right *ex-sist* only regionally, as beautiful particularist patterns? If they exist in the regional way, the consequence will be that this moral judgment will be correct or incorrect in function of its *indirect* truth in respect to the world. It is difficult to claim that goodness is a part of the world anyway.

³² Poli sees real levels in reality: “We may distinguish at least three ontological strata of the real world: the material, the psychological and the social.” (Poli 2002: 643). We think that these levels are ontic stuff, and that they are not ontological at all, in the way that Poli proposes them to be. But then he gets arbitrariness and distinctional confusion in ontology, the attitude that would only be appropriate in the area of the ontic. We just do not see why a rabbit would have real levels of physical, biological and mental strata. From the perspective of blobjectivism, there are no such real *ontological* levels. And finding a biological level to exist in ontology seems to us arbitrary and inappropriate for the mind and language independently existing world. You need “variously articulated research communities of philosophers, linguists, psychologists and engineers” (Poli 2002: 662) only in the case you are concerned with the ontic mess, not in ontology.

³³ Horgan, T. and Potrč, M. 2000.

The question should not necessarily be decided here, and we may just continue to refer to MSDGs. But on a certain occasion we may tackle this question what exactly enters the regional ontology. Is regional ontology just folk psychological ontology consisting of roughly MSDGs? Or do there exist several aspects of regional ontology, such as aesthetic, ethic aspect, scientific aspect, MSDG world aspect? 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 the 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 questions of metaphysics it is just *not relevant* if 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.

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