

# Natural language ontology for reference to abstract objects

Louise McNally

During the past two years a small network of linguists from Barcelona, Osnabrueck, and Lille has been meeting occasionally to work on a natural language ontology for reference to abstract objects (i.e., events, propositions, facts and the like), inspired in earlier work particularly by Asher and Ginzburg and Sag. One of our specific goals was to see whether corpora could be usefully tagged with such ontological information, e.g. for the purpose of facilitating the resolution of anaphoric pronouns such as “it” or “that”. In this talk I report on the numerous difficulties we encountered in this enterprise. The results so far, while in a sense negative, have nonetheless helped to clarify what avenues we think might be most productively pursued in future research.