
INSIDE AUßERSEIN

FILIPPO CASATI

Kyoto University, Japan.

filippo.g.e.casati@gmail.com

GRAHAM PRIEST

CUNY Graduate Center, USA and the University of Melbourne, Australia.

g.priest@unimelb.edu.au

1 Introduction

In 1973, Gilbert Ryle famously declared that Meinong's theory was dead and buried (Ryle 1973). Now, after more than 40 years, history has shown that he was wrong. Meinong's *Theory of Objects* is more alive than ever: the proof is provided by the vast contemporary literature that engages seriously with many of the important ideas of Meinong. Nevertheless, a fundamental notion of Meinong's *Theory of Objects* has not yet received the attention that it deserves. The notion in question is that of *Außersein*. In this paper, we try to begin to fill this gap in the literature.

After introducing the main ideas of Meinong's philosophy (Section 2), we critically evaluate the few available interpretations of Meinong's *Außersein*. In particular, after showing that some contemporary Meinongians try to evade *Außersein*, we criticize the interpretations delivered by Grossman and Lambert (Section 3). Finally, in Sections 4 and 5, we defend the interpretations proposed by Jacqueline and Priest. We compare them, drawing attention to both their similarities and differences.

2 Enter Meinong

Think about the last time you went to Paris. Remember your visit to Notre-Dame, the paintings you saw at the Centre Pompidou, the cheese you ate in that beautiful brasserie, and the picture you took in front of the Eiffel Tower. Maybe you have never been there. In that case, just imagine these things. When you remember or imagine something, you actually remember or imagine a *thing*. Paris, the paintings, the brasserie, and the Eiffel Tower are the things you remember or imagine.

If you share this intuition, you may want to agree with Meinong in assuming that usually intentional activities are directed towards a thing, and that, as such, they require something towards which they are directed. In Meinong's words: "psychological events... have this distinctive character of being directive towards something" (Meinong 1904, pp. 76 – 77).¹ This is why "knowing is impossible without something being known, ... judgements and ideas or presentations are impossible without being judgements about and presentation of something" (Meinong 1904, p. 76). In Meinong's terminology, the things towards which our intentional activities are directed are the objects of our thought—*Gegenstände*.

Of course, remembering and imagining are only two amongst the many possible intentional activities we can engage in. Examples of different kinds of intentional activities are: worshiping, fearing, praying to, and panicking about. Moreover, given so many different kinds of intentional activities, it is natural to expect that we can direct them towards very many different kinds of objects as well. In particular, we can worship or fear objects that exist, and we can worship or fear objects that do not exist.

This variety is not lost in Meinong's theory of objects. Indeed, Meinong believed that some objects have being [*Sein*] and some objects do not. Objects that have being can either exist or subsist [*bestehen*]. When they exist, such as the Eiffel Tower, they are either spatially or temporally located (or both); when they merely subsist, such as prime numbers, they somehow exist without being spatio-temporal located.² Objects that do not have any kind of being, such as purely fictional characters, have non-being [*Nichtsein*]. In the Meinongian framework, being (both existence and subsistence) and non-being are simply normal properties. Of course, the Eiffel Tower, prime numbers, and fictional characters are very different kinds of objects; still, according to Meinong, they are objects. Since we can grasp them with our intentional activities, they are all *Gegenstände*.

It is also important to recall that, according to a common interpretation (see, for instance, Berto 2013, pp. 85 – 109), Meinong thinks that every object, regardless of its ontological status, has the properties that it is described as having. For instance, even if Sherlock Holmes does not have any kind of being (indeed, he has non-being), he has the property of *being a detective* because, according to Doyle's stories, he is described as such. This idea is captured by the so-called naïve characterization

¹Page references to quotations from Meinong are from their English translations.

²The relationship between existence and subsistence in Meinong's philosophy has been understood in different ways. Following what Meinong claims in his *On Assumptions* (1910, p. 59) and in his *Selbstdarstellung* (1921, p. 18), we assume that, according to Meinong himself, when an object exists, it subsists too. Even though this is certainly a simplification, this is also enough for our purposes. Indeed, no arguments defended in our paper rely on this matter.

principle, according to which any object has the properties that it is characterised as having. In other words, for any set of properties (for any *Sosein*), an object which satisfies that set of properties (that *Sosein*) is in the domain of discourse.

Let us call this view the *naïve* Characterisation Principle (CP). It is not tenable, for a number of reasons. The first is that the naïve CP delivers violations of the principle of non-contradiction admitting inconsistent objects, namely objects with inconsistent properties. The second is that the naïve CP allows us to prove the existence of whatever we want. Third, and most generally, the naïve CP delivers triviality, in the technical sense that any sentence follows.³

In order to avoid these predicaments, both Meinong and neo-meinongians have rejected the naïve CP. There are a number of ways of doing this. Two will be particularly important in what follows, so let us spell these out here. The first, *nuclear* Meinongianism, divides properties into the nuclear (or characterising) and the non-nuclear (non-characterising). The CP applies only when the properties involved are nuclear. This version is endorsed, for example, by Parsons (1980). On another version, *modal* Meinongianism, any properties can be deployed in the CP; but the object characterised is not guaranteed to have the characterising properties at the actual world (though it may). It is guaranteed to have them at *some* world—maybe an impossible world. This version is endorsed by Priest (2005) and Berto (2013). We do not need to go into the question of which, if either, of these versions is correct. It suffices here to say that both versions agree that objects, whether they exist or not, can have properties in a perfectly ordinary sense.

In summary, then, we can say that Meinongians are committed to the following philosophical picture. Anything one can refer to is an object (*Gegenstand*), *X*. Since *X* is an object, it has properties. Since *X* has properties, *X* has a *Sosein* comprising these properties. So much, at least is common ground.

We now turn to where the common ground disappears; and it does so with the notion of *Außersein*. Meinong held that an object may have *Außersein*; but what, exactly, does that mean? That is the topic of the rest of this essay. In the next section, we will review and critically assess some of the most important interpretations of *Außersein*. In the following section, we will look at the interpretation delivered by Jacqueline and Priest, which we take to be the most coherent interpretation with respect to Meinong's ontology. In the following section, we will explore the most important difference between Jacqueline and Priest on the matter of *Außersein*.⁴

³See Priest 2005, 4.2.

⁴The authors refer to Priest in the third person, not because his present self wishes to distance himself from his prior self, but just to avoid clunky syntax.

3 Meinong's *Außersein*

3.1 Evading the Issue

A common attitude towards *Außersein* is one of avoiding it.⁵ People endorsing this approach sometimes focus on the so-called *Principle of Außersein* without discussing what *Außersein* actually is. Meinong held that the *Sosein* of an object was independent of its *Sein*. This principle, the “principle of the indifference of pure Objects to being” (Meinong 1904, p. 86), is sometimes called the *Principle of Außersein*. Understood in this way, the Principle, then, enunciates one of the core ideas of Meinong's theory; and of course, understood in this way it is extremely important. Nevertheless, it seems a mistake to suppose that this says anything about *Außersein* as such. Let's see why.

First, very many different disciplines employ principles which are supposed to be theoretically helpful: for instance, statistics makes use of principles to better understand probability, physics to better understand gravity, and philosophy to better develop metaphysical concepts. However, generally speaking, though the ‘principle of *X*’ concerns *X*, it is not itself *X*. This is true for the Principle of *Außersein* as well. As the Newtonian law of gravity is concerned with gravity without being gravity, the Principle of *Außersein* is concerned with *Außersein* without being *Außersein*. Even though the Principle of *Außersein* can be intuitively related to *Außersein*, these two concepts are still different. Meinong himself distinguishes between the principle which is concerned with the *Außersein* of a ‘pure object’ [*Der Satz vom Außersein des reinen Gegenstandes*], on the one hand, and *Außersein* itself, on the other hand.⁶

Moreover, one should not forget that, according to Meinong, every time there is an intentional act, the act is at last normally directed towards an object. If so, *Außersein* has to be an object as well. Indeed, not only are we talking and thinking about *Außersein* right now, but Meinong himself does so too. From this point of view, since it is legitimate to investigate what any object of thought is (be it Sherlock Holmes, the Eiffel Tower, or a prime number), it is legitimate to investigate what *Außersein* is as well. Therefore, this evasive account does not get to the heart of the matter.

⁵Examples of philosophers displaying this attitude towards *Außersein* include Berto (2013) and Parsons (1980).

⁶For instance, in his *The Theory of Objects*, Meinong talks about the Principle of *Außersein* (1904, p. 86) and, in his *On Emotional Presentation*, he explicitly refers to *Außersein* itself (1917, p. 15).

3.2 Grossman's Position

An alternative approach to the notion of *Außersein* is proposed by Grossman (2008). For him *Außersein* is what is outside being and non-being.⁷ In order to see what this means, consider an object *A*, which has being. According to Grossman, there is no such thing as object *A* with its own being because, following Meinong, *A* is nothing more than *A* itself. There is no addition of *A*'s being to *A* itself. Further, consider an object *A* with non-being. Once again, there is no such thing as *A* with its own non-being because *A* is nothing more than *A* itself. There is no addition of *A*'s non-being to *A* itself. Hence, to say that *A* has *Sein* (existence, subsistence) is not to say that being is part of *A*. In the same way, to say that *A* has *Nichtsein* is not to say that non-being is part of *A*. According to Grossman, “[existence and subsistence] cannot be part of objects” because, since they are literally outside being, “there are no such entities [or objects] as existence and subsistence” (Grossman 2008, p.119). For the same reason, non-being cannot be part of an object because there is no such object as non-being. Grossman is also clear that ‘being a part of an object’ means ‘being an ontological constituent of an object’. He writes that something is part of an object “in the way in which properties (and relations) or instances of properties (and relations) are parts of objects” (Grossman 2008, p.119). In other word, *being red* is part of a red object because it constitutes the redness of the object in question.

To see why Grossman's interpretation is implausible, let's start by noting that the expression “there are no such entities [or objects] as existence and subsistence” is ambiguous. To begin with, it can be interpreted as ‘existence and subsistence are not entities [or objects]’. If this is the case, then Grossman's interpretation of *Außersein* is incompatible with Meinong's account of intentionality, according to which every time we refer to something, we refer to an object. Since we can refer to existence and subsistence (since, for instance, we can say that ‘existence is a property’ and that ‘subsistence is different from existence’), they have to be objects too. The same holds for non-being. Since Meinong's account of intentionality is crucial for his whole philosophical project, it is not plausible that Meinong abandons it when he deals with being and non-being. For this reason, this interpretation of Grossman does not look promising at all.

A second possible interpretation of ‘there are no such entities [or objects] as existence and subsistence’ interprets it as ‘entities [or objects] like existence and subsistence do not have being’ — and the same for non-being. In Meinongian terms, this means that neither being nor non-being has being: they neither exist nor subsist.

⁷As Routley has pointed out in some unpublished notes (Sylvan, 1950), Grossman's interpretation of *Außersein* is unclear. We agree with Routley. What follows is the best we can do to make sense of it.

In this sense, being and non-being are *Außersein* — they are literally outside being. As strange as it may look, this is a position that Meinong can, at least theoretically, endorse. At the end of the day, it could be the case that, according to Meinong, being and non-being have the same ontological status as fictional characters.

However, this interpretation is still highly problematic. For in this case, according to Grossman, being and non-being cannot be part of an object exactly because they neither exist nor subsist. Now, as we have already noted, according to Meinong, being and non-being are properties. If being and non-being neither exist nor subsist, it is natural to think that no other properties exist or subsist either. There is no reason to believe that being and non-being constitute exceptions. Moreover, if being and non-being cannot be part of an object exactly because they neither exist nor subsist, then no other properties can be part of an object because they neither exist nor subsist either. This means that, for instance, the properties *being red* and *being sweet* can not be part of a red sweet object; and that, given Grossman’s definition of ‘being part of’, they cannot constitute the redness or the sweetness of the object in question (Grossman 2008, p.119).

If what we have said until now is correct, this second understanding of Grossman’s interpretation of *Außersein* contradicts the principle of *Außersein*, namely Meinong’s fundamental assumption that, regardless their ontological status, objects have the properties that they are characterised as having. Hence, Grossman’s account of *Außersein* contradicts Meinong’s view that objects always have a *Sosein* composed of the properties that they are characterised as having. Even in this case, Grossman’s understanding of *Außersein* does not seem correct.

3.3 Lambert’s Position

A third account of *Außersein* is proposed by Lambert in his *Meinong and the Principle of Independence* (1983). According to Lambert, *Außersein* is the domain of all objects without being. “The domain of nonbeings Meinong called *Außersein*”, which is, literally, “the domain of objects outside of being” (Lambert 1983, p. 14). As he points out, such a domain is enormous and, among its denizens, it contains “possible objects such as Pegasus or the golden mountain and also impossible objects such as the round square of Mill and the proof of the decidability of general quantification theory” (Lambert 1983, pp. 14 – 15). In other words, *Außersein* is understood as the set of all objects that do not have either the property of *being existent* or the property of *being subsistent*.

Unfortunately, as for the other interpretations discussed so far, this one faces problems as well. For a start, according to the Lambert, *Außersein* is a domain. If so, as an element of a domain does not *have* or *possess* a domain but it is *member*

of a domain, objects should not have or possess *Außersein* but they should be a member of *Außersein*. Unfortunately, this is not what we read in Meinong. Meinong himself does not talk about domains; neither does he use any terminology that seems to support the identity between *Außersein* and domain.

More importantly, according to Meinong, *all* objects have *Außersein*, not just objects with *Nichtsein*.⁸ Thus, in his *On Emotional Presentation*, he writes: “If an . . . object is to be apprehended, this object . . . , at least as having *Außersein*, must be given as a precondition for the experience” (Meinong 1917, p. 15); and “*Außersein* seems clearly to be predicable of all objects” (Meinong 1917, p. 19). So Lambert’s interpretation turns Meinong into a nihilist: every object has *Nichtsein*. That is, no object exists. This conclusion is evidently against Meinong’s view, according to which, even though some objects do not have being, some other objects do.

4 Jacquette and Priest’s Position

So let’s move on to the last account of *Außersein* we will consider, namely the view that assimilates the notion of *Außersein* to the notion of objecthood. Such an interpretation we take to be the most coherent among the ones available on the market, and it has been recently developed in two different ways by Dale Jaquette, in his *Alexius Meaning: the Shepherd of Non-Being* (2015), and by Graham Priest in his ‘*Sein* Language’ (2014b).

Let’s start with Jaquette. As does Lambert, he takes *Außersein* to be a domain of objects. However, contrary to Lambert’s interpretation, Jaquette believes that *Außersein* is not a notion concerned with any kind of ontological issues: it is not about objects without being, and is not about objects with being either. For this reason, “*Außersein* is not a special kind of *Sein* [and it is not a special kind of *Nichtsein* either]”: “[it] is not a subcategory of the ontology” (Jaquette 2015, p. 71). Therefore, Jaquette interprets *Außersein* as the domain of all objects, regardless of whether they exist, subsist, or neither exist nor subsist. *Außersein* is simply “the name Meinong later gives to what . . . [is] considered independently of its ontic status” (Jaquette 2015, p. 71). According to Jaquette, all objects belong to *Außersein*; as such, *Außersein* is intended as “an ontologically neutral referential domain” (Jaquette 2015, p. 71). In this sense, the notion of *Außersein* is tightly connected with the notion of objecthood: all objects are members of *Außersein* exactly because all objects are (trivially) objects. They all belong to *Außersein* in virtue of their objecthood.

At this point, one may be suspicious of Jaquette’s interpretation because, as we

⁸Cf. Meinong, 1904, p. 83-86; Meinong, 1917, p. 19; Marek, 2013.

have argued in the case of Lambert, it would be more natural to think of *Außersein* as a property that all objects have, rather than a domain in which all objects are. This worry disappears if we move from Jacqueline's interpretation to Priest's interpretation (2014b). Indeed, according to this, Meinong's idea of *Außersein* is nothing more than the property of *being an object*. As such, every object has *Außersein* because (trivially) every object is an object. He writes: "Any object has *Außersein*. That is, it is simply an object" (Priest 2014b, p. 439). In other words, if something is an object, it has *Außersein*; and if something has *Außersein*, it is an object.

It is interesting to note briefly that, in his *Exploring Meinong's Jungle and Beyond* (1980), Richard Routley seems to agree with Priest's interpretation. He writes that "An object as such is said to *be ausserseiend* or to *have Aussersein*. That is, *Aussersein* is a property . . . ; it is the property of objects as such, such that existence and non-existence are external to them" (Routley 1980, p. 857). As does Priest, Routley takes *Außersein* to be the property that all objects have as objects, as such; that is the property in virtue of which objects are simply objects, regardless of their ontological status. In other words, *Außersein* is taken to be the property of *being an object*. Unfortunately, this observation is isolated and, after that, Routley focuses his attention exclusively on the Principle of *Außersein*. So let's go back to Priest.

From the idea that *Außersein* is the property of *being an object*, Priest infers that *Außersein* is a metaphysically fundamental property—an *ur*-property; that is, a property the instantiation of which is entailed by any other property. In order for something to be red, green, tall, or heavy, this something has to be a thing, an object, in the first place. Having *Außersein* is therefore a property necessarily entailed by any other property.

Recall, also, that in Meinong's framework, everything has a *Sosein*, a certain collection of properties. Given this, when something has *Außersein* (when something is an object), it has properties too (it has a *Sosein*). Since *Außersein* is a property, namely the property of *being an object*, even an object which has no property other than *Außersein*, has a *Sosein*. This is why Priest claims that "*Außersein* [and] *Sosein* are equivalent" (Priest 2014b, p. 439).

Contrary to all the other understandings of *Außersein* we have discussed above, both Jacqueline's and Priest's interpretations have the unquestionable advantage of being completely consistent with Meinong's expressed views. Since Meinong claims that all objects have *Außersein*, but only some objects have being and only some objects have non-being, it is natural to think that there is something, namely *Außersein*, which is, so to speak, shared by all objects regardless their ontological status. For Jacqueline, this is being in the domain of all objects; while for Priest, it is the property of *being an object*.

Meinong himself seems to endorse this idea when he says that every object, “has a remnant of a positional character, [that is] *Außersein*” (in Grossman 2008, p. 228). Here, Meinong suggests that, regardless of the ontological status of an object, there is always something contributing to its ‘positional character’, namely something that makes the object an object ‘possibly present’ to the consciousness of a subject. Now, in the Brentenian tradition of which Meinong is a part, *being possibly present to a consciousness of a subject* simply means *being an object*. As such, *Außersein* is what makes an object an object. And this is exactly the role played by the notion of *Außersein* in both Jacquette and Priest.

So much for the similarities between Jacquette’s and Priest’s views. Now for the differences. One of these, we have already commented on: the fact that Jacquette takes *Außersein* to be a set, whereas Priest takes it to be a property.

Next, Priest ties in the notion of *Außersein* with that of identity, since something is an object if and only if it is self-identical (*Identitätsein*) (Priest 2014b, p. 439). As we have noted, for Priest, *Außersein* and *Sosein* are equivalent. Moreover, everything that is an object has the property of being self-identical, and vice versa. *Außersein*, *Identitätsein*, and having a *Sosein* all, then, come to the same thing.

By contrast, Jacquette does not mention identity at all. What his views are on the matter we don’t know. But perhaps he would be quite happy to accept the connection between *Außersein* and identity. Arguably, the set of objects and the set of things that are self-identical are the same set.

Perhaps the biggest difference between Priest and Jacquette concerns their treatment of the Characterisation Principle. Jacquette is a nuclear Meinongian, whilst Priest is a modal Meinongian.

According to Jacquette, properties can be divided into *constitutive* and *extra-constitutive* properties; this is basically the same distinction as Parsons (1980)’s distinction between nuclear and extra-nuclear properties. Constitutive properties are properties which are taken to be essential to determining the nature of an object, while extra-constitutive properties are properties that are implied by the constitutive ones (Jacquette 2015, p. xxx). Jacquette then holds a version of the CP according to which the set of properties which characterise an object, namely the object’s *Sosein*, can contain only constitutive properties. He writes: “*Außersein* of the pure object is the referential semantic domain of all objects understood only as objects, constituted in their *Soseine* exclusively by their distinguishing constitutive property clusters, without taking their ontic status into account” (Jacquette 2015, p. 71).

Priest, on the other hand does not endorse a version of CP which relies on the distinction between constitutive and extra-constitutive properties. Endorsing modal Meinongianism, Priest believes that an object can have *all* the properties it is characterised as having, either at the actual world, or at some other (possible

or impossible) world. Thus, any way of characterising an object, will determine an object, that is, something with *Außersein*. The characterisation, however, is not guaranteed to be true of the object at the actual world (though it may be) — just at some worlds.

5 Objects that are not Objects

This last difference has important ramifications for the notion of *Außersein*. In this section, we will look at these.

In the first place, the property of *being a member of Außersein* is not a characterizing property for Jacqueline. Here, characterizing properties are properties that are essential to distinguish between objects (see Jacqueline 2015, Ch. 5). Since all objects are members of *Außersein*, the property of *being a member of Außersein* does not help to distinguish between objects. As such, it cannot be a characterizing property either. And certainly, not-having-*Außersein* is not a characterising property. If it were, we could characterise an object, x , by the condition of not having *Außersein*. It would then not have *Außersein*; but since it is an object, it would have *Außersein* as well. However, Jacqueline is no dialetheist.⁹ So this would be quite unacceptable to him. For him, the domain of *Außersein* is quite consistent.¹⁰

Priest, on the other hand, is a dialetheist; but, as he is often at pains to point out, there is nothing in modal Meinongianism as such, that requires this. In particular, one can characterise an object, x , by the condition of not having *Außersein*. This is guaranteed to be an object, and so have *Außersein*; but it is not guaranteed not to have *Außersein* at the actual world — only at some world, w , or other. This is no more contradictory than Priest being a man at this world, and a woman (not a man) at some other. There is not even a reason to believe that x is an object at world w . It may well be a logical truth that everything is an object, that is, has *Außersein*. However, logical truths may fail at impossible worlds. So it may not even be true at w that x is an object.

One could, of course, characterise an object, y , as both having and not having *Außersein*. This does not mean that y is actually a contradictory object. All it means is that there is some world, w (and it would be natural to think that w is an

⁹It is difficult to find a quotation in which Jacqueline explicitly rejects dialetheism. However, in none of his work is there a trace of accepting any contradiction as true. For this reason, it is fair to assume that Jacqueline was not sympathetic with dialetheism.

¹⁰As a referee correctly noted, related issues are discussed by Meinong himself in relation with the so-called ‘Defective Objects’ (Meinong 1917). However, due to the complexity of Meinong’s account of defective objects, we do not discuss the matter here. A detailed discussion of defective object can be found in Casati and Fujikawa (draft).

impossible world) where y has these contradictory properties.

Having said all this, because Priest is a dialetheist, it is open to him, in a way that it is not open to Jacqueline, to hold that some objects both do and do not have *Außersein*.

In fact, Priest does hold this view. He holds that nothingness both is and is not an object. It is clearly an object, since one can refer to it, think about it, etc. But it is not an object. By definition, it is the *absence* of all things: it is what remains when all objects are *removed*.

In fact, the contradictory nature of nothingness, even if were not obvious, can be proved with the help some simple machinery machinery.¹¹ First, according to Priest, to be an object is to be something. So let us define x is an object, Gx (G for *Gegenstand*), as $\mathfrak{S}y y = x$. As is clear, it is a logical truth that everything is an object: $\mathfrak{A}xGx$. That is, nothing is not an object: $\neg\mathfrak{S}x\neg Gx$.¹²

Next, we need a little mereology. Let us write $x < y$ to mean that x is a proper part of y . (Nothingness and y are the two improper parts of y .) As usual, $x \leq y$ means that $x < y \vee x = y$. x overlaps y , $x \circ y$, can be defined in the usual way:

$$[1] \quad x \circ y \leftrightarrow \mathfrak{S}z(z \leq x \wedge z \leq y)$$

The sum, or fusion, of a bunch of objects is the object one obtains by putting all the objects together. Thus, the sum of your parts is you. So, given a bunch of objects, something will overlap their fusion iff it overlaps one of them. Let us write the sum of the things that satisfy the condition $A(x)$ as $\sigma x A(x)$. Then we have:

$$[2] \quad x \circ \sigma x A(x) \leftrightarrow \mathfrak{S}y(A(y) \wedge x \circ y)$$

Now, whether or not every bunch of objects has a sum is a philosophically contentious matter. Some hold that they do; some hold that there is no sum if the objects do not hang together in an appropriate fashion (like the parts of a body or a country). We need take no stand on this matter here.

We are now in a position to define nothingness, n . It is simply the sum of no things, that is, no objects. (Thus, we might say that it is the sum of all the things in the empty set). Hence:

$$[3] \quad n = \sigma x \neg Gx$$

This is the intuitively correct definition of nothingness. Moreover, the things that are not objects cannot fail to hang together (whatever that means) since there are none of them. Hence, [2] and [3] give us:

¹¹For what follows, see Priest 2014a.

¹²Following Priest (2005), we write \mathfrak{S} and \mathfrak{A} as the particular and universal quantifiers, respectively, to bring home the fact that they are not “existentially loaded”.

$$[4] \quad x \circ n \leftrightarrow \mathfrak{S}y(\neg Gx \wedge x \circ y)$$

Clearly, Gn . (That, as we observed, is a logical truth.) But we can now show that n is not an object by the following simple argument. We know that $\neg\mathfrak{S}x\neg Gx$, so [4] gives us:

- $\forall x\neg x \circ n$

and so:

- $\neg n \circ n$

but then [1] gives us:

- $\neg\mathfrak{S}z z \leq n$

In particular, then:

- $\neg n \leq n$

and so:

$$[5] \quad n \neq n$$

Now, for any x , either $x = n$ or $x \neq n$. In the first case, [5] and the substitutivity of identicals gives us $x \neq n$. So $x \neq n$ in either case. That is:

- $\mathfrak{A}x x \neq n$

i.e.:

- $\neg Gn$

Hence we have $Gn \wedge \neg Gn$: n is an object that is not an object.

What we see, then, is that for Priest *Außersein* is an inconsistent notion: even though everything has it, some things do not (as well).

6 Conclusion

Let us conclude by summarizing the main points of this paper. First of all, distinguishing between the Principle of *Außersein* and *Außersein* itself, we have shown that, even though contemporary Meinongians are engaged with the former, they often ignore the latter. Secondly, we have examined the few interpretations of *Außersein* available on the market. On the one hand, we have shown that both

the interpretations defended by Grossman and Lambert are incompatible with the general framework presented by Meinong in his *Theory of Objects*; on the other hand, we have defended both Jacquette and Priest's account of *Außersein*, according to which Meinong's *Außersein* is deeply related with the notion of objecthood. Finally, we have focused our attention on three main differences between these two interpretations, showing that: (i) for Jacquette, *Außersein* is a domain while, for Priest, it is a property; (ii) for Jacquette, there is no explicit connection between *Außersein* and self-identity while, for Priest, there is; (iii) for Jacquette, *Außersein* is a consistent notion while, for Priest, it is not: some objects do and do not have it. Adjudicating this last disagreement would, of course, take us a long way beyond the ambit of this paper.

References

- [1] Berto, F. (2013), *Existence as a Real Property: The Ontology of Meinongianism*, London: Synthese Library, Springer.
- [2] Casati, F. and N. Fujikawa, (Draft) On Defective Objects.
- [3] Grossman, R. (2008), *Meinong. The Arguments of Philosophers*, London and New York: Routledge.
- [4] Jacquette, D. (2015), *Alexius Meinong: the Shepherd of Non-Being*, London: Synthese Library, Springer.
- [5] Lambert, K. (1983), *Meinong and the Principle of Independence. Its Place in Meinong's Theory of Objects and its Significance in Contemporary Philosophical Logic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [6] Meinong, A. (1904), 'Über Gegenstandstheorie', translated in Chisholm, R. M. (eds.), *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology*, New York and London: The Free Press Collier-Macmillan, 1960.
- [7] Meinong, A. (1910), 'Über Annahmen', translated as *On Assumptions*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1983.
- [8] Meinong, A. (1917), 'Über Emotionale Präsentation', translated in Schubert Kalsi, M. L., (ed.), *On Emotional Presentation*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972.
- [9] Meinong, A. (1921), 'Selbstdarstellung' translated in Grossmann R., *Meinong*, London: Routledge Kegan Paul (1974).
- [10] Parsons, T. (1980), *Nonexistent Objects*, Yale: Yale University Press.
- [11] Priest, G. (2005), *Towards Non-Being*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2nd edn, 2016.
- [12] Priest, G. (2014a), 'Much Ado about Nothing', *Australasian Journal of Logic* 11: 146-58.
- [13] Priest, G. (2014b), 'Sein Language', *The Monist* 97: 430-42.
- [14] Routley, R. (1980), *Exploring Meinong's Jungle and Beyond*, Canberra: Australian National University RSSS.

- [15] Ryle, G. (1973), 'Intentionality and the Nature of Thinking', *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 27: 255-65.
- [16] Sylvan, R. (1950), Papers 1950 – 1996, Box 23, Queensland: University of Queensland Library.