

# MEINONGIAN SCOREKEEPING

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Some commitments at the interface of semantics and ontology, such as numbers or symphonies, tend to appear problematic. The scorekeeping approach to semantics introduces contextually shifting parameters that allow for construal of truth as indirect correspondence. Meinong did recognize diversity and richness that is made possible by the non-reductionist engagement of the scorekeeping approach. Because of his commitment to the deep presupposition of direct correspondence construal of truth though, Meinong had to interpret richness of normative discursive scorekeeping commitments as richness of ontological strata, features and engagements. Once as Meinong recognizes the construal of truth as indirect correspondence, many problems related to his objects dissolve, naturally placing his scorekeeping discovery into discursive normative setting. A translation of Meinongian objects into discursive scores confirms that his discovery aims at these indeed, which is obscured by his sticking to the construal of truth as direct correspondence.

## **0. Preliminaries**

For a long time, philosophers assumed that Meinong was up to something important with his discovery of various kinds and strata of entities proposed by his theory of objects. There are several introductions into the theory of objects and there are problems related to this theory that are discussed in the literature. Meinongian objects certainly present a challenging interpretative venue which stretches all from the joyous acceptance up till the deep skeptic challenges, as this may be illustrated by Russell's first embracing them and then in a later phase vigorously objecting to the soundness of the theory of objects.<sup>1</sup>

The present paper asks the fundamental question about the nature of famous and decried Meinongian objects: What are these objects indeed? This was the question that scholars many times forgot to ask, simply assuming the existence of some sort for these objects.

The answer is that Meinongian objects present the real Meinong's discovery: the rich and flexible parameters and features taking place in the normative scorekeeping *discourse*. Meinong however was forced to interpret this discovery of his as an *ontological* venue, because of his deep seated and never really questioned presupposition of truth construed as direct correspondence. This presupposition may be questioned though as soon as one accepts the scorekeeping discourse interpretation of Meinong, which in a natural manner goes along with the construal of truth as indirect correspondence.

The present paper paints a broad canvass that allows asking burning questions about the real nature of Meinongian objects. This is why it by and large relies on some interpretations of Meinong's work<sup>2</sup>, opening thereby the wider prospect of the minute interpretation of Meinong's rich original texts

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<sup>1</sup> Voltolini, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> The interpretations of Meinong's work in question are these of Richard Routley-Sylvan, Dale Jacquette and Roberto Poli, among others.

that cannot be adequately pursued in an introductory paper. Meinong with whom we deal here is thus primarily Meinong of the theory of objects.<sup>3</sup> But this does seem to be a central issue.

**1. Some commitments at the interface of semantics and ontology, such as numbers or symphonies, tend to appear problematic.**

Philosophers have for a long time struggled with the problem of how to interpret such entities as numbers and symphonies. One classical place revealing the problem of status pertaining to abstract entities in their relation to empiricism is Carnap's paper "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology", which starts in the following way:

"Empiricists are in general rather suspicious with respect to any kind of abstract entities like properties, classes, relations, numbers, propositions, etc. They usually feel much more in sympathy with nominalists than with realists". (1950: 20)

These are also the kinds of problems with which Meinong was primarily concerned. Several interpretations stress, quite rightly, Meinong's adherence to empiricism. Meinong appeared to be constantly concerned with the empirical basis of his investigations, and this was also the approach proper to his pupils (Poli 2001). The interest in the empirical research concerned with psychology and psychophysics is a matter in point (Albertazzi 2001, Potrč and Vospernik 1996).

If Meinong would go the strict empiricist way, he would thus take nominalist approach and he would accordingly argue that numbers and relations do not really exist, i.e. that they take no special place in the furniture of the universe, besides to the denizens of the material world. But he seems to have taken just an opposite approach that placed him closer to realism.<sup>4</sup> For he is perhaps most known for his saying that there are such entities around that these entities do not exist. According to this view thus, some kind of existence is to be accorded to numbers<sup>5</sup> and presumably even to symphonies. If you take an overall look at Meinong, there seems to be a tension already. On the one hand there may be the expectation – due to his empiricist provenance – that he would dismiss any existence of entities such as numbers and symphonies. On the other hand, there is also a tendency in Meinong that pushes him to accept some kind of existence proper to the problematic entities. This puts Meinong closer to the realist camp.<sup>6</sup>

Anyway, some features at the intersection between semantics and ontology appear problematic not just for philosophers in general. They also present a genuine challenge for an interpretation of Meinong. Such features are numbers, say. There are opposed tendencies in Meinong how to interpret them. And such tensions certainly deserve to be interpreted and to be made clearer. It is interesting though that they were not really approached by Meinong scholars, who usually start with the simple

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<sup>3</sup> There are of course several venues and tensions leading to Meinong's theory of objects. For the purposes of this paper, we abstract the interesting questions about the genesis that lead to the theory of objects. We acknowledge though that this is an important area of research that may be embarked upon once the general line defended in this paper is laid out. We presume that results of research dedicated to the genesis of theory of objects would be compatible with our interpretation of theory of objects.

<sup>4</sup> If one takes one understanding of Sylvan's noneist interpretation, one may perhaps claim that Meinong really did not accept the existence of his objects. We will address this question later. Compare also David Lewis paper on noneism and allism (1990).

<sup>5</sup> It is actually Russell's and not Meinong's opinion that numbers might be accorded a kind of existence. In this paper we propose a rather general view of Meinongian objects. We thus stay open for alternative interpretations.

<sup>6</sup> The realistic and Platonist interpretation of Meinong is stressed by Edward Zalta.

presumption of the Meinongian objects' existence. The interpretation then usually embarks upon internal tensions for Meinongian objects – once as those are already accepted. But there is not much space dedicated to the question how and why Meinongian objects were accepted in the first place.

The area between *ontology* and *semantic* is the one where there are shifting tendencies in the interpretation of problematic features. There are basically two shifts possible here: to tip the scale into the direction of ontology, or to shift it more towards genuine semantic issues. Meinong took the first of these ways, the ontological one. We claim that Meinong really discovered something in the realm of *semantics* and *normativity* as he struggled with problematic features. We then try to explain why he was forced to shift his discovery in the realm of semantic to the predominance of ontological interpretation.

As we mention Meinongian objects, we think about such features as numbers and symphonies, but also at such features as Santa Claus and round square, i.e. denizens of fiction and impossibilities that we are able to think about. These are really the features that present problem for interpretation at the interface between semantics and ontology. The expression "Yesterday's performance of Beethoven's fifth symphony was excellent" may be true, i.e. it may be semantically evaluated as true. Obviously, the ontological status of symphonies – whether they exist, and in which manner that exist – contributes to the semantical value of such statement.

## **2. The scorekeeping approach to semantics introduces contextually shifting parameters that allow for construal of truth as indirect correspondence.**

We will now present in outline a rather well known approach to semantics that also provides an answer to questions that emerge at the interface of semantics and ontology. This approach may be called *scorekeeping* approach. It was originally introduced by David Lewis. And it was later elaborated by Horgan, Horgan and Potrč and Horgan and Timmons, among others. The semantic approach in question was not applied to the question about how to treat Meinongian objects. This is what we intend to do. We think that there are valuable lessons to be learned from viewing Meinongian objects through the eyes of scorekeeping. But what is scorekeeping in the first place?

David Lewis points out that there are rich parameters in the complex language game that he calls a conversational score. Despite the richness and dynamical nature of these parameters, people master them automatically and quite impeccably and one can set out some robust principles that guide them. Take the following adjustment to the referential shift, in the case a speaker is telling you:

"We are now in Europe after having spent a year in New Zealand. My wife is quite unhappy that we had to leave our cat Bruce with our hosts there. She is unhappy because Bruce the cat really became kind of a family member. But there were these unfortunate veterinary restrictions in power just as we departed. Watch out, the cat is going to jump at you!"

The bulk of the story reports the situation after having left Bruce the cat back in New Zealand. According to mechanisms of co-reference, it would be expected that the cat lastly mentioned in the narrative is Bruce. But you notice without any difficulty that this last is the cat that is close to you in this very room, here in Europe. What has happened? You have adjusted without much problem to the shift of reference from Bruce to another cat. One problem that you have circumvented quite effortlessly is that you made an automatic distinction between the absent cat and between the present cat that would tend to be merged by the mechanism of co-reference. Although the pull of the co-referential mechanism is quite heavy, the scores reporting contextual adjustment come with even more weight, so that they push the

cognitive system' assessment automatically in the appropriate direction. The scorekeeping proceeds quite effortlessly, if one observes its effect.

We proceed now to make attentive at some of the points which Lewis dedicates to the characterization of scorekeeping. We just reproduce some quotations figuring these points here. But our main job is to keep in mind that these are also the points into which Meinong had insight, because Meinong's insight was – this is the thesis of this paper – into the normative dynamics of the scorekeeping semantic, but unfortunately he tipped the scale of this insight towards its ontological interpretation. Here is David Lewis's general scheme for rules of accommodation concerning a conversational score:

"If at time  $t$  something is said that requires component  $s_n$  of the conversational score to have a value in the range  $r$  if what is said to be true, or otherwise acceptable; and if  $s_n$  does not have a value in the range  $r$  just before  $t$ , and if such-and-such further conditions hold; then at  $t$  the score-component  $s_n$  takes some value in range  $r$ ." (Lewis 1983: 240)

First, Lewis mentions *presupposition* as component of the conversational score<sup>7</sup>. "At any stage in a well-run conversation, a certain amount is presupposed. The parties to the conversation take it for granted, or at least purport to, whether sincerely or just 'for the sake of the argument'. Presuppositions can be created or destroyed in the course of conversation." (233) There is "kinematics of presupposition": "Say something that requires a missing presupposition, and straightway that presupposition springs into existence, making what you said acceptable after all." (234)<sup>8</sup>

The second point in the kinematics of conversation is *permissibility*: there is a shifting boundary between the permissible and between the not permissible in the conversation. The dynamics of boundary-shifting follows explicit permissions and disapprovals and also implicitly takes into account comparative nearby cases. (234-236)

Definite descriptions *denote* what is "the most salient in the domain of discourse" (241). Saliency is one of the most important contextualism notions. Remember the shift from Bruce the cat to the actual cat. "Denotation of definite description is score-dependent." (242). The *point of reference* is another component of conversational score. It can be more or less determined and can change with other adjustments in a language game.

*Vagueness* shows the dependence on "context. What is true enough on one occasion is not true enough on another." Take Austin's statement that France is hexagonal. "Under low standards of precision it is acceptable. Raise the standards and it loses its acceptability." This is "a rule of accommodation at work." One of the most important points in Lewis approach is the remark that "raising of standards goes more smoothly than lowering". (245) This explains a large number of tensions e.g. epistemic skepticism.

"The 'can' and 'must' of ordinary language do not often express absolute ('logical' or 'metaphysical') possibility. Usually they express various *relative modalities*. Not all possibilities there are enter into consideration. If we ignore those possibilities that violate laws of nature, we get physical modalities; if we ignore those that are known not to obtain, we get the epistemic modalities; if we ignore

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<sup>7</sup> "Like the components of a baseball score, the components of a conversational score at a given stage are abstract entities. They may not be numbers, but they are other set-theoretic constructs: sets of presupposed propositions, boundaries between permissible and impermissible courses of action, or the like." – "What play is correct depends on the score. Sentences depend for their truth value, or for their acceptability in other respects, on the components of the conversational score at the stage of conversation when they are uttered." (Lewis 1983, 238)

<sup>8</sup> Just for beginning, we may compare this to the Meinongian assumptions (*Annahmen*), without thereby wishing to exhaust the comparison.

those that ought not to obtain – doubtless including actuality – we get deontic modalities.” “The context must be our guide. The boundary between the relevant possibilities and the ignored ones is a component of conversational score.” (246)

*Performatives* get “truth conditions”, “if the circumstances are felicitous”. (248)

“The *plan* is a component of conversational score. The rules governing its evolution parallel the rules governing the kinematics of presupposition, and they include the rule of accommodation.” (294)

These quotes from David Lewis specifying conversational scores, their rules and presuppositions must ring a bell for Meinongian ears. Many times the situation seems close to the Meinongian discoveries, just that there are no objects mentioned. How comes? We will try to explain this.

The just stated scorekeeping observations in Lewis show discursive commitments. We claim that Meinong actually discovered these kinds of discursive commitments. This was his real discovery. But for reasons that we will try to make transparent Meinong interpreted these normative features and commitments as ontological objects. There is not a complete match between Lewis scorekeeping and Meinongian objects but parallels are sufficient, we believe, so that they will support our thesis that Meinongian objects are really normative scorekeeping features, quite obscurely interpreted through the acceptance of ontological commitment.

Now we will try to shortly figure out what the shifting of the scorekeeping normative parameters has to do with truth as *indirect correspondence*.<sup>9</sup> How can truth be an indirect kind of correspondence relation? Here is a take on this:

“Truth is plausibly construed as *semantically correct assertibility, under contextually operative semantic standards*. A statement’s truth results from the interaction of two factors: the contextually operative semantic standards, and how things stand with the mind-independent world. When the semantic standards operate in such a way that a given statement can be correct semantically (i.e., true) even though the statement posits (i.e., quantifies over) certain items that are not there in reality, then truth (for discourse governed by such semantic standards) thereby becomes an indirect form of language/world correspondence.” (Horgan Potrč 2000: 253)

It may be that statements track real spatiotemporal variation in what corresponds to their posits in the variable physical world. In the case where world does not contain any parts, truth construed for such statements would be correspondence, although of an indirect kind. A plausible case of truth as indirect correspondence figures metaphysically lightweight posits, such as symphonies and universities. Individual statements involving these often count as semantically correct (i.e., true), under contextually operative semantic standards, even though they employ posits (e.g., symphony, university) that do not designate genuine denizens of reality. It is not an easy question to answer what exactly corresponds to a symphony in the world, and also what exactly corresponds to a university. Are this students, the building or buildings, the administration, the university founding act? All of these? Other things? Yet both symphony and university are in the world. We may refer to them and we are justified to do so. Many times we also assert true statements about them, provided that our engagement is shaped along the correspondence with the world in an indirect manner. The normative component is crucial in this account of truth, substituting somehow for the directness of relation. Let us turn now back to posits in the scorekeeping approach.

First we have to notice that the referential shift encountered in Bruce the cat case is accommodated and made more flexible by scorekeeping approach that really centers at the dynamics of normativity. Starting with this insight we may then try to apply the same strategy to the cases figuring numbers and symphonies, so that the normative influence becomes more pronounced.

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<sup>9</sup> Truth as indirect correspondence is also tackled towards the end of Lewis scorekeeping paper.

You have to realize that normative scorekeeping offers an appropriately sounding solution to the cases of semantic evaluation concerning statements involving symphonies and universities. In their case you can talk about *just ontic commitment*<sup>10</sup> and not about the ontological discursive commitment. This is despite that there is an illusion figuring automatic tendency to engage oneself towards the higher score of ontological commitment.<sup>11</sup>

Some examples involving flexible evaluation depending on the context of normative engagement involve questions such as the following ones: "Is this table flat?" The answer is: Yes and no. Yes according to the everyday parameters. No according to the very strict parameters, where we use microscope in our evaluation of the statement.<sup>12</sup> Consider also the following question: "Does the table exist?" - "Yes and no." Yes according to the everyday parameters of folk-ontological evaluation. No according to the evaluation under ultimate ontological commitment attuned parameters.

The scorekeeping approach to semantics thus introduces contextually shifting parameters that allow for construal of truth as indirect correspondence.

Before proceeding, we sketch our argument concerning the nature of Meinongian objects in outline. Our argument for the evaluation of Meinongian objects proceeds in two stages. At the first stage, we claim that Meinong criticized the *referential semantics* approach. We have sympathy with this non-reductionist inspired criticism that provides a plethora of objects instead of the meager ontological support that is the only thing allowed for by the referential semantics. At the second stage we then claim in the next section that the deepest presupposition of Meinong (and, as a fact of the matter, of the entire Brentanian school) was the commitment to the *direct correspondence* theory of truth, and that this presupposition that tends not to be questioned forced him to conceive his objects as *ontological* items and not as scorekeeping normative engagement features, which they really are. Meinong thus discovered discursive engagement commitments and so he did not really discover any objects. He was forced to construe the normative scorekeeping engagement that he really discovered as being of ontological nature because of his adoption of the direct reference presupposition.

### **3. Meinong did recognize diversity and richness that is made possible by the non-reductionist engagement of the scorekeeping approach.**

Here is the first statement about the features that Meinong discovered:

- (1) Meinong criticized the *referential semantics* approach, and against it he adopted a non-reductionist based richness of features that he discovered.

Referential semantics is the one that restricts itself to the extensional interpretations and that tends to be skeptical to any kind of intensional creatures of darkness, as Quine has dubbed them. Referential semantics is skeptical in respect to the discursive presuppositions and to the related stuff. It stresses causal and historical chain links.<sup>13</sup>

The mentioned creatures of darkness are possible, necessary, obligatory items and similar. These are exactly what may be understood as examples of Meinongian objects. Little Red Riding Hood, golden

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<sup>10</sup> Horgan T. and Potrč M., forthcoming.

<sup>11</sup> Compare the earlier quoted Lewis remark that raising of standards goes more smoothly than lowering.

<sup>12</sup> Look at the discussion concerning Unger's approach to flatness, by David Lewis in his paper.

<sup>13</sup> Kripke, Donnellan, Field, Devitt.



mountain and square circle, the possible, necessary and obligatory states of affairs are the first that come to the mind as equivalents of Meinongian objects. None of them is strictly referential in an extensional sense.

One may be naturally tempted to express agreement with the non-reductionist attitude, i.e. with the rejection of referential semantics thesis that just extensional items in the world should count and that non-extensional intensional and other kind of stuff should be reduced to them. The intuition behind this is that the relevant features which we encounter in the world more times than not are not strictly referential and that they cannot be reduced to the realm of the referential. Take the mentioned symphonies, poems, our projection of future events and of possibilities that we plan, the realization of the necessary course of events. All of these are in the world, they matter to us and they are often the most relevant features in our engagements. It would be thus false to reduce them just to the features proper to the referential semantics.

Meinongian criticism of referential reductive semantics, such as that of Russell or Kripke, is stressed by Richard Routley (1980). We can just be sympathetic to this criticism because it allows us to introduce an immense richness of features. And as already told that comforts our intuition that it is better to have a rich and jungle like world, inhabited by possibilia, necessary objects and fictitious entities rather than to meet the desert extensional referential landscapes.

To some extent, looking at the plethora of Meinongian objects, we can thus be satisfied with Meinong opposing referential semantic reductionism and with his introduction of non-reductionist richness proper to the features that he discovered.

Notice though that these features are not necessarily interpreted as objects, first of all not as ultimately ontologically existing objects. As Routley says, Meinongian discovery may be first interpreted as the discovery of richness of "objects of *discourse*". This at least follows from Routley's characterization of his approach which embraces criticism of the referential semantics and appropriates the richness of Meinong's jungle. Routley gives it the name of *noneism* (which includes Meinong without being restricted to him) and specifies it with the following theses:

"None of space, time or location – nor, for that matter, other important universals such as numbers, sets or attributes – exist; no propositions or other abstract bearers of truth exist: but these items are not therefore nothing, they are each something, distinct somethings, with quite different properties, and, though they in no way exist, they are objects of discourse, of thought, and of quantification, in particular of particularization." (Routley 1980:1).

What Routley claims here is that the extensional world is not the only one world that there is. There are entities for which we found that they present some problems at the intersection between semantics and ontology. The apparent problem with these is that they do not possess the kind of existence that would be in accordance with the referential reductionist semantics. They – numbers, attributes or propositions – exist as objects of discourse and thought, among other things.

But we must put Routley's characterization as noneist in a proper context. In his "Noneism and Allism?" Lewis argues quite convincingly that Routley should be interpreted as an allist<sup>14</sup> - as somebody that accepts the existence of controversial Meinongian entities. We will try to argue in direction of a non-

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<sup>14</sup> "[...] he quantifies just as we do; over everything; that is (as we would say) over everything that exists. [...] We may indeed look askance at the extent of his existential commitments - for, despite what he tells us, he is an allist. He affirms the existence of all the controversial entities (as we may call them). He does not join us when we dodge the question about some of these alleged entities by denying that they exist." (Lewis 1990, 29)

ontologically committed "jungle" that operates at the level of discourse that is free from Lewis charges aimed at Routley.

It follows that the important thing for (non-ontologically committed) noneism as the main Meinongian discovery – which is in accordance with the criticism of referential semantics – is the discovery of objects of *discourse* and thought. Just by this statement, nothing is claimed yet about the ontological nature of such objects. In fact, they may be interpreted as features of *discursive commitment*, without that they would be thereby or necessarily interpreted as ontological objects. Meinong's discovery, according to this interpretation, thus has to do with *features of discursive commitment*. This is what Meinong has discovered and what his jungle is all about.

But there is some pressure to interpret these commitments to discursive features as commitments to ontological objects. This pressure comes from the deep Meinongian presupposition that is rather unrelated to the Meinongian endorsement of the richness of discovered features. The discovered richness thus may be taken quite independently from the next point on our schedule.<sup>15</sup>

**4. Because of his commitment to the deep presupposition of direct correspondence construal of truth though, Meinong had to interpret richness of normative discursive scorekeeping commitments as richness of ontological strata and engagements.**

Here is the second statement about Meinong's discovery:

- (2) Meinong was forced to ontologically interpret the features that he discovered, because of his deep commitment to the presupposition of direct correspondence construal of truth.

There is a deep presupposition not just of Meinong, but perhaps of the entire Brentanian school: the presupposition that truth should be construed as *direct correspondence*. It is interesting to realize that this presupposition was not really thematized, despite its grip on the theories in the rich and much discussed tradition in question. Here is a characterization of truth as correspondence by Meinong:

"Whatever is asserted is true if it corresponds to what is, or with whatever is actual. Therewith a narrow relation to the evidence is intended."<sup>16</sup>

Brentano and Meinong are not just empiricists, they are Cartesians as well.<sup>17</sup> In the same vein, Chisholm took the approach of self-presentation as his departure. Instead of stating "The cat is on the mat", the self-presentationalist rather claims: "I am such that there is the cat on the mat". A reason that one may go this way is exactly in order to secure the relation of *direct correspondence*. The reference to the outside world may turn out to be insecure and it is often rather ridden with errors. I may almost

<sup>15</sup> The main thesis that underlies our argument is the statement that referential semantics is quite different in its commitments to the direct correspondence construal of truth.

<sup>16</sup> "Was einer behauptet, ist wahr, wenn es mit dem übereinstimmt was ist, oder [...] mit dem was tatsächlich ist. [...] dadurch jene enge Beziehung zur Evidenz abgestreift wird". (Meinong 1910: 94)

Zalta has underlined aiming at direct correspondence as the specificity of Meinong's approach. (We thank Danilo Šuster for this hint.) So direct correspondence is a real grounding presupposition for Meinong, that perhaps cannot be reduced just to truth conceived as direct correspondence. Adopting a direct correspondence account of truth allows Meinong to stay with a non-controversial two valued logic. But on the other hand realm of Meinongian objects would also seem to go in the direction of many valued logics and in favor of such features as vagueness.

<sup>17</sup> This point is for example *not* heavily stressed by Albertazzi and Poli, which we think is indicative.



always find out<sup>18</sup> that I am in the situation to be deceived by some skeptical arrangements. As against this threat, Descartes proposed the security of a direct evidential relation.<sup>19</sup>

Now try to figure out how to obtain a relation of *direct correspondence* that would achieve the desired evidence. Well, it seems to be an easy task once you introduce some *objects* to which your intentional act may be directly related. So in the case of thinking about the cat on the mat, I can easily establish the relation of direct correspondence once as the “cat-on-the-mat” is introduced as a special kind of ontological object. As this is a relation between my psychological act and the abstract<sup>20</sup> object “cat-on-the-mat”, there does not seem to exist any threat to miss the directness of relation, a threat that is there once the relation is to the empirical stuff in the external world.

It may then be also easily seen that the specific Meinongian approach to the intentional relation first of all aimed to secure direct correspondence by the introduction of Meinongian objects. Thus Meinongian objects as ontological items are features that are introduced because the deep presupposition of direct correspondence may be secured in the case they are there in some manner. At least Meinongian objects present the way in which Meinong secured the relation of direct correspondence through the intentional relation.

If one takes a closer look however, one may realize without much difficulty that the presupposition of direct correspondence is a very dubious one. First, it is based upon introspective evidence, which is a rather questionable approach for most of current naturalistically minded philosophers.<sup>21</sup> Then, it reifies Meinong’s discovery of normative features, which introduces a dubious plethora of ontological entities where actually one should recognize discursive normative scorekeeping features.

As a proof that a dubious way to go takes place here, one may take a quick look at the question of the *Außersein* of the pure object. For the sake of staying with the simple case, take it that the situation of the cat sitting on the mat has just two properties, cat and mat:  $\langle C, M \rangle$ . Now the *Außersein* of this object (as opposed to its existence or subsistence) happens *without any discursive commitment*, i.e. without any commitment to the existence whatsoever. Why is such a maneuver needed? The answer is that *Außersein* of the pure object is there because just in its case, again, *direct correspondence* relation may be achieved. Why? Because the pure object comes without any *normative* commitment. But this may happen again just in case when the object it is not appearing in any judgment.<sup>22</sup> Once that the mentioned object would appear in a judgment namely, it would be subjected to normative pressures, as this happens with judgments indeed. So pure object has direct correspondence as the rationale for its introduction.

Notice now that Meinong struggled with this type of entities. He introduced *assumptions* (*Annahmen*) that also do not come under the embedding of any straightforward judgment. But assumptions are nevertheless closer to the normative pressures. If children play cops and robbers, they are serious about their roles inside and during the game. But they of course just assume their roles. And

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<sup>18</sup> Raising the contextual standards implied into my observation, that is.

<sup>19</sup> That security was reached by clear and distinct perception for Descartes. According to Brentano, the physical stuff or sensations that are opposed to the clearly self-presented contents, fail the evidential requirements. (As stressed repeatedly by Wilhelm Baumgartner.) In his treatment of psychophysics, Meinong was up to extract features that may be interpreted as evidential though – diversities (*Verschiedenheit*), which were his first objects (Potrč and Vospernik, 1996).

<sup>20</sup> There is of course a question how to interpret the mode of existence proper to this object, if it happens to be a Meinongian object.

<sup>21</sup> Although philosophers such as Gene Mills and several others lately embraced a similar approach.

<sup>22</sup> The specification of the *Außersein* of the pure object is exactly that it does not appear in any judgment, and even before this that it is not taking part in any form of existence.

this is clearly a *discursive commitment*. So the transition from the *Außersein* of the pure object towards the assumption marks a direct correspondence restriction shifting from the completely out of discourse (and judgment) situations towards approaching such normative pressure scorekeeping situations.

### **5. A translation of Meinongian objects into discursive scores**

Here is the third statement that brings to light the real nature of Meinongian discovery:

(3) Once Meinong abandons the direct correspondence construal of truth and appropriates indirect correspondence, his discovery reveals itself as that of normative discursive scorekeeping features and not that of ontological objects. Such an approach promises to solve several questions posed by the theory of objects.

Now let us ask ourselves what indeed are Meinongian objects. Objecta and objectiva, i.e. objects correlated to presentations and thoughts or judgments first come to the mind. Notice now that these, and also desiderativa and dignitativa, together with possibilities, necessities and obligations, may all be interpreted as *discursive features* to which one gets committed in a normatively supported scorekeeping situations. In discourse, all the time a plethora of things get presumed, and new features appear on a minute basis, as the kinematics of the discursive relations unfolds.

It is simply sufficient to dismiss the commitment to direct correspondence and to adopt *indirect correspondence* in order to see that this is what Meinong really discovered. Meinong just had to interpret his discovery of normative features and assumptions appearing in the rich scorekeeping discourse kinematics as ontological entities because of his sticking to the direct correspondence presupposition. Once this presupposition gets abandoned, one may see Meinong as a precursor of P.F. Strawson and Grice's type of communication-intention analysis, with rich discovery and regimentation of discursive presumptions, including the dynamics through which these assumptions emerge.

We believe that many problems that are there for Meinongian *Gegenstandstheorie* are easily solved once as one looks at what Meinong's discovery really aimed at.<sup>23</sup> Already our brief presentation has the merit of clearly putting pure objects and assumptions into their natural position and place.

Just take the distinction between exemplifying and encoding as it was introduced by the Slovene philosopher Mally<sup>24</sup>. The opposition obtains a completely new sense if we observe it as pertaining to the normative features in the dynamic dialectics of discourse and not anymore as related to the rigid ontological interpretation.

Keeping things about scorekeeping discursive features proposed by David Lewis in mind, we may try to see a systematic presentation of several dimensions pertaining to Meinongian objects as showing commitments to discursive scorekeeping features and not to any ontological matters.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The demonstration of these cases is of course a matter that should await further occasions of research.

<sup>24</sup> Mally was born in Kranj, Slovenia, where he also finished his elementary studies, before moving to Graz and to Meinong. (A couple of years ago, Potrč drove Ed Zalta to Kranj for a visit.) Besides Mally, Meinong's pupil Schwartz (quoted by Chisholm) comes from Ljutomer in Slovenia. We presume that Martinak is of Slovene origin, but Franc Veber certainly was. Meinong's private library is nowadays at the University of Ljubljana.

<sup>25</sup> We follow Poli (2001: 353) in his systematic presentation of the points related to the Meinongian objects' dimensions. Poli's presentation is useful for this short paper's need to stay with concise rendering. Somehow more extensive reconstruction of Meinong's ontology would need to "give more importance to incompleteness, factuality, possibility, short to the modal moment" (as Venanzio Raspa writes to us).

1. Spheres of being (existence of reals, subsistence of ideals and *Außersein* of the pure object<sup>26</sup>) may be simply seen as several strengths of *discursive commitments* in respect to existence. I.e., the question whether they really exist and in what mode they really exist, loses its grip. The question how seriously we take our commitments persists.

2. Modes of being (objecta, objectives, dignitatives, desideratives) then just show *discursive commitment* to features in various areas. Am I really committed to that state of affairs under kinematical pressures of this conversational score? So the state of affairs – whatever it may be – turns out to be quite unimportant in respect to my commitment to it.

3. Moments of being (being properly said and so-being). Observe these again as conversational discursive commitments, and the heavy load of ontology evaporates.

4. Dependences (first-order and higher-order objects; production and foundation; complete, incomplete and completed objects; precise and imprecise objects). Once as one adopts conversational scorekeeping based approach, one has to get critical in respect to the atomistic building-block approach<sup>27</sup> whose basis has to ultimately lie in what we believe is misguided sticking to the presupposition of direct correspondence. This would deserve a critical and detailed analysis. Again, the scorekeeping take on things will dismiss ontological seriousness so that the discursive changing commitments may be then discovered in the variability of the mentioned features.

5. Modalities (factuality, possibility, necessity). Take away insensible insisting on the ontological objectuality, and you will discover various features that are assumed during the kinematics of discursive commitments.

A typical Meinongian object is not a cat-on-the-mat; it is an objectivum or a necessity. Strip these objects of their unnecessary and weirdly looking ultimate ontological commitment shell and you will discover the *assumptions* that appear at several stages of the conversational score engagements, along the lines presented by David Lewis. This may then turn out to be a lesson in evaporism: whatever seems to be initially firmly there in the Meinongian sky will show itself to have its identity shaped as a feature that is assumed during the kinematics of a conversational or a widely discursive score.

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<sup>26</sup> In fact, *Außersein* of the pure object is not a mode of being, as may be understood from the accent in our interpretation (this is then opposed to the categorization by Poli). We wish to thank Venanzio Raspa for this and for other useful comments of our paper that allowed us to make some improvements.

<sup>27</sup> Dependencies and inferiora-superiora distinctions in Meinong prove that he adopted a building-block attitude which seems to us rather incompatible with the dynamic phenomenon of scorekeeping features and assumptions that he was out to characterize.

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