

INTRODUCTION

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Abstract: The notion of ontological dependence can find application in distinct areas of philosophical research and can serve the purpose of better understanding the nature of the objects and phenomena at the center of such researches. What the present issue focuses attention on is the relation that subsists between our activities as human beings and certain types of entities that seem to depend on them.

Key Words: Ontological dependence; Human products; Ontology; Metaphysics.

This special issue of *Esercizi Filosofici* focuses on the notion of ontological dependence and specifically on how this metaphysical relation can help us better understand the nature of entities that are the result of human creative activities. Ontological dependence is a subject attracting nowadays the attention of a great number of philosophers working in the analytic tradition. This notion, of an exquisitely metaphysical character, can find application in distinct areas of philosophical research and can serve the purpose of better understanding the nature of the objects and phenomena at the center of such researches. Ontological dependence can be characterized as a family of relations subsisting between entities. It has a metaphysical character and must therefore be distinguished from a purely causal type of relation or from the logical dependence that exists between propositions. The fact that an entity depends ontologically on another seems relevant to determine what the first entity is and its essential characteristics. It follows, therefore, that an investigation of the link between dependent entities and entities on which they depend can help shed light on the nature of the former.

What the present issue focuses attention on, besides of course the concept of ontological dependence in general, is the relation that subsists between our activities as human beings and certain types of entities that seem to depend on them. In other words, the main goal is that of focusing the attention on those entities that depend ontologically, in one way or another, on the practices and activities of human beings. Dealing with this issue allows us to embrace a wide range of topics currently debated: social ontology, the metaphysics of artifacts, the metaphysics of artworks, fictional objects, and many others. The aim is to investigate specifically the nature of the entities dependent on us to shed light on

the different varieties of ontological dependence at play in these areas. On the one hand, the reflection on a certain category of objects can bring out new characteristics attributable to the relation of ontological dependence, on the other hand, considering some issues peculiar to certain types of entities focusing on their ontological dependence connections can help us to better understand the nature of these entities themselves.

In his paper, Michele Paolini Paoletti considers fictional objects and how artifactualism, one prominent theory of fictional objects, can be better formulated presupposing metaontological pluralism, namely the view according to which there are many irreducible relations of ontological dependence. Marilù Papandreou's paper offers a reconstruction of Aristotle's account of inadvertently made objects and how the possibility of such entities can shake our intuitions regarding the relation between the essence of artifacts and the intentions of their makers. She also considers how Aristotle's account can result interesting in the context of contemporary debates on the metaphysics of artifacts. Elena Bartolini in her essay offers a view on the subject of ontological dependence starting from Heidegger's comments on some Heraclitean fragments, specifically on the relation between *λόγος* and Being. Pyro Suarez in his paper considers the topic of moral contextualism and how it can be formulated in a way that makes it compatible with an externalist account of the semantics of moral terms which would save the substantiality of moral disagreement. This has some implications on how and to what extent moral reality, what makes our moral discourses true or false, is in/dependent on us and our practices. Lisa Paravan's essay deals with skepticism regarding the relation of ontological dependence. She exposes Unger's new skeptical perspective and she shows how such a view can impact the notion of ontological dependence. Finally, in my paper, I attempt to show how it is possible to make room for artifacts in a neo-Aristotelian conception of reality. The upshot of the paper is the proposal of a two-level criterion of identity for artifacts based on Evnine's doctrine of amorphism which sees artifacts as essentially dependent for their identity on the act of creation that brought them into existence.

I would like to close this brief introduction by thanking all the authors that decided to contribute to the present issue with a paper. Special thanks go to the invited authors, Michele Paolini Paoletti and Marilù Papandreou, for accepting my invitation to take part in the project. I would also like to thank all the referees for their precious work and Professors Paolo Labinaz and Gabriele De Anna for the help they provided me. I also want to thank the editorial board of *Esercizi Filosofici* which trusted me with the present project and the Department of Legal Science of the University of Udine that granted me the funding that allowed me to dedicate my time to the editing of this special issue of *Esercizi Filosofici*.