

Existential Dependencies: Holes, problems and other flaws in the argument

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Do we talk about metaphysically difficult entities such as holes, flaws and problems in the same way we talk about coats and tables? Although it has been claimed that we do, and that their behavior just shows that syntactic behavior persists in the absence of reference, I provide evidence that in certain contexts they do not behave like “ordinary” NPs and suggest that this is because they are existentially dependent on a host entity, i.e., a hole is a hole in something. I offer an analysis of the class of existentially dependent NPs that accounts for their distribution.