

ON THE METAPHYSICS OF
RELATION-RESPONSE PROPERTIES;
OR, WHY YOU SHOULDN'T COLLAPSE
RESPONSE-DEPENDENT PROPERTIES
INTO THEIR GROUNDS

Spencer M. Smith

Words are our tools, and, as a minimum, we should use clean tools: we should know what we mean and what we do not, and we must forearm ourselves against the traps that language sets us. . . . And more hopefully, our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connexions they have found worth marking, in the lifetimes of many generations: these surely are likely to be more numerous, more sound, since they have stood up to the long test of the survival of the fittest, and more subtle, at least in all ordinary and reasonably practical matters than any that you or I are likely to think up in our armchairs of an afternoon—the most favoured alternative method.

—J. L. Austin, “A Plea for Excuses”

AUSTIN'S CAUTIONARY REMARKS are well taken: words *are* our tools, and we ought indeed to “use clean tools”—particularly when doing philosophy. And while we may reasonably question their details or the extent to which they point toward a viable research program for philosophy, Austin's more hopeful observations about there being important distinctions and connections enshrined in natural language are surely onto something as well. For a family of what I take to be particularly clear confirming instances of the latter observation, consider the following series of predicates:¹

“blameworthy,” “praiseworthy,” “trustworthy,” “noteworthy,” “buzzworthy,” “bingeworthy” . . .

1 For the sake of readability, I will often proceed as though standalone adjectives such as those listed count as predicates, rather than always including a verb.

“desirable,” “believable,” “admirable,” “laughable,” “memorable,” “lovable,” “punchable” ...

“awe-inspiring,” “hope-inspiring,” “anxiety-inducing,” “fear-inducing,” “tear-jerking” ...

Each predicate in each of these series appears to denote a property with *relation-response structure*.² That is, each predicate appears to denote a particular relational property—namely, the property of standing in a given relation to a given type of response, whether that response be emotional, attitudinal, or behavioral. Each of these lists, of course, goes on.³

Moreover, each of the foregoing predicates appears to implicate a particular relation and a particular type of response as figuring in the structure of the property it denotes.⁴ There is room to haggle over precisely how to analyze the relation of worthiness or the response type of blame, for instance; but it nevertheless seems clear from the meaning of the English word “blameworthy”

2 In this paper I assume that, as a general matter, meaningful predicates denote properties, save for troublesome predicates like, e.g., “does not self-instantiate.”

3 It is important to be clear that a predicate’s merely having one of these lists’ distinctive suffixes—e.g., “-worthy” or “-able”—is not sufficient for it to be a member of the corresponding list. For a thing to be seaworthy, for instance, is presumably not for that thing to be worthy of a certain sort of response picked out (strangely) by “sea.” Perhaps certain uses of “seaworthy” *imply*, in corresponding conversational contexts, that the seaworthy item is indeed worthy of a certain type of response, e.g., sailing, floating, etc. But to say that some object is seaworthy is not *in itself* to say, for some response *R*, that that object is worthy of *R*.

4 Other series of predicates are close kin to the ones I will be focusing on, including:

“awesome,” “fearsome,” “loathsome,” “irksome,” “tiresome,” “worrisome” ...

“interesting,” “irritating,” “annoying,” “disturbing,” “inspiring,” “tiring” ...

Each of these predicates appears to denote a property with relation-response structure. What distinguishes them from the predicates I will be focusing on is that to the extent that these latter expressions indicate which relation-constituents figure in the relation-response structures of the properties they denote, they appear to do so only with what Quine might have called “studied ambiguity” (“On What There Is,” 26). Thus, it is not quite true that the “-some” and “-ing” suffixes, as they appear in the members of our additional series, implicate *particular* relations. It seems better to say that these suffixes serve a generalizing function—namely, the function of allowing a user of the word to implicate the presence of one or another out of a range of possible particular relations without having to specify which. Thus, in saying that a thing is awesome, competent English users have a decent sense of the range of possible particular relations they are implying this thing might bear to the response type of awe: perhaps it is a relation of *engendering* or of *meriting*. (Context, I suppose, can help to narrow this down.)

Everything of importance that I have to say in this paper about relation-response expressions and the properties they denote applies just as well to the members of these additional series. I neglect them only because their generality makes discussion of them messier.

that it is indeed this relation—namely, worthiness—and indeed that type of response—namely, blame—that one must understand if one is to understand the property that “blameworthy” denotes. In light of this, let a *faithful reading* of “blameworthy”—or of the corresponding property name “blameworthiness”—be a reading that has it denote a property with *genuine relation-response structure*—i.e., relation-response structure that is fundamental, or that cannot be “analyzed out”—whose fundamental relation-constituent stands a good chance of being what we standardly mean by “worthy” (in the relevant contexts), and whose fundamental response constituent stands a good chance of being what we standardly mean by “blame” (in the relevant contexts). The notion of a faithful reading generalizes to other predicates of the relevant sort. Moreover, we can talk of relation-response structures themselves or the properties that have them as being faithful to a given predicate or property name.

If you are like me, you may think it a straightforward deliverance of English that we ought to read and use the aforementioned predicates and their corresponding property names faithfully; as Gideon Rosen puts it, our accounts of blameworthiness, trustworthiness, etc. “should respect word structure.”⁵ But surprisingly, many philosophers appear to use certain such expressions—e.g., “blameworthy”—to denote properties that lack faithful structure. Such philosophers appear instead to use “blameworthy” as a predicate for properties like, e.g., having acted wrongly from ill will—properties that to my mind seem far better fit to serve as *conditions* or *grounds* of blameworthiness rather than as blameworthiness itself.

Upon hearing of such news, you may be disposed to think this a case of mere verbal slippage, that these philosophers were just speaking loosely or carelessly. But if that is the story you wish to run with, it is difficult to know what to think in response, e.g., to Jules Coleman and Alexander Sarch’s report that behaving this way with regard to blameworthiness is “standard,” or to David Shoemaker’s report that theories which strip blameworthiness of faithful relation-response structure in this way are “much more popular” than theories that do not.⁶ If these reports are right, respect for word structure seems to be in surprisingly short supply, at least in one major philosophical subliterate.

This paper is, among other things, a plea for respecting word structure when it comes to theorizing putative relation-response properties generally. To some extent this will be an Austinian exercise in terminological hygiene: relation-response expressions figure centrally in a significant number of philosophical

5 Rosen, “The Alethic Conception of Moral Responsibility,” 66.

6 Coleman and Sarch, “Blameworthiness and Time,” 101; and Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility,” 483.

discussions, so it is all for the best to keep them in good working order. But the project is not merely prophylactic, for I will also spend some time arguing that respect for word structure here can help us to see more clearly what is truly at stake in recent debates concerning the natures of certain value properties.

The paper proceeds as follows: In section 1, I introduce Gideon Rosen's ground-theoretic framework for theorizing blameworthiness, and I offer a generalization of that framework for theorizing putative relation-response properties across the board. This framework will prove useful in the work to come. In section 2, I unpack my contention that many philosophers appear to neglect word structure when analyzing putative relation-response properties, focusing on blameworthiness as my case study. In section 3, I consider two arguments—one recently articulated by Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson, the other by Shoemaker—for the claim that a popular approach to theorizing certain putative relation-response properties requires those who adopt it to deny that such properties have genuine relation-response structure.⁷ I show that D'Arms and Jacobson's argument is invalid as it stands, and I argue that at least one natural way of rendering it valid relies upon an account of property individuation that those to whom the argument is directed have good reason to reject. I then show that Shoemaker's argument relies crucially upon an assumption that its targets need not, should not, and do not in all cases accept. Finally, in sections 4 and 5, I argue that whereas recently propounded classification schemes say otherwise, a great deal of the debate between so-called Response-Independence and Response-Dependence theories of certain value properties—properties like, e.g., blameworthiness, trustworthiness, etc.—ought not to be framed as hinging on whether the relation-response structure of such a property is affirmed as genuine. In fact, merely to affirm as much leaves nearly everything of importance in that debate yet to be settled.

1. A FRAMEWORK FOR THEORIZING RELATION-RESPONSE PROPERTIES

In this section, I draw upon the work of Gideon Rosen to establish a framework for theorizing putative relation-response properties, and I use that framework to distinguish different approaches that one might take to such theorizing.

1.1. *Three Question-Schemas*

Rosen poses three questions that any comprehensive theory of blameworthiness ought to address:

7 D'Arms and Jacobson, "The Motivational Theory of Guilt (and Its Implications for Responsibility)"; and Shoemaker, "Response-Dependent Theories of Responsibility."

1. *The Analytic Question*: What is it for something to be blameworthy?
2. *The Grounding Question*: What are the conditions under which something is blameworthy?
3. *The Explanatory Question*: Why are the conditions of being blameworthy as they are?⁸

Rosen's questions get to the heart of the matter and can be adapted for the purposes of theorizing other putative relation-response properties. Here, then, are three question-schemas whose instances any comprehensive theory of a relation-response property, *F*-ness, ought to address:

- I. *The Analytic Question-Schema*: What is it for something to be *F*?
- II. *The Grounding Question-Schema*: What are the conditions under which something is *F*?
- III. *The Explanatory Question-Schema*: Why are the conditions of being *F* as they are?

The Analytic Question-Schema (henceforth "QS-I") asks what it is for something to be *F*, where—as I shall later explain—a true answer constitutes a *metaphysical analysis* or *real definition* of being *F*. The Grounding Question-Schema (henceforth "QS-II") asks not what it is to be *F* but rather what it is in virtue of which *F*-things are *F*. In other words, it asks for an account of the *explanatory ground* or *explanatory grounds* of *F*-ness instantiations.⁹ In still other words, QS-II asks for a list of the *F*-making properties there are—i.e., those properties the having of which confers (a degree of) *F*-ness upon their bearers. The Explanatory Question-Schema (henceforth "QS-III") goes a step further. It asks what it is about the *F*-making properties in virtue of which they are *F*-making.

QS-II and QS-III each have to do with a form of noncausal metaphysical determination currently being investigated by philosophers under the name "grounding." QS-I may also have to do with grounding if, following philosophers like Rosen or Fabrice Correia, we construe analysis or real definition ground

8 See Rosen, "The Alethic Conception of Moral Responsibility," 65–68. I have not reproduced Rosen's questions verbatim, since the questions he considers explicitly concern responsibility rather than blameworthiness. But Rosen proceeds via a series of terminological stipulations to hone in on the topic of blameworthiness, and tasks himself with providing an account of blameworthiness that addresses each of the three questions I have presented. Thus the interpolation.

9 Because I take it to be relatively unimportant in the context of the present paper, I will for the most part blur the distinction between a thing's being *F* and that thing's having the property *being F*, or *F*-ness.

theoretically.¹⁰ In light of these connections, it behooves us briefly to familiarize ourselves with some basic tools for thinking about grounding bequeathed to us by the literature on it. They will prove useful in drawing out some further features of QS-I–III and in our investigations to come.

1.2. *Grounding: Some Basics*

Grounding, as I will be thinking of it, is an irreflexive, antisymmetric, transitive, noncausal determination relation between facts. To say that grounding is a noncausal determination relation between facts is to say that when one fact, *A*, grounds another fact, *B*, *A* in some sense *makes B* obtain, but not by way of causing *B* to obtain. In the typical case of grounding thus conceived, a single fact, *A*, is grounded in a plurality of facts, *I*, numbering anywhere from one to infinitely many.

Facts in this context are themselves typically conceived as worldly items, in particular, as either so-called true Russellian propositions or Armstrongian states of affairs: the discrete, worldly counterparts to declarative sentences that, in the least controversial instance, consist in certain arrangements of objects and their properties or relations.¹¹ In what follows, I adopt the standard convention of adjoining brackets to declarative sentences in order to form the names of the facts that correspond to those sentences when true. For example, take the sentence “Blue is a dog.” This sentence, when true, corresponds to a fact, namely, [Blue is a dog].

Grounding is also thought to be the relation of noncausal metaphysical explanation, or else the relation that backs such explanation. Thus, when a fact, *A*, is *wholly grounded* in a plurality of facts, *I*, *A* is said to obtain *because of* or *in virtue of* the obtaining of the facts comprising *I*. In turn, whenever *A* is wholly grounded in *I*, *A* is *partly grounded* in each subplurality of facts comprising *I* and is thus said to obtain *partly in virtue of* each such subplurality.

1.3. *Understanding Question-Schemas I, II, and III*

With the foregoing bit of grounding ideology in hand, let us turn to consider more deeply what QS-I–III are asking.

There are different things we might be asking when we ask *what it is* for something to be *F*, for any given predicate we might substitute for “*F*.” Following Rosen, I stipulate that QS-I asks for a *metaphysical analysis* or *real definition* of being *F*. (Henceforth, I simplify discussion by supposing that metaphysical

10 Rosen, “Metaphysical Dependence,” 122–26, and “Real Definition,” 197–200; Correia, “Real Definitions,” 57–59.

11 See, e.g., Rosen, “Metaphysical Dependence,” 114–15; and Audi, “Grounding,” 686.

analysis and real definition are the same thing, and I use “analysis” as my term of choice.) To be sure, there are debates to be had about analysis. For instance, Rosen holds that analysandum facts are always wholly grounded in their corresponding analysans facts, whereas Paul Audi—toward whose position I myself am presently more inclined—takes analysandum facts to be identical to their corresponding analysans facts and thus, given the irreflexivity of grounding, not at all grounded in those facts.¹² I do not wish to enter into this debate here. Rather, I mention the disagreement for the purposes of clarifying my understanding of QS-II, toward which I now turn.

QS-II, as I have it, asks for the conditions of being *F*, or the *F*-making properties. We have gone further and explained that QS-II asks for the *grounds* of *F*-ness instantiations (or “*F*-facts,” for short). But this can now be seen to be ambiguous: if we suppose with Rosen that the ground of a fact can be that fact’s analysans, then some answers to QS-I may double as answers to QS-II. I do not know whether Rosen wants this, but—more importantly for our purposes—I do not want this. So I stipulate that QS-II asks after the grounds of *F*-facts where the grounds in question do not stand as analysans to their corresponding *F*-facts.

QS-III, finally, asks why the conditions of being *F* are as they are. In other words, what makes the conditions of *F*-ness be conditions of *F*-ness? When the conditions of *F*-ness are themselves property instantiations, an equivalent question would be: in virtue of what are the *F*-making properties *F*-making? Why are *these* properties—the properties cited in response to QS-II—the *F*-makers? Alternatively and somewhat torturously, we might frame the question in terms of fact forms and ask: When some facts of such-and-such forms get together to ground a fact of some other form, what are the forms of the facts which ground the fact that the former facts ground the latter?¹³ Where it is easier to do so, I endeavor to speak in terms of properties rather than of fact forms.

Ultimately, we are left with a grounding structure that can be represented graphically as in figure 1. The arrows represent what may be either whole or partial grounding relations, as the case may be. The three boxes represent facts that correspond to possible answers to QS-I–III, respectively.¹⁴ The bracketed

12 Rosen, “Metaphysical Dependence,” 122–26, and “Real Definition,” 197–200; Audi, “Grounding,” 686. See also Dorr, “To be *F* is to be *G*,” 43, 54, for what is effectively a conditionalized defense of Audi’s stance on the point.

13 By a “fact form,” I mean a form that distinct particular facts may share. For instance, [Blue is a dog] and [Thea is a dog] each share the fact form [*x* is a dog].

14 As I say above, I am inclined to regard analyzable facts as identical to the facts that analyze them. For instance, if we say that to be a bachelor is to be an unmarried eligible male, then I am inclined to say that for all *x*, if *x* is a bachelor or an unmarried eligible male, then [*x* is

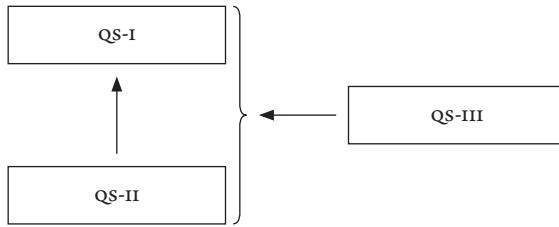


FIGURE 1

contents together represent the higher-order fact that the QS-II fact(s) ground the QS-I fact. Written out, our structure says that (1) the QS-II fact or facts ground the QS-I fact, and (2) the QS-III fact or facts ground the fact [The QS-II fact or facts ground(s) the QS-I fact].¹⁵

To see how the structure might look when filled, consider a nonnaturalistic version of consequentialism, namely, one that accepts a necessitated version of the standard equivalence—necessarily, an act is right if and only if it maximizes goodness—but denies that to act rightly *just is* to maximize goodness. Nevertheless, the view says that whenever an act is right or is goodness-maximizing, it is right *directly in virtue of* being goodness-maximizing (or “optimal,” for short). In other words, facts of the form [*x* acts optimally] are immediate

a bachelor] = [*x* is an unmarried eligible male]—in effect, a single fact has two linguistic or representational garbs, one of which is more perspicuous as to the structure of that fact than the other. Still, for reasons of neatness, I shall often plug in the less perspicuous presentation of an analyzable fact into QS-I boxes. That is, I shall put in an open sentence like “*x* is a bachelor” rather than “*x* is an unmarried eligible male,” even though the latter embeds a more proper answer to the “What is it to be a bachelor?” instance of QS-I. On my preferred view of analysis, this is but a minor presentational infelicity, since on that view “*x* is a bachelor” and “*x* is an unmarried eligible male,” for a given *x*, designate the same fact. On Rosen’s view of analysis, however, it is inaccurate to use “*x* is a bachelor” rather than “*x* is an unmarried eligible male” to designate the fact corresponding to the “What is it to be a bachelor?” instance of QS-I. There is thus a tension between how I shall be portraying grounding structures in this paper and how someone with Rosen’s view of analysis would portray such structures. This is unfortunate, but not greatly so: whether we think of QS-I facts in my preferred way or in Rosen’s way, we will agree that such facts are to “go above” QS-II facts in the grounding structures we will be looking at; and agreeing about these sorts of structural relations between the facts we shall be considering will generally suffice to ensure that we are on the same page about the relevant claims I shall be making.

- 15 One potentially misleading feature of this way of depicting things is that it may be taken as implying that there is always exactly one fact corresponding to each node in the explanatory structure. Such an implication would be false, most clearly in the cases of the QS-II and QS-III nodes: there can be multiple grounds of a given QS-I fact, and there can be multiple grounds of the fact that a given QS-II fact grounds a given QS-I fact. For such cases, we would need many more boxes than just three. But the basic structure we have represented would be preserved, and that is the main thing I want these graphics to assist us in tracking.

whole or partial grounds of corresponding facts of the form [x acts rightly]. Thus, we have figure 2:

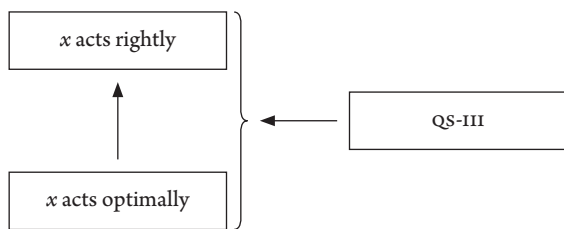


FIGURE 2

We will cover how one might fill in the QS-III box shortly. For the moment, I want to touch upon something I just said, namely, that in our case, facts of the form [x acts optimally] are “immediate whole or partial grounds” of corresponding facts of the form [x acts rightly]. There is some trouble about how to define immediate grounding, but the notion is sufficiently intuitive that for our purposes it suffices to take it as a working primitive. Following Kit Fine, we may nevertheless gloss the notion by saying that an *immediate ground* of a fact F is a ground of F whose grounding of F “need not be seen to be mediated.”¹⁶ In turn, we may then say that a *mere mediate ground* of F is a ground of F for which this is not so. For example, A is an immediate ground of [A or B] insofar as A may be seen to ground [A or B] without grounding any intermediary item. However, A is a mere mediate ground of [[A or B] or C], since A may be seen to ground [[A or B] or C], but only by way of first grounding [A or B].

While I here follow Fine in construing the distinction between immediate and merely mediate grounding in terms of facts, I often prefer to speak in terms of a partly corresponding distinction that holds at the level of properties and may be defined in terms of the fact-theoretic distinction as follows, using subscripted f s as variables ranging over facts: for some property, G -ness, to be an *immediate ground* of some other property, F -ness, is for F -ness and G -ness to nonvacuously satisfy the condition that necessarily, whenever a fact of the form [x is G], f_1 , grounds a corresponding fact of the form [x is F], f_2 , f_1 is an immediate ground of f_2 . On the other hand, for G -ness to be a *mere mediate ground* of F -ness is for F -ness and G -ness to nonvacuously satisfy the condition that necessarily, whenever a fact of the form [x is G], f_1 , grounds a corresponding fact of the form [x is F], f_2 , f_1 is a mere mediate ground of f_2 .

16 Fine, “Guide to Ground,” 50–51. Fine avoids saying that an immediate ground is one which is not mediated, for—as he demonstrates—such an account is susceptible to counterexamples.

There is another distinction between types of grounds worth bringing out, namely, that between *universal* and *parochial* grounds.¹⁷ Here too I generally prefer to work with such a distinction at the level of properties, construed as follows: for some property, *G*-ness, to be a *universal ground* of some other property, *F*-ness—in other words, a *universal F-making property*—is for *F*-ness and *G*-ness to nonvacuously satisfy the condition that necessarily, whenever any *x* is *F* or *G*, [*x* is *G*] at least partly grounds [*x* is *F*]. (Thus, a universal ground of *F*-ness is necessarily equivalent to *F*-ness: necessarily and for all *x*, *x* is *F* if and only if *x* is *G*.) On the other hand, a *parochial ground* of *F*-ness, *G*-ness, is a *merely occasional F-making property*: possibly some things are *F* at least partly in virtue of being *G*, but it is not necessary that everything that is *F* is *F* at least partly in virtue of being *G*.¹⁸

These distinctions are valuable to have on hand. To see why, consider the different ways we might try to fill in box QS-II in the blameworthiness instance of our explanatory structure for some individual, *S*, in figure 3:

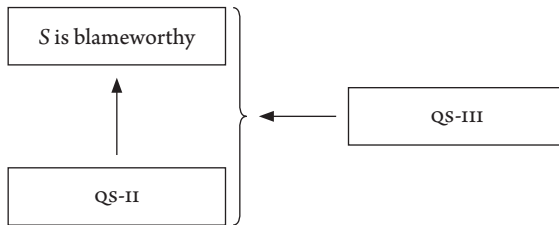


FIGURE 3

To fill in box QS-II here would be to offer an answer to the question “What are the conditions under which *S* is blameworthy?” In response to this question, we might naturally expect a long and multifarious list of the ever-so-many properties *S* might have in virtue of the possession of which a person might be

17 I have not seen the notion of a parochial ground explicitly demarcated elsewhere. Rosen, however, does use the term “universal right-making feature,” and the work done by “universal” in this expression of his is the work done by “universal” in mine. See, e.g., Rosen’s discussion of Derek Parfit’s metanormative views in the former’s “Real Definition,” 207n24.

18 Alternatively, we might have appealed to fact forms to construe the distinction between universal and parochial grounds as one obtaining at the level of facts rather than that of properties. As I allude to above in the case of immediate/mere-mediate grounding (by way of saying the property-theoretic distinction “partly” corresponds to the fact-theoretic distinction), these ways of construing the distinction do not correspond perfectly, for the former construal affords us the ability to countenance universal and parochial grounds that have no natural correlates on the latter construal. Still, working with the property-theoretic construal of the distinction makes things easier and suffices for all purposes for which we shall be needing such a distinction.

blameworthy on a given occasion: having lied, having stolen, having killed, etc. Plausibly, each such property would be a mere parochial ground of blameworthiness, since not all who are blameworthy are blameworthy in virtue of, e.g., having lied.

Would the aforementioned blameworthy-making properties be mediate or immediate grounds of blameworthiness? A theorist of blameworthiness could go either way on this, but a common approach to theorizing blameworthiness—in fact, to theorizing normative properties generally—would lead us to say that such properties are mere mediate grounds of blameworthiness. The approach I have in mind would be to say that some property, *G*-ness, is *the unique universal and immediate ground* of blameworthiness, and the various aforementioned parochial grounds of blameworthiness ground blameworthiness only ever by way of grounding *G*-ness. Call this the *Principlist Approach* to theorizing normative properties.

We have already seen a view that conforms to the Principlist Approach, namely, the nonnaturalistic version of consequentialism considered above. That view holds that optimality is a universal and immediate ground of rightness, for it holds that necessarily and for all *x*, *x* is right if and only if *x* is optimal, and right directly in virtue of being optimal. The Principlist Approach to theorizing blameworthiness, then, would be to find some property, *G*-ness, that stands to blameworthiness as optimality stands to rightness and that stands to the many and varied parochial grounds of blameworthiness as optimality stands to the many and varied parochial grounds of rightness.

The major attraction in taking the Principlist Approach to theorizing a given normative property, *F*-ness, is that such an approach, if successful, would seem to simplify the task of answering the *F*-instance of QS-III: “Why are the conditions of *F*-ness as they are?” That is because in taking a Principlist Approach to theorizing *F*-ness, one seeks a partial answer to this question in the form of some unique universal and immediate ground of *F*-ness, *G*-ness, which is such that all other grounds of *F*-ness—the many and varied parochial grounds—are grounds of *F*-ness precisely *because* they are grounds of *G*-ness. To be sure, the discovery of a property like *G*-ness would not leave us with a complete answer to the question of why the conditions of *F*-ness are as they are, for it would remain to be said what it is in virtue of which *G*-ness itself is a condition of *F*-ness. Nevertheless, in discovering *G*-ness, we would thereby discover an explanation as to why *every other* condition of *F*-ness is a condition of *F*-ness. Needless to say, such a discovery would seem to constitute a significant explanatory success.

I have been discussing the reasons for taking a Principlist Approach to theorizing normative properties, but an analogous case can be made for taking a Principlist Approach to theorizing certain putative relation-response properties,

normative or not. That is because a great many putative relation-response properties seem never to be possessed fundamentally: no one is ever brutally trustworthy—rather, people are trustworthy in virtue of being, e.g., historically reliable and well-intentioned truth-tellers; no one is ever brutally awe-inspiring—rather, people are awe-inspiring in virtue of being, e.g., extremely skilled in this or that activity; no one is ever brutally lovable—rather, people are lovable in virtue of being, e.g., extremely magnanimous or kind. Indeed, each such relation-response property, *F*-ness, would appear to have many and varied parochial grounds, just like normative properties generally. And to any theorist of *F*-ness, this cries out for explanation: what is it about these many and varied parochial *F*-making properties that makes them *F*-making? The desire for a unifying answer makes a Principlist Approach look attractive.

Just a moment ago, I said that the Principlist Approach to theorizing *F*-ness, if successful, would not by itself supply a complete answer to the question of why the conditions of *F*-ness are as they are, for that approach would not by itself explain why the unique universal and immediate ground of *F*-ness, *G*-ness, is a condition of *F*-ness.¹⁹ Philosophers who have adopted the Principlist Approach to theorizing normative properties have supplied different sorts of answers here, corresponding to the different sorts of answers ground-theorists have offered to the question of how to ground grounding facts generally. We have finally circled back to the question of how to fill in QS-III boxes.

We just witnessed one means of grounding a certain class of grounding facts, namely, facts like [*A* grounds *C*], where *A*'s grounding of *C* is mediated by *A*'s grounding of *B*, which in turn grounds *C*. Here, [*A* grounds *C*] is grounded in at least two facts, namely, [*A* grounds *B*] and [*B* grounds *C*]. Some may

19 What is more, positing an intermediary grounding property like *G*-ness would create the need for an explanation as to why the many and varied parochial grounds of *F*-ness are grounds of *G*-ness. In other words, though we give an answer as to what it is in virtue of which the many and varied parochial grounds of *F*-ness are such—namely, that they are such because they ground *G*-ness, which itself grounds *F*-ness—we have not yet answered the question of what it is in virtue of which those many and varied parochial grounds of *G*-ness are such. This may seem to undermine any advantage we might have thought we had gained by positing *G*-ness; do not all of our same problems arise anew at this new level we have introduced? Have we not merely shifted the bump in the explanatory rug? No—or at least not if we have found a good candidate to play the role of our universal and immediate ground. That is because a good candidate for the role of universal and immediate ground will be one whose nature makes it very clear why the many and varied parochial grounds of *F*-ness are grounds of *G*-ness. The thought is that it should be easier to see why those grounds of *F*-ness are grounds of *G*-ness than it is to see why they are grounds of *F*-ness. And if it is in turn easier to see why *G*-ness might be a ground of *F*-ness than it is to see why the many and varied parochial grounds of *F*-ness are grounds of *F*-ness, then we have surely made explanatory progress by discovering *G*-ness, since it is an illuminating intermediary.

also wish to say a third fact is required to ensure that these two facts ground [A grounds C], namely, [It lies in the essence of grounding to be transitive]. If we supplement the picture in this way, we arrive at an instance of a more general approach to grounding grounding facts, which, broadly and basically, is to appeal to essences. More specifically, *essentialists* say that facts about what grounds what—e.g., [A grounds C]—are themselves at least partly grounded in facts about the essences of one or more of the constituents of those facts, i.e., either the *grounders*—A, in our example—or the *groundeds*—C, in our example—or, as we are here supposing, the grounding relation itself.²⁰ Why does A ground C? Because A grounds B, and B grounds C, and because it lies in the nature of grounding itself that if A grounds B and B grounds C, then A grounds C. Facts about essences, on the other hand—or relevant subpluralities thereof—are frequently supposed by essentialists to be ungrounded.²¹

The essentialist's approach to grounding grounding facts is the most relevant one for our discussion to come, and so I will not consider other approaches to grounding grounding facts—i.e., to filling in a QS-III box in our explanatory structure—save for a brief consideration of another such possibility at the end of section 4.5.

Let us recap. We began this section by introducing Rosen's framework for theorizing blameworthiness. We then considered a generalization of that framework for theorizing putative relation-response properties generally, i.e., an explanatory structure that any comprehensive theory of any putative relation-response property, *F*-ness, ought to guide us in filling out, if only in sketch. We then focused on examining different ways of filling out two nodes of that structure and in the process discussed the Principlist Approach to theorizing normative properties, as well as how and why one might adapt it for the purposes of theorizing putative relation-response properties generally.

We have covered a lot of ground. Let us turn now to our main topics of discussion, keeping our framework and its accompanying distinctions in mind as we go.

20 Strictly speaking, one might take an essentialist line on the grounds of some grounding facts without taking that line on all.

21 See, e.g., Rosen, "Ground by Law":

The essentialist laws are fully satisfying unexplained explainers. If we ask why [*p*] grounds [*p* ∨ *q*], we can answer: "Because it lies in the nature of disjunction that disjunctions are grounded in their true disjuncts." But if we ask why *this* is so, all we can say is: "That's just the nature of disjunction." That's not an answer. It's just a way of saying that when the question is why something has the constitutive essence it has, no answer is possible or necessary. The explanatory buck stops here. (291)

For a similar approach, see Dasgupta, "Metaphysical Rationalism."

2. DISRESPECT FOR WORD STRUCTURE: WIDESPREAD? WIDELY ENDORSED?

David Shoemaker reports that what he calls “Response-Independence theories of blameworthiness” are “much more popular” than what he calls “Response-Dependence theories of blameworthiness.”²² The way Shoemaker draws the distinction, Response-Independence theories of a given form of blameworthiness by definition hold that that form of blameworthiness is or is reducible to some property or properties in virtue of whose possession one merits a given form of blame.²³ The sort of properties Shoemaker has in mind are, to use an example he discusses, properties like *having knowingly and voluntarily acted badly from ill will while in control, appropriate historical conditions obtaining*.²⁴ The Response-Independence theorist of a given form of blameworthiness thus regards that form of blameworthiness as being or as being reducible to a property that lacks faithful relation-response structure, as the foregoing property clearly does. On the other hand, Shoemaker tells us that the much less popular sort of theories—the Response-Dependence theories of (this or that form of) blameworthiness—by definition identify (that form of) blameworthiness with or take it to be reducible to some faithful relation-response property or other. For Shoemaker, that property is *meriting anger (of a certain special variety)*; for D’Arms and Jacobson, it is *being an appropriate target of guilt*; for Rosen, it is *being an appropriate target of resentment*.²⁵

I have thus far stated only the constraints that Shoemaker takes each type of theory to place on possible answers to the blameworthiness instance of QS-I, namely, “What is it for something to be blameworthy?” There are other distinguishing features of Response-Independence and Response-Dependence theories, by Shoemaker’s lights. In fact, Shoemaker regards each type of theory as placing constraints on possible answers to the blameworthiness-instances of QS-II and QS-III as well. We will consider these additional constraints in sections 4 and 5.

It is not too difficult to adduce examples of prominent philosophers of blameworthiness speaking as though they endorse the sort of disrespect for word structure that Shoemaker bakes into his definition of Response-Independence theories of blameworthiness. Consider the following examples.

22 Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility,” 483.

23 Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility,” 498.

24 Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility,” 506.

25 Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility,” 508; D’Arms and Jacobson, “The Motivational Theory of Guilt (and Its Implications for Responsibility),” 15; and Rosen, “The Alethic Conception of Moral Responsibility, 72–73.

Jules Coleman and Alexander Sarch appear to confirm Shoemaker's judgment as to the popularity of what Shoemaker refers to as Response-Independence theories of blameworthiness, for they tell us that they themselves endorse "the standard view" of blameworthiness according to which it is "a *reason* or a *ground* that explains why blaming . . . would be justified."²⁶ Thus, for Coleman and Sarch, a person is first blameworthy, and only thereafter (in the order of explanation) are they a justified target of blame. But then blameworthiness must be distinct from the property *being a justified target of blame* because it is prior to it. Thus blameworthiness, for Coleman and Sarch, cannot be *this* relation-response property, namely, being a justified target of blame. But nor do they appear to think it any other genuine relation-response property, for they frequently imply that they take blameworthiness to be or to be reducible to *being culpable for wrongdoing*.²⁷ Being culpable for wrongdoing may itself appear to be or to partly consist in a genuine relation-response property, namely, culpability. Yet Coleman and Sarch appear to regard culpability as susceptible of analysis in terms of "certain facts about one's agential relationship to the doing or omitting—for example, the fact that it was the product of a defective character, wicked intentions, a bad will, or some other kind of moral failing of the agent."²⁸ Such an analysis "analyzes out" culpability's relation-response structure and is therefore unfaithful as an analysis of culpability. Since culpability is the only putative relation-response property constitutively involved in the property of being culpable for wrongdoing, to analyze blameworthiness as culpability for wrongdoing when culpability is itself analyzed unfaithfully would be to analyze blameworthiness unfaithfully in turn.

26 Coleman and Sarch, "Blameworthiness and Time," 101.

27 Coleman and Sarch imply this by arguing that blameworthiness does not diminish with the mere passage of time entirely on the grounds that culpability for wrongdoing does not diminish with the mere passage of time. One might be inclined to interpret Coleman and Sarch as merely affirming a kind of covariation here between degree of blameworthiness and degree of culpability for wrongdoing, while maintaining that blameworthiness is nevertheless something distinct. But in light of their aforementioned view of blameworthiness, it is more natural to read them as assuming that insofar as culpability for wrongdoing is itself a "ground" or "reason" that explains why blame would be justified, culpability for wrongdoing *just is* blameworthiness. These properties, for them, appear to play the same role.

Alternatively, you may suspect that "being a justified target of blame," in Coleman and Sarch's idiolect, means something distinct from "being a fitting target of blame" or "being an apt target of blame" and then suppose that they regard blameworthiness as being a fitting target of blame, which itself grounds the *distinct* status of being a justified target of blame. But Coleman and Sarch explicitly deny any equivalence between blameworthiness and being a fitting or apt target of blame. Thus, the option of reading them as affirming these other faithful relation-response structures for blameworthiness is not available.

28 Coleman and Sarch, "Blameworthiness and Time," 103.

T. M. Scanlon, on the other hand, tells us that “to claim that a person is *blameworthy* for an action is to claim that the action shows something about the agent’s attitudes that impairs the relations that others can have with him or her.”²⁹ Thus it appears—at least on the basis of this remark and others like them—that, for Scanlon, what it is for an agent, *S*, to be blameworthy for an action, *A*, is for *S*’s *A*-ing to indicate (or perhaps to flow from) *S*’s possession of a relevant set of relation-impairing attitudes. But notice that this description of Scanlonian blameworthiness makes no reference to any sort of response that might be appropriate towards *S* on the basis of *S*’s action or *S*’s relation-impairing attitudes. It certainly seems then that Scanlonian blameworthiness lacks faithful relation-response structure.

And finally there is Michael McKenna, who tells us that “blaming another for something she has done is primarily, albeit not exclusively, a matter of responding in a distinctive fashion to the perceived *morally objectionable quality of an agent’s will as manifested in her blameworthy behavior*,” where the quality of will McKenna takes to be morally objectionable is the “axiological” property of *being morally ill*.³⁰ In other words, *S*₁’s blaming of *S*₂ is primarily a matter of *S*₁’s responding to what *S*₁ perceives to be *S*₂’s morally ill will. But then he tells us just a page later that “blaming is most fundamentally a response to perceived *blameworthiness*.”³¹ How can McKenna think that blame is “primarily” a matter of responding to perceived *morally ill will* yet also “fundamentally” a matter of responding to perceived *blameworthiness*? Presumably he can think this only if he thinks that there is no difference between these things. For McKenna, for *S* to be blameworthy for *A*-ing seems just to be for *S*’s *A*-ing to manifest morally ill will. But again, the property *having morally ill will* seems to lack faithful relation-response structure.³²

I regard it as certain that Coleman and Sarch do in fact endorse an unfaithful analysis of blameworthiness. On the other hand, I regard it as highly probable that Scanlon at least is simply speaking loosely, for he immediately follows up his

29 Scanlon, *Moral Dimensions*, 128.

30 McKenna, “Directed Blame and Conversation,” 122–23 (emphasis added).

31 McKenna, “Directed Blame and Conversation,” 123 (emphasis added).

32 While the reading offered in the main text strikes me as faithful to McKenna’s words, a nearby alternative reading would have him *identifying* a will’s being morally objectionable with that will’s being morally ill, rather than taking the latter to explain the former. On that reading, McKenna might better be read as offering a faithful analysis of blameworthiness, provided McKenna also understands the response type of *objection* to constitute a faithful analysis of the response type of *blame*. That there is ambiguity in how best to read McKenna here is not a problem for the case I am making; on the contrary, it further supports the point I am about to make in the main text, namely, that it is often unclear whether authors who speak as though they reject faithful analyses of blameworthiness really do.

forementioned statement of what it is to claim that somebody is blameworthy by saying, “To *blame* a person is to *judge him or her to be blameworthy* and to take to your relationship with him or her to be modified in a way that this judgment of impaired relations holds to be appropriate.”³³ We noted above that Scanlon’s original description of the content of a claim or judgment of blameworthiness makes no mention of responses, appropriate or otherwise, and we accordingly read him as affirming the identity of blameworthiness with the unfaithful property of having acted from (or in a way that indicates) relation-impairing attitudes. And yet just one sentence later, Scanlon speaks as though a judgment of blameworthiness *does* consist at least partly in a judgment as to the appropriateness of a certain blaming response. Well, does it, or doesn’t it? If it does, then perhaps Scanlon does not really regard blameworthiness as having acted from (or in a way that indicates) relation-impairing attitudes; perhaps instead, he regards this latter property as a ground or condition in virtue of the satisfaction of which a person is worthy of certain kinds of response—namely, behavioral or attitudinal modifications of certain sorts—the worthiness of which responses is itself the true bearer of the title “blameworthiness.”

Thus, while I offer the foregoing examples primarily as a way of helping you to see more clearly what disrespect for word structure looks like, I offer them secondarily as a way of indicating where I stand with respect to the matter of whether—as Shoemaker and Coleman and Sarch report—such disrespect is widespread and widely endorsed. In short, whether or not they are right that such disrespect is widespread, I hesitate to say that it is widely endorsed. Many philosophers (like Scanlon) seem to be either speaking carelessly or, if not carelessly, using “blameworthiness” in a loose or extended sense, i.e., to refer to what they in fact regard as the (perhaps universal and immediate) *ground* or *condition* of blameworthiness rather than blameworthiness itself. I offer further support for this hypothesis in section 4.

Still, Coleman and Sarch are not speaking loosely or carelessly. As such, I assume they regard themselves as having reasons to identify blameworthiness with or reduce it to an unfaithful property—though so far as I can see, they do not share any such reasons with us.³⁴ In the next section, I discuss the only

33 Scanlon, *Moral Dimensions*, 128 (latter two emphases added).

34 In note 27 above, I mention that Coleman and Sarch deny that blameworthiness and being a fitting target of blame are equivalent. This of course would be sufficient for these properties to be distinct. It may seem then that Coleman and Sarch do offer *some* reason to deny that blameworthiness has faithful relation-response structure, namely, that blameworthiness is inequivalent to one relation-response property that might have otherwise seemed apt to be identified with blameworthiness. But this would be to get the dialectic backward, since Coleman and Sarch *presuppose* that blameworthiness is an unfaithful property in

such reasons I have seen explicitly propounded, namely, an argument recently offered by D'Arms and Jacobson and another by Shoemaker, each of which purports to deduce an unfaithful analysis of prideworthiness from a popular combination of views about putative relation-response properties like it.

3. REASONS TO DISRESPECT?

Consider the following passage from D'Arms and Jacobson:

If to be prideworthy is to merit pride, and pride is even partly constituted by the thought that something is splendid and mine, then it seems to follow that for something to be prideworthy is just for it to be splendid and mine. But if the prideworthy can be understood via a pride-independent notion of *splendid and mine*, then ... pride drops out of the explanation of the prideworthy.³⁵

In a footnote attached to the first of these sentences, they add:

At any rate, this is so if fittingness is tantamount to the truth of the emotion's constitutive thought. Indeed, cognitivism's ability to explain fittingness in this straightforward way is one of its features.

D'Arms and Jacobson's argument, rendered a bit more formally, seems to be this:

- 1_{DJ} For an object, *x*, to be prideworthy is for *x* to be worthy of pride.
- 2_{DJ} For an object, *x*, to be worthy of pride is for *x* to be a fitting target of pride.
- 3_{DJ} Each instance of pride is partly constituted by exactly one thought, and this thought is of the form _____ is *splendid and shiny*, where the blank is to be filled in by the target of that instance of pride.³⁶
- 4_{DJ} For an object, *x*, to be a fitting target of pride is for *x* to be such as to render *x*-targeting instances of the thought that partly constitutes pride true.

Thus,

the ballpark of culpability for wrongdoing *before* setting out to argue for its inequivalence with being a fitting target of blame. It is this presupposition that I am saying Coleman and Sarch seem not to offer reasons for.

35 D'Arms and Jacobson, "The Motivational Theory of Guilt (and Its Implications for Responsibility)," 12.

36 D'Arms and Jacobson's toy example of pride's cognitive content is _____ is *splendid and mine*. (They borrow the example from Foot, "Hume on Moral Judgment.") I have replaced that content with _____ is *splendid and shiny*, since this latter content does not involve us in any complications having to do with indexical contents, as the former does.

C1_{DJ} For an object, x , to be a fitting target of pride is for x to be splendid and shiny. (from 3_{DJ} and 4_{DJ})

Thus,

C2_{DJ} For an object, x , to be prideworthy is for x to be splendid and shiny. (from 1_{DJ}, 2_{DJ}, and C1_{DJ})

Let me state three assumptions. First, D'Arms and Jacobson employ the "to be F is to be G " locution, whereas I employ the "for x to be F is for x to be G " locution. I assume this is fine, exegetically speaking. Second, D'Arms and Jacobson need for the argument's locution of choice to impose a kind of transitivity, otherwise the argument has no hope of being valid. I assume this holds of my locution of choice. More specifically, I assume that if it is true that for x to be F is for x to be G , and it is also true that for x to be G is for x to be H , then it is also true that for x to be F is for x to be H . Third and finally, I assume that each statement of the form "for x to be F is for x to be G " that we will be considering in this paper is equivalent to a corresponding statement of the form "the property F -ness is or is reducible to the property G -ness."

Premise 1_{DJ} is a truism. Premise 2_{DJ} is not a truism, but it is a corollary of the popular view that worthiness (of the relevant sort) just is fittingness. In any case, it is not something I wish to question here. Premise 3_{DJ} is an instance of *cognitivism about pride*: the view that pride is partly constituted by a thought with a certain distinctive content. Premise 4_{DJ} is an instance of the *alethic conception of fittingness*: the view that what it is for instances of certain types of (psychological) response to be fitting is for their constitutive thought to be true.

On any natural way of filling in the details, C2_{DJ} conflicts with my core thesis, since prideworthiness clearly lacks faithful relation-response structure if prideworthiness is or is reducible to being splendid and shiny.³⁷ But that is not the worst of it. Premises 1_{DJ}–4_{DJ} collectively amount to a theory of prideworthiness, and analogous theories can and have been offered for other putative relation-response properties. Indeed, packages of views like these are popular.³⁸ Thus,

37 I regard as unnatural the way of filling in the details according to which prideworthiness has multiple distinct types of structure *fundamentally*. Still, I would be happy to read my core thesis as ruling out this sort of story and so would be happy to say that C1_{DJ} and C2_{DJ} conflict with my core thesis no matter how naturally or unnaturally you fill in the details.

38 For a nice sampling of recent theories of blameworthiness that endorse analogous packages of theses, see the discussion in Clarke and Rawling, "True Blame," 3–4. Of course, such an approach to theorizing certain putative relation-response properties cannot straightforwardly be adopted for *all* such properties since in many cases the type of response at issue, not being psychological in kind, will not sensibly be susceptible of a cognitivist construal. But the approach is quite popular for such properties when the type of response at issue is, e.g., a reactive attitude, and it may naturally be thought to apply in the case of putative relation-response properties involving certain other nonreactive attitudes like, say, believability.

if D'Arms and Jacobson's argument is sound, my core thesis conflicts with a popular approach to theorizing a greater number of putative relation-response properties than just prideworthiness.

The trouble for this formulation of D'Arms and Jacobson's argument is that it is invalid: premises 3_{DJ} and 4_{DJ} do not entail $C1_{DJ}$, and $C2_{DJ}$ does not follow without $C1_{DJ}$. Premises 1_{DJ} – 4_{DJ} do entail that for x to be a fitting target of pride—and thus for x to be prideworthy—is for x to be such as to render x -targeting instances of pride's constitutive thought true. In other words, premises 1_{DJ} – 4_{DJ} do yield the result that prideworthiness is or is reducible to being such as to render appropriate instances of pride's constitutive thought true. But this claim neither is nor entails the claim that prideworthiness is or is reducible to being splendid and shiny.

One natural way of repairing the argument would be the following. First, suppose something rather natural for a cognitivist about pride to suppose, namely, that pride is necessarily partly constituted by its distinctive thought (and necessarily is not partly constituted by any other thought); let this be premise 3^*_{DJ} ; then suppose *intensionalism about property individuation*—the thesis that any two necessarily coextensive properties are identical; and let this be premise 5_{DJ} . It now follows, given what has been said, that prideworthiness is identical to being splendid and shiny, since it now follows that necessarily and for all x , x is prideworthy if and only if x is splendid and shiny.³⁹

The trouble for this way of repairing the argument is that intensionalism is implausible as an account of property individuation. In fact, our very own case supplies us with good reason to reject it. That is because it is extremely plausible that on the picture laid out, facts about prideworthiness are always grounded in corresponding facts about what is splendid and shiny, whereas facts about what is splendid and shiny are of course not thus grounded, since grounding is irreflexive. On the pictures of fact and property individuation that I prefer, this alone would suffice to show that the property of being prideworthy and the property of being splendid and shiny are distinct. On more fine-grained conceptions—à la Rosen's—we need to say more: in particular, we need to say that facts about prideworthiness are only ever *partly* grounded in corresponding facts about what is splendid and shiny.⁴⁰ But that, I submit, is eminently

39 Strictly speaking, this follows only if we can validly infer from “necessarily and for all x , x is prideworthy if and only if x is splendid and shiny” to “prideworthiness and being splendid and shiny are necessarily coextensive.” I shall assume we can.

40 Suppose that to be a bachelor is to be an unmarried male. In that case, Rosen would say that for any bachelor, S , the fact [S is a bachelor] is wholly grounded in [S is an unmarried male] (“Metaphysical Dependence,” 122–26, and “Real Definition,” 199–200). Remarkably, he would also say that under such a supposition, the property of being a bachelor is identical to the property of being an unmarried male (“Metaphysical Dependence,” 125n14,

plausible given the conception of prideworthiness that we are supposing. On that conception, what it is for x to be prideworthy is for x to be such as to render x -targeting instances of pride's constitutive thought true. But this makes prideworthiness a higher-order property, i.e., the property of having some other property. Specifically, it is the property of having that property, whatever it is, the possession of which by any x renders x -targeting instances of pride's constitutive thought true. Thus prideworthiness is not just a higher-order property but a *generalized* higher-order property: it is not the property of having some particular property specified *de re*, such as redness or sharpness, but is rather the property of having *that property, whatever it is*, the possession of which by any x renders x -targeting instances of pride's constitutive thought true. But this means that facts about prideworthiness must be grounded *both* in a corresponding fact about something's being splendid and shiny *and* in the fact that pride's constitutive thought is that its target is splendid and shiny. The complete grounds of prideworthiness must always include this latter, "bridging" fact.

Thus the toy theory of prideworthiness encapsulated by premises 1_{DJ} – 4_{DJ} —i.e., the theory that combines (i) the identification of worthiness (of the relevant sort) with fittingness, (ii) an instance of cognitivism about pride, and (iii) the alethic conception of fittingness—itself tells against intensionalism about property individuation precisely because it commits one to an apparent ground-ordering between necessarily coextensive properties that plausibly entails their distinctness. Thus anybody who accepts that toy theory of prideworthiness ought to reject our amended version of D'Arms and Jacobson's argument. And the commitments of that theory that imply the counterexample to intensionalism are not distinctive to it: analogous theories—of blameworthiness, of trustworthiness, etc.—imply analogous counterexamples. I therefore conclude that D'Arms and Jacobson's argument fails to establish that this popular approach to theorizing putative relation-response properties commits one to theorizing such properties unfaithfully.

D'Arms and Jacobson are not the only ones to argue for this result, however. Let us turn now to consider the following passage from Shoemaker:

and "Real Definition," 202–5, 190n2). This is because for Rosen, the property of being F = the property of being G if it lies in the nature of F -ness that whatever is F or G is F wholly in virtue of being G , and this latter condition, according to Rosen, holds if and only if to be F is to be G . Importantly, Rosen thinks that if we do not have whole grounding here, then we do not have this property identity ("Real Definition," 207n24). In the case of prideworthiness presently conceived, it seems to lie in its nature that anything that is prideworthy or splendid and shiny is prideworthy in virtue of being splendid and shiny. Thus Rosen's account would yield the result that the property of being prideworthy *just is* the property of being splendid and shiny *if* we were here dealing with *whole* grounding. But as I argue in the main text, we are not. And if not, then we are dealing with distinct properties here.

Resentment is almost universally taken to be what D'Arms and Jacobson call a "cognitively sharpened" emotion, namely, anger plus a judgment, e.g., that the to-be-resented agent culpably wronged you. . . . But if that is the correct characterization of our paradigm responsibility emotion, then the game has been given away to the response-independent theorist, for resentment *presupposes* the responsibility of the resented agent. If you deliberately step on my foot, and my resentment includes the judgment that you culpably wronged me, then what makes my response apt is just that that constitutive judgment is *true*, and your judgment will be rendered true *by your antecedent responsible blameworthiness*, as that is just what a judgment of culpable wrongdoing amounts to. Cognitive theories of blame beg the question in favor of response-independence.⁴¹

The argument presented in this passage is certainly enthymematic, and I confess I am not entirely certain how best to fill in its details. Upon first encountering this passage, it seemed to me that Shoemaker was arguing along more or less the same lines as D'Arms and Jacobson, albeit in the case of blameworthiness rather than prideworthiness. If that were right, then what I had to say about D'Arms and Jacobson's argument should apply just as well to Shoemaker's.

But there is another way to read the passage according to which it presents something distinct.⁴² On that reading, a more perspicuously rendered formulation of Shoemaker's argument might go roughly as follows:

- 1_s For an object, *x*, to be a fitting target of blame is for *x* to be such as to render *x*-targeting instances of the thought that partly constitutes blame true.
- 2_s Each instance of blame is partly constituted by exactly one thought, and this thought is of the form _____ *culpably wronged*, where the blank is to be filled in by the target of that instance of blame.⁴³
- 3_s If 1_s and 2_s, then whenever any object, *x*, is a fitting target of blame, [*x* is a fitting target of blame] is (at least partly) grounded in [*x* culpably wronged].⁴⁴

41 Shoemaker, "Response-Dependent Responsibility," 314.

42 I thank an anonymous referee for encouraging roughly this reading of Shoemaker, which upon reflection seems to me superior to the reading I initially had.

43 As with the example that D'Arms and Jacobson borrowed from Foot above, Shoemaker's example of blame's thought content, namely, _____ *culpably wronged me*, is partly indexical. As before, I opt to simplify my presentation of the argument by removing the indexical element, leaving _____ *culpably wronged*.

44 Of course, the antecedent of this premise, "If 1_s and 2_s" is strictly speaking ungrammatical (as is that of premise 5_s), given that "1_s" and "2_s" are names of premises and not themselves

- 4_s For an object, x , to culpably wrong is (at least in part) for x to be blameworthy.
- 5_s If 4_s and for some object, x , [x is a fitting target of blame] is (at least partly) grounded in [x culpably wronged], then [x is a fitting target of blame] is (at least partly) grounded in [x is blameworthy].
- 6_s If for some object, x , [x is a fitting target of blame] is (at least partly) grounded in [x is blameworthy], then blameworthiness is distinct from *being a fitting target of blame*.
- 7_s If blameworthiness is distinct from *being a fitting target of blame*, then blameworthiness is response independent.
- But,
- 8_s Some object, x , is a fitting target of blame.
- Thus,
- C1_s For some object, x , [x is a fitting target of blame] is (at least partly) grounded in [x culpably wronged]. (from 1_s, 2_s, 3_s, and 8_s)
- Thus,
- C2_s For some object, x , [x is a fitting target of blame] is (at least partly) grounded in [x is blameworthy]. (from 4_s, 5_s, and C1_s)
- Thus,
- C3_s Blameworthiness is distinct from *being a fitting target of blame*. (from 6_s and C2_s)
- Thus,
- C4_s Blameworthiness is response independent. (from 7_s and C3_s)

I wish briefly to note and justify three small ways my formulation departs from Shoemaker's. First, my formulation is framed in terms of blame, whereas Shoemaker's is framed in terms of resentment. This is a mere simplification, and a harmless one at that.⁴⁵ Second, Shoemaker's formulation speaks of aptness,

sentences. This is a mere infelicity of presentation, for I here intend "If 1_s and 2_s" as shorthand for the unwieldy phrase that would result by replacing "1_s" and "2_s," as they appear in it, with the sentences that state the premises themselves.

45 In the sentences preceding this passage, Shoemaker indicates that rather than considering how things stand if we adopt a cognitivist approach to theorizing blame and an alethic approach to theorizing blame's fittingness, he focuses on resentment out of the convictions that there are many different blaming response types, and resentment is commonly regarded as a paradigmatic such type ("Response-Dependent Responsibility," 313–14). With this we may happily agree, and we could—if we wished—replicate our discussion of Shoemaker's argument for any such type. But this would be tedious, and what is more, our already complex rendering of Shoemaker's argument would become even more complex were we to focus on resentment, for then we would need in turn to speak not of blameworthiness *simpliciter* but of what we might call "resentment blameworthiness." While I regard this degree of presentational rigor as generally desirable and for that reason do

whereas mine speaks of fittingness. But my decision here is informed by Shoemaker's own tendency to treat these things as the same in relevant contexts. Third, Shoemaker speaks not of resentment's constitutive thought but of its constitutive judgment. This difference will not matter.

Let us consider the argument's premises. Premises 1_s and 2_s are familiar: they are respectively just a blame-centric instance of the alethic conception of fittingness and an instance of cognitivism about blame. Premise 3_s is a consequence of the plausible thought, on display in my foregoing criticism of D'Arms and Jacobson's argument, that for any true thought, t , that p , the fact [t is true] will be (at least partly) grounded in [p]. Premise 4_s is something I take Shoemaker to be committed to by way of what he commits to when he says that "a judgment of culpable wrongdoing *amounts to*" a judgment of "antecedent responsible blameworthiness."⁴⁶ Shoemaker's wording here is a bit particular, but the thought seems to be that for x to culpably wrong is (at least in part) for x to be blameworthy.

Premise 5_s looks plausible given the worldly conception of facts we are working with. The idea behind it is that if for some x to culpably wrong is (at least partly) for x to be blameworthy, then if [x culpably wrongs] (at least partly) grounds [x is a fitting target of blame], so too presumably would [x is blameworthy]. Recalling my preferred, slightly more coarse-grained conception of facts and properties, this alone would suffice to show that blameworthiness is distinct from being a fitting target of blame, as premise 6_s says. As noted above, more must be said if we embrace Rosen's more fine-grained conception of fact and property individuation. But I do not wish to challenge premise 6_s and so am content to work with it rather than with a version that more studiously establishes that the grounding of [x is a fitting target of blame] by [x is blameworthy]—as Shoemaker here conceives of it—meets Rosen's criteria for implying that blameworthiness and being a fitting target of blame are distinct.

I am least confident in attributing premise 7_s to Shoemaker, yet something like 7_s seems to be needed in order to proceed, as Shoemaker appears to, from the implicit result that blameworthiness is distinct from (because prior to) being a fitting target of blame to the claim that blameworthiness is response independent. After all, to derive that blameworthiness is distinct from being a fitting target of blame is not *yet* to derive that blameworthiness cannot be identified with or reduced to some other genuine relation-response property. Presumably, Shoemaker is thinking that being a fitting target of blame is the best or only candidate for a faithful analysis of blameworthiness, and so if it

adopt it in my discussion of Shoemaker's and D'Arms and Jacobson's own views in section 4, the formalization of Shoemaker's argument that we are presently considering is already complex enough without this additional complication. Hence the simplification.

46 Shoemaker, "Response-Dependent Responsibility," 314 (emphasis added).

cannot work, no other genuine relation-response property deserves the role. Premise 8_s, on the other hand, is clear and needs no defense in this context.

The argument is valid, and on the plausible assumption that if a property is response independent, it lacks genuine relation-response structure, C_{4s} implies that blameworthiness lacks genuine relation-response structure.⁴⁷ This argument is evidently distinct from D'Arms and Jacobson's, and if Shoemaker is correct about its upshot—namely, that “cognitive theories of blame beg the question in favor of response-independence”—it purports to deliver the result that if we embrace the popular approach to theorizing blameworthiness, which embeds the combination of cognitivism about blame plus an alethic conception of blame's fittingness, we must theorize blameworthiness unfaithfully.

Fortunately, if the foregoing argument is indeed Shoemaker's, then I think his judgment about its upshot is mistaken: the combination of an alethic conception of blame's fittingness (namely, 1_s) plus the particular version of cognitivism about blame that Shoemaker focuses on (namely, 2_s) does *not* require us to say that blameworthiness is distinct from being a fitting target of blame—not these premises by themselves, anyhow. And not even by themselves together with the relatively uncontroversial premises 3_s, 5_s, and 8_s; nor by all of these together with the perhaps more controversial premises 6_s and 7_s. Our formulation of the argument makes this much clear, for according to it, the conclusion that blameworthiness is distinct from being a fitting target of blame (namely, C_{3s}) relies crucially on C_{2s}—namely, that [*x* is a fitting target of blame] is (at least partly) grounded in [*x* is blameworthy]—which in turn relies crucially on 4_s, namely, that for an object, *x*, to culpably wrong is in part for *x* to be blameworthy. But 4_s is an independent premise, not delivered by any other of premises 1_s–8_s.

Still, it may be that proponents of the rest of premises 1_s–8_s *ought* to embrace 4_s. Shoemaker himself embraces 4_s or something like it insofar as he wishes to analyze culpability in terms of blameworthiness—a project he regards as part of the broader project of giving a Response-Dependence theory of responsibility.⁴⁸ I myself am partial to this project, provided we understand it in the way I propose to understand Response-Dependence theories of properties generally

47 In section 4, I reveal that I take this assumption to be an analytic truth, given what is generally meant by “response independent.”

48 Of course, as exemplified by the Response-Independence view that Shoemaker here considers, merely analyzing a putative relation-response property (in this case, culpability) in terms of another putative relation-response property (in this case, blameworthiness) will not suffice for giving a faithful theory of the former, since the view at hand proceeds to say that the analysis here is itself to be understood as a response-independent property. To embrace a faithful theory of a putative relation-response property, *F*-ness, one cannot simply affirm an analysis of that property in terms of another, nearby-seeming putative relation-response property; rather, one must also say that faithful relation-response structure

in sections 4 and 5, and so myself am attracted to something like premise 4_s. The point I have made thus far is not that 4_s is false but merely that proponents of cognitivism about blame plus an alethic conception of blame's fittingness are not, apparently *contra* Shoemaker, committed *as such* to 4_s or to anything like it.

But what might 4_s-sympathizers like myself say in the face of Shoemaker's argument? Must we embrace Shoemaker's conclusion that cognitivism about blame, an alethic conception of blame's fittingness, 4_s, and the rest together imply that blameworthiness is distinct from being a fitting target of blame? No, for we might instead simply reject the specific version of cognitivism that Shoemaker here apparently assumes is mandatory for cognitivists about blame, namely, premise 2_s. That version of cognitivism commits one to the idea that culpability figures in the content of blame's constitutive thought. But cognitivists about blame who are partial to something like 4_s can reject this. Indeed, they *should* reject this if they wish also to say that blameworthiness is or is reducible to being a fitting target of blame.⁴⁹ More specifically, such theorists should not say that blame's constitutive thought involves anything like that its target is blameworthy

is *ineliminable* from the original property's *final* analysis. I discuss how faithfulness relates to Response-Independence and Response-Dependence views further in sections 4 and 5.

49 Rosen makes the same point when he writes:

Why not just say that in addition to the thought that *A* was wrong and that *X* showed ill will in doing it, resentment of *X* for *A* involves the thought that *A* was *X*'s fault, or that *X* has no excuse, or (what amounts to the same thing in this context), *X* is blameworthy for *A*?... This account would be disastrous for the Alethic View given its explanatory ambitions. The fundamental premise of the view is that when *X* is blameworthy for *A*, that is because the thoughts implicit in resentment are true of *X* and *A*. But if one of the thoughts implicit in resentment is just the thought that *X* is blameworthy for *A* (or some close equivalent), this would yield what amounts to an explanatory circle, according to which *X* is blameworthy for *A* because it's true that *X* is blameworthy for *A*. Of course this is not literally a circle—*p* because *p*—but it's just as bad. Just as *p* cannot explain *p*, it's true that *p* cannot explain *p*. Rather the order of explanation runs the other way: when a proposition *p* is true, *p* is true *in virtue of the fact that p*. (It's true that snow is white *because snow is white*.) Any account of the content of resentment according to which resentment involves thoughts about blameworthiness thus leads to absurdity when combined with the Alethic View. ("The Alethic Conception of Moral Responsibility," 80–81)

It is noteworthy that Rosen and Shoemaker differ in their understandings of what would follow from the conjunction of cognitivism about blame plus the alethic conception of blame's fittingness were blame's constitutive thought to predicate blameworthiness of its target. By Shoemaker's lights (as I have interpreted him), it would follow that blameworthiness is distinct from being a fitting target of blame and is therefore response independent. But Rosen does not go this way. Instead, Rosen holds fast to the claim that to be blameworthy is to be a fitting target of blame and, for that reason, is led to interpret the view at hand as committed to the claim that [*x* is blameworthy] is (at least partly) grounded in [It is true that *x* is blameworthy], which (as I discuss in note 50 below) Rosen finds problematic.

(or that its target is F , where to be F is at least in part to be blameworthy); for were they to do this, they would be led—by the reasoning on display in the arguments for C_{1s} and C_{2s} above—to say that for some x , [x is blameworthy] (at least partly) grounds [x is a fitting target of blame]. Were they also to hold that blameworthiness is or is reducible to being a fitting target of blame, they would then be forced to say that [x is blameworthy] (at least partly) grounds itself. In other words, such theorists would be caught in a circle of grounding, which is bad.

It is for effectively this reason that Rosen—himself a Response-Dependence theorist of blameworthiness who advances a cognitivist, alethic conception of blame and blameworthiness—opts not to imbue blame’s constitutive thought’s content with anything having to do with responsibility.⁵⁰ There are of course different options for doing this. Rosen’s own account holds that blame’s constitutive thought content is of the form _____ *deserves to suffer for doing A*. Alternatively, one might attempt to repurpose something in the ballpark of Shoemaker’s example of a Response-Independence-theoretic conception of blameworthiness, cited earlier in section 2—namely, *having knowingly and voluntarily acted badly from ill will while in control, appropriate historical conditions obtaining*—and say that while this property is not itself identical to blameworthiness or that to which blameworthiness reduces, it is the condition that blame’s constitutive thought presents its target as satisfying.

To be clear, I mention these alternative accounts of blame’s constitutive thought’s content not to affirm or defend either but simply to show that embracing the trio of cognitivism about blame, the alethic conception of blame’s fittingness, and premise 4_s —namely, that to be responsible is (at least partly) to be blameworthy—does not force one to embrace a Response-Independence theory of blameworthiness. This result would follow only given a *particular version* of cognitivism of blame—namely, one that imbues its constitutive thought with blameworthiness-involving content—which those who embrace this trio of theses can, should, and (in the case of Rosen, at least) sometimes do reject. In other words, the popular approach to theorizing blameworthiness that we

50 I say “effectively for this reason,” for as may be seen in the passage cited in note 49 above, Rosen stops short of accusing the version of this view, which he therein considers of being circular, claiming instead that while that view is not literally committed to a circle, what it is committed to is just as bad, namely, that for some x , [x is blameworthy] is (at least partly) grounded in [It is true that x is blameworthy]. I am not certain why Rosen forgoes completing the circle, as it were, by observing that [It is true that x is blameworthy] would itself need to be grounded in [x is blameworthy], given the principle—which he himself accepts in the passage above—that facts of the form [It is true that p] are generally grounded in corresponding facts of the form [p]. In any case, I do think this principle—or at least a relevant analogue of it that holds for the truth of thoughts—is extremely natural, and so I do think the view in question implies circular grounding given extremely natural ground-theoretic assumptions.

have been considering does not by itself require one to analyze blameworthiness unfaithfully, *contra* Shoemaker.

Let us recap the results of this section. We considered two arguments for thinking that a popular approach to theorizing certain putative relation-response properties—namely, an approach that combines cognitivism about the property’s response constituent with an alethic conception of the fittingness of responses of that type—requires one to theorize such properties unfaithfully. I argued that neither argument works as advertised. More specifically, I argued that D’Arms and Jacobson’s argument is invalid as it stands and that a natural way of repairing it is not viable. I then argued that Shoemaker’s argument does not in fact show that cognitivism about blame, together with an alethic conception of blame’s fittingness, implies an unfaithful analysis of blameworthiness. Rather, this result follows only given a substantial additional premise (namely, 4_s), as well as a particular version of cognitivism about blame that cognitivists about blame can, should, and (in some cases) do reject.

4. RESPONSE INDEPENDENCE AND RESPONSE DEPENDENCE

In this penultimate section, I turn to the role that faithfulness plays in recent debates over Response-Independence (henceforth, “RI”) and Response-Dependence (henceforth, “RD”) theories of value properties. In particular, I draw upon our ground-theoretic framework from section 1 to argue that recent ways of drawing the distinction between RI and RD theories of such properties render that distinction partly merely verbal and otherwise unhelpfully arbitrary. Afterward, in section 5, I argue that embracing faithful analyses of putative relation-response properties does not require us to say the controversial things that self-proclaimed RD theorists of such properties typically say. In other words, faithful analyses of these properties come much more cheaply than has been suggested.

I begin in section 4.1 by depicting the grounding structure that I regard as obtaining whenever there obtains a fact involving the instantiation of at least a great many relation-response properties. Then, after a necessary terminological interlude in section 4.2, I show in section 4.3 that the self-proclaimed RD theorists we have been discussing—Shoemaker and D’Arms and Jacobson—accept that this same grounding structure obtains across a number of such kinds of cases. Then, in section 4.4, I show that RI theorists *also* accept this same grounding structure across these cases. In section 4.5, I draw my conclusions from the work done—namely, that the RI theorists under discussion differ from their RD-theoretic counterparts merely over which items in that grounding structure they denote by way of which expressions, and over which items they permit to occupy the QS-III position in the common grounding structure—and

I attempt to reveal what our results have shown about where the heart of the RI/RD debate really lies.

4.1. Common Ground(ing Structure)

In section 1, I observed that many putative relation-response properties seem never to be possessed fundamentally but rather are always possessed *in virtue of* the possession of other properties: no one is ever brutally blameworthy, for instance; rather, they are blameworthy in virtue of, e.g., having lied, stolen, murdered, etc. I further suppose that facts of the form $[A \text{ grounds } B]$ are themselves always grounded.

Thus, insofar as I say we ought to endorse only faithful analyses for putative relation-response properties, I am committed to supposing that for any such property, F -ness, a true theory of F -ness will situate F -ness facts in ground-theoretic explanatory structures as in figure 4:

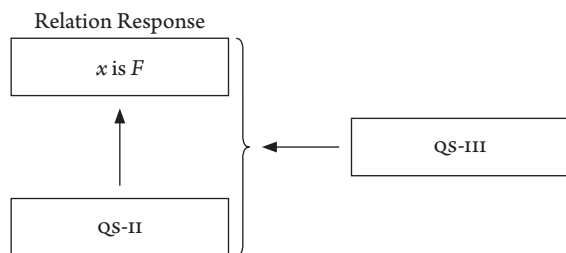


FIGURE 4

Read out, this graphic says: (i) facts of the form $[x \text{ is } F]$ are relation-response facts—i.e., facts involving a thing being F , where F -ness is a genuine relation-response property; (ii) facts of the form $[x \text{ is } F]$ are each grounded in some further fact or facts; and (iii) the grounding of each fact of the form $[x \text{ is } F]$ in such further fact or facts is itself grounded in some further fact or facts.

Presumptuously, I call this the “Common Grounding Structure,” since I will shortly argue that, as they are defined by certain theorists, both RI and RD theories of putative relation-response properties share commitment to instantiations of their respective properties standing in grounding relations that together instantiate the Common Grounding Structure. But first, a necessary terminological interlude.

4.2. A Necessary Terminological Interlude

Where F -ness is “a value,” D’Arms and Jacobson stipulate that *sentimentalism about F-ness* is the thesis that F -ness is response dependent, where a value is response dependent just insofar as it “cannot adequately be explained without

appeal to the emotions.”⁵¹ For example, a response-dependent conception of funniness “identifies [it] with what causes or, more plausibly, what merits amusement.”⁵²

Notably, D’Arms and Jacobson restrict the scope of “response” as it appears in their use of “response dependent” to emotional responses alone. This has the potential to make for awkwardness insofar as I have intended and continue to intend for “response” to range over responses of all types, whether they be emotional, attitudinal, or behavioral. But I assume D’Arms and Jacobson would be happy to countenance a more expansive definition of “response dependent” corresponding to my more expansive sense of “response.”⁵³ Speaking in that more expansive sense, we can say that what it is for a property to be *response dependent* is for it to be *response involving*, i.e., to have a structure that embeds fundamentally some type of response as a constituent. (In turn, we can say that what it is for a property to be *response independent* is for it to have a structure that is not fundamentally response involving.) By our definitions set out in the introduction, it follows that a property’s having genuine relation-response structure suffices for its being response dependent.

The foregoing, I take it, is the standard way of defining these predicates as they apply to properties. What about the labels “RI theory” and “RD theory”? It would seem most natural to say that a theory of *F*-ness is an RI theory of *F*-ness just insofar as that theory says that *F*-ness is response independent, and *mutatis mutandis* for RD theories.

Notably, if we define things this way, it will turn out that I am an RD theorist wherever putative relation-response properties are concerned. That result is fine by me. But it implies—in conjunction with my earlier claim that it is “a straightforward deliverance of English” that we ought to analyze putative relation-response properties faithfully—that I am committed to its being a straightforward deliverance of English that we ought to embrace RD theories

51 D’Arms and Jacobson, “Whither Sentimentalism?” 250.

52 D’Arms and Jacobson’s use of the term “value” suggests that they have in mind value properties, e.g., goodness, badness, blameworthiness, etc. However, they subsequently opt out of construing their preferred version of sentimentalism as a thesis about properties, opting instead to construe it as a thesis about value concepts (D’Arms and Jacobson, “Whither Sentimentalism?” 254). Still, they apply the language of “response-dependence” and “response-independence” to properties as well as concepts, and so their cited remarks are appropriate to the task to which I am putting them.

53 Provided of course that we do not then go on to attempt to say that sentimentalism about *F*-ness is the thesis that *F*-ness is response dependent in our more expansive sense of “response dependent.” That would be bad, as it would imply that one can be a sentimentalist about properties that have nothing to do with sentiments, e.g., punchability or bingeworthiness.

of the properties designated by English predicates like “blameworthy,” “desirable,” “awe-inspiring,” etc. And this certainly sounds rather less anodyne; after all, surely the RI/RD debate over blameworthiness, say, could not be won simply by observing that “blameworthiness,” as a matter of good English, denotes worthiness of blame. Something seems to have gone wrong.

I answer that a number of things have gone wrong: First, as I speculated in section 2, I take it that a number of philosophers of blameworthiness who seem to make RI-theoretic remarks are simply speaking carelessly or loosely, à la Scanlon. Second, as I argued in section 3, I take it that a number of philosophers of blameworthiness have erroneously supposed that a popular approach to theorizing blameworthiness requires you to collapse blameworthiness into its response-independent ground. Finally, as I will shortly illustrate, I take it that a number of philosophers of blameworthiness have misjudged the implications that do and do not follow from the affirmation of a faithful analysis of blameworthiness. In this vein, I hypothesize that rather than reserve the labels “RD theory of *F*-ness” and “RI theory of *F*-ness” for theories that affirm *F*-ness’s response dependence or response independence respectively, such philosophers overextend these labels to cover the theories that result from conjoining each respective affirmation with the implications they take to follow from it. It is no surprise, then, that the RI/RD debate should appear insusceptible of trivial resolution by appeal to word structure, since quite a number of the major theses at issue in that debate are *not* susceptible of such resolution. That such theses are not thus susceptible is a testament to the fact that they do not follow from what is trivial, namely, as I say, that we ought to endorse only faithful analyses of putative relation-response properties.

To make good on these contentious claims, let us return to our main task and consider where self-professed RD theorists stand vis-à-vis the Common Grounding Structure.

4.3. Response-Dependence Theories and the Common Grounding Structure

Shoemaker is a self-proclaimed RD theorist about a certain form of blameworthiness that we may call “angry-blameworthiness.”⁵⁴ In particular, he endorses a “fitting” or “normative” RD theory of angry-blameworthiness, according to which that property *just is* the property of being a fitting target of a certain form of anger. Thus, this form of angry-blameworthiness, for Shoemaker, clearly has faithful relation-response structure. Moreover, Shoemaker holds that angry-blameworthiness, so understood, is always grounded in what he refers to as “objective features,” such as, e.g., “control, knowledge, voluntariness, quality of will, or

54 Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility” and “Response-Dependent Theories of Responsibility.”

history.”⁵⁵ In other words, it is always some combination of response-independent features that *make* persons who have them fitting targets of angry-blame. Finally, Shoemaker says that the “fundamental fitting response-dependent feature of [this] theory is really about what makes certain objective features [like, e.g., those just listed] the *anger fitmakers* in the first place,” which, for him, is that such features “trigger our [refined] anger sensibilities.”⁵⁶

Shoemaker’s RD theory of his target form of angry-blameworthiness thus answers each of the angry-blameworthiness instances of QS-I–III. If we abstract out a bit, we are left with the grounding structure in figure 5:

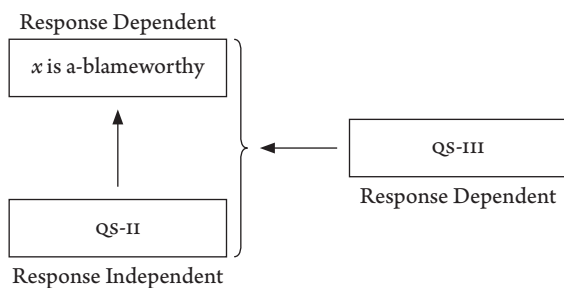


FIGURE 5

This graphic says: (i) facts of the form [*x* is angry-blameworthy] are response dependent (i.e., they are facts involving the instantiation of a response-dependent property); (ii) each such fact is grounded in facts that are response independent (i.e., facts involving the instantiation of a response-independent property); and (iii) the grounding of each fact of the form [*x* is angry-blameworthy] in some such response-independent facts is itself at least partly grounded in some fact or facts concerning a relation (or relations) that the grounds of angry-blameworthiness stand in to the type of response at issue in angry-blameworthiness—a type of response that Shoemaker sometimes calls “*angry-blame*.”

It should be clear that Shoemaker’s fitting-RD theory of angry-blameworthiness construes it as a genuine relation-response property and situates facts involving the instantiation of that property in a series of grounding relations that together instantiate the Common Grounding Structure.

D’Arms and Jacobson’s fitting-RD theories of various putative relation-response properties do the same.⁵⁷ To keep things simple, let us focus on their RD theory of *self-blameworthiness*, which says that to be self-blameworthy just is

55 Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility,” 509.

56 Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility,” 509–11 (bracketed words added).

57 D’Arms and Jacobson, “Whither Sentimentalism?” and “The Motivational Theory of Guilt (and Its Implications for Responsibility).”

to be a fitting target of guilt. D'Arms and Jacobson's story centers on their own special conception of fittingness. They hold that the emotion involved in self-blame is guilt and that this emotion, like other "natural emotions," is susceptible of an "interpretation" according to which it "appraises" its target as—to use their self-professedly "rough" answer as an example—"having engaged either in some sort of *wrongdoing* or in a *personal betrayal*."⁵⁸ Crucially, D'Arms and Jacobson depart from Shoemaker insofar as they warn against reading the properties that figure in such appraisals as being response-independent properties: "Since these emotional appraisals are derived from the emotion holistically, including its motivational element, they must be understood as response dependent—even if their terms have response-independent senses in ordinary language."⁵⁹

D'Arms and Jacobson then propose to understand the fittingness of natural emotions as the correctness of such appraisals. Thus, x is a fitting target of guilt when x is such as to render correct guilt's distinctive appraisal, as yielded by some interpretation. On this picture, then, the properties of having acted wrongly and having engaged in personal betrayal—where, recall, these properties are being conceived as covertly response dependent—are grounds of being self-blameworthy not because they "trigger our refined

58 D'Arms and Jacobson, "The Motivational Theory of Guilt (and Its Implications for Responsibility)," 18, 23. For an admirably condensed sketch of the details of how D'Arms and Jacobson take the appraisals at issue in fittingness to work, see the following:

Begin with an *empirical* characterization of the general emotional syndrome: the cluster of feelings, patterns of attention, typical elicitors and palliators, characteristic thoughts, and especially the motivational role occurring in paradigmatic episodes of the emotion kind. In light of this data, give an *interpretation* into language of how someone in the grip of such an emotion appraises its object as specifically good or bad. Appraisals in this sense are not constitutive thoughts or components of emotion, but ways of understanding how the emotion as a whole evaluates its object. Any gloss into language will be imperfect and can at most help to point in the direction of the distinctive way that the emotion appraises its object. *Since these emotional appraisals are derived from the emotion holistically, including its motivational element, they must be understood as response dependent—even if their terms have response-independent senses in ordinary language...*

An empirical characterization of fear favors the suggestion that it should be interpreted as appraising its object as dangerous, for example; this makes sense of how fear engages with its object—as something to be avoided directly and urgently... *What is distinctive about our approach is how it understands the claim that fear is about danger: not as a response-independent thought one must have in order to count as afraid, but rather as an effort to articulate the distinctive emotional appraisal involved in the combination of feelings, goals, and action tendencies of fear.* (18–19, emphasis at the end of each paragraph added)

59 D'Arms and Jacobson, "The Motivational Theory of Guilt (and Its Implications for Responsibility)," 18.

guilt sensibilities,” to use Shoemaker’s phrase, but rather because: (i) it lies in the nature of guilt that it is interpretable as appraising its targets either as having acted wrongly or as having engaged in personal betrayal; and (ii) what it is for guilt to be fitting is for its interpreted appraisal of its target to be accurate. In other words, D’Arms and Jacobson may be understood as providing what I earlier (in section 1.3) called an “essentialist” answer to the self-blameworthiness-instance of QS-III.

Thus, if we abstract out a bit, D’Arms and Jacobson’s fitting-RD theory of self-blameworthiness situates self-blameworthiness facts in grounding structures of the sort in figure 6:

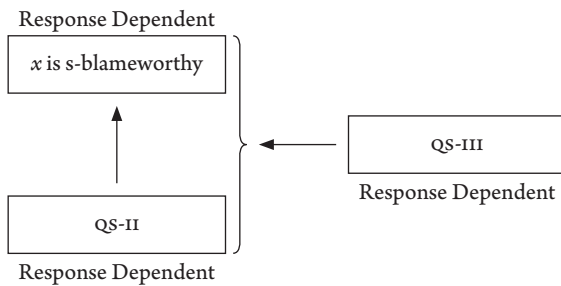


FIGURE 6

This structure differs from that posited by Shoemaker’s fitting-RD theory insofar as it embeds a different constraint on permissible occupants of the QS-II position, namely, that they be response dependent. On the other hand, while D’Arms and Jacobson do not adopt Shoemaker’s style of answer to the self-blameworthiness-instance of QS-III, they agree with Shoemaker that the answer must refer to some fact or facts about relations borne by the occupants of QS-II to the type of relation at issue in the relevant form of blameworthiness. Differences with Shoemaker aside, it should be clear that D’Arms and Jacobson’s fitting-RD theory of self-blameworthiness also construes that property as a genuine relation-response property and situates facts involving the instantiation of that property in a series of grounding relations that together instantiate the Common Grounding Structure.

4.4. Response-Independence Theories and the Common Grounding Structure

What about RI theories of putative relation-response properties, like blameworthiness? How do such theories construe blameworthiness, and where do they situate it in relation to other facts and grounds? To answer this, consider once more what Coleman and Sarch say about blameworthiness, namely, that it is “a *reason* or a *ground* that explains why blaming . . . would be justified,” which they

take to be or to be reducible to some property in the ballpark of culpability for wrongdoing (which, recall, Coleman and Sarch take to be response independent).⁶⁰ In other words, blameworthiness is a response-independent ground of a property, like being a justified target of blame. Thus Coleman and Sarch’s theory of blameworthiness implies that its instantiations occupy grounding structures of the following sort, where “JTB” abbreviates “justified target of blame” (figure 7):

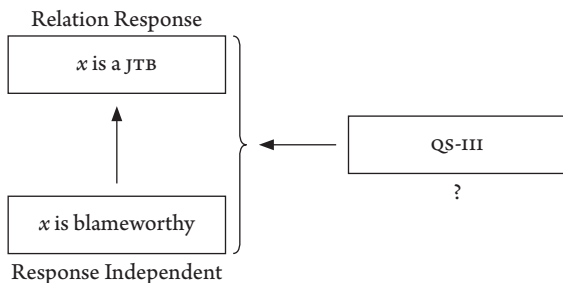


FIGURE 7

This sort of picture largely accords with the schematic definition of RI theories of angry-blameworthiness that Shoemaker offers, namely:

Response-Independence about the Blameworthy: The blameworthy consists in a property (or properties) of agents that makes anger at them appropriate, a property (or properties) whose value-making is ultimately independent of our angry responses. Anger at someone for *X* is appropriate if and only if, *and in virtue of the fact that*, she is antecedently blameworthy (and so accountable) for *X*. What makes her blameworthy is thus ultimately response-independent.⁶¹

This schema is rife with commitments that can be helpfully captured by surveying what it has to say about the angry-blameworthiness-instances of QS-I–III. Starting with QS-I, Shoemaker’s schema tells us that the RI theorist of angry-blameworthiness is bound by definition to saying that what it is for *x* to be angry-blameworthy is for *x* to be *F*, where *x*’s being *F* grounds *x*’s being an appropriate target of anger. This of course is not an answer to the angry-blameworthiness-instance of QS-I but rather a constraint upon possible answers to it.⁶² Shoemaker is clear, however, about what sorts of answers he regards as

60 Coleman and Sarch, “Blameworthiness and Time,” 101, 103.

61 Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility,” 498.

62 Shoemaker does, however, appear to imply that for the RI theorist, at least part of what it is to be blameworthy for something is to be accountable for that thing.

typically offered here, saying that “the response-independent theorist says that the response-independent property of the [angry-]blameworthy (that it was a bad action performed with voluntariness, control, knowledge, and so on) is what makes anger appropriate”⁶³ In other words, angry-blameworthiness is an “objective”—i.e., response-independent—property.

Recall that the angry-blameworthiness-instance of QS-II asks: “What are the conditions under which something is angry-blameworthy?” Shoemaker’s schema does not tell us that the RI theorist of angry-blameworthiness is bound by definition to say anything special here. Instead, it tells us that such theorists are bound by definition to give a specific answer to a different instance of QS-II, namely, “What are the conditions under which something is anger-worthy?” The RI theorist of angry-blameworthiness must say that angry-blameworthiness is an apparently universal ground of anger-worthiness (which, for Shoemaker, is identical to being a fitting target of anger).

Finally, the angry-blameworthiness-instance of QS-III asks, “Why are the conditions of angry-blameworthiness as they are?” It is a bit ambiguous what Shoemaker’s schema requires the RI theorist of angry-blameworthiness to say here. Initially, we are not offered any information on the RI theorist’s response to this question; instead, we are offered information on the RI theorist’s response to a different instance of QS-III, namely, “Why are the conditions of *anger-worthiness* (i.e., being a fitting target of anger) as they are?” The RI theorist of angry-blameworthiness, we were told, identifies angry-blameworthiness with the condition (or conditions) of anger-worthiness, and now we are told that the RI theorists also say that angry-blameworthiness’s status as an anger-worthy-making property is not explicable by reference to its relation to our angry responses. In other words, facts of the form [[*x* is angry-blameworthy] grounds [*x* is anger-worthy]] are never even partly grounded in a fact of the form [Angry-blameworthiness bears *R* to our angry responses] for any relation, *R*. But then, slightly thereafter, Shoemaker concludes the RI schema by saying that “what makes [an agent] [angry-]blameworthy is thus ultimately response-independent.” On the basis of *this* remark, it seems Shoemaker *does* regard the RI theorist of angry-blameworthiness as committed to a constraint on possible answers to the angry-blameworthiness-instance of QS-III, namely, that the answer not appeal to angry-blameworthiness’s bearing some relation to our responses. So RI theories of angry-blameworthiness—according to Shoemaker—appear to place the same “response-independent answers only” constraint on two distinct instances of QS-III: one for angry-blameworthiness and one for what angry-blameworthiness grounds, namely, anger-worthiness (i.e., being a fitting target of anger).

63 Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility,” 509 (bracketed text added).

If the foregoing remarks prove difficult to track, do not worry. The important takeaway is that, by Shoemaker’s lights, the RI theorist of angry-blameworthiness is committed to its instantiations standing in grounding structures of the sort in figure 8:

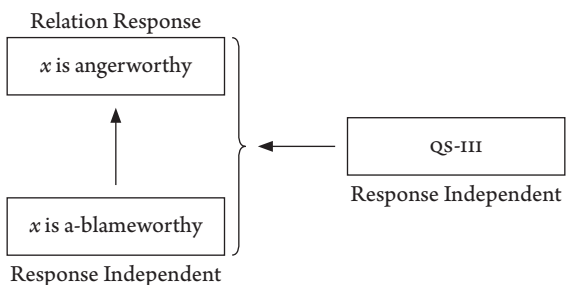


FIGURE 8

This grounding structure is nearly identical to the one we attributed to Coleman and Sarch’s RI theory of blameworthiness. The only difference is that an extra constraint has been placed on possible occupants of the QS-III position, namely, that they be response independent. Still, like Coleman and Sarch’s theory of blameworthiness, as well as Shoemaker’s and D’Arms and Jacobson’s fitting-RD theories of their respective forms of blameworthiness, the RI theorist of angry-blameworthiness, as Shoemaker conceives of them, situates facts involving the instantiation of angry-blameworthiness in a series of grounding relations that together instantiate the Common Grounding Structure.

4.5. Problems Observed

Hopefully you see what I see: Coleman and Sarch and the rest of the RI theorists of blameworthiness as Shoemaker conceives of them do *not* disagree with RD theorists of blameworthiness that certain relation-response properties with a type of blame as the response constituent—e.g., being a justified target of blame or being a fitting target of anger—are grounded in further properties. They do not even disagree with Shoemaker, a prominent RD theorist of blameworthiness, over roughly what sorts of properties do the grounding, here, namely, “objective” or response-independent properties like having acted wrongly from ill will or suchlike. In this area, the only disagreement between these camps is with respect to how we name the nodes in the grounding structure: RI theorists use relation-response expressions like “blameworthiness” to name objective, response-independent grounds, whereas RD theorists use it to name faithful relation-response properties like being a justified target of blame or being a fitting target of anger. This dispute is therefore merely verbal: it has

to do not with worldly facts and their relations but rather with the question of whether or not to respect word structure.

This is not the only difference we have brought out. If we go with Shoemaker, it seems RI theorists also characteristically disagree with RD theorists over possible answers to relevant instances of QS-III: the RI theorist only accepts response-independent answers, whereas the RD theorist demands response-dependent answers.

The first thing to say here is that Shoemaker's claim that there are many RI theorists thus construed seems rather unlikely. That is because it is hard to imagine how one might attempt to ground facts of the form $[[x \text{ is angry-blame-worthy}] \text{ grounds } [x \text{ is a fitting target of anger}]]$ or suchlike without appealing to *any* facts involving relations between angry-blameworthiness and anger. Of course one could say that such grounding facts are ungrounded; that would satisfy the constraint under consideration. But I suspect few would do such a thing. As we noted in section 1, it is much more common to locate the grounds of grounding facts partly in facts about the essences of one or more of the constituents involved in them. (This, for instance, is what Rosen does in answering the blameworthiness instance of the QS-III schema.⁶⁴) Alternatively, one might take the relevant sort of fittingness as a primitive, nonnaturalistic normative relation and endeavor to ground the grounding of fittingness facts partly by appeal to normative bridge-laws. We need not explore this option further except to say that any such approach to grounding our grounding facts would certainly appeal to a relation borne by blameworthiness to anger: relating these items is just what such a bridge-law would be posited to do. Thus the most common approaches to answering the relevant instance(s) of QS-III violate the constraint Shoemaker takes to be constitutive of RI theories. In the absence of alternative approaches that satisfy the response-independence constraint, then, it is hard to imagine who exactly holds the view that Shoemaker thinks is "much more popular."

But—and this is the second thing—even if we grant that there are theorists who eschew response-dependent answers in cases of this sort, why would we ever promote this questionable eschewing to the status of a *defining feature* of being an RI theorist of blameworthiness? To see the problem, consider Coleman and Sarch. They mean to identify blameworthiness with or reduce it to some response-independent property in the ballpark of culpability for wrongdoing. Surely *this* should be the point at which we say that Coleman and Sarch are RI theorists of blameworthiness! But Shoemaker is committed to disagreeing: should Coleman and Sarch happen to proceed to give a response-dependent

64 Rosen, "The Alethic Conception of Moral Responsibility," 73–74.

answer to the justified-target-of-blame-instance of QS-III—a perfectly natural thing to do, given the popularity of essentialist answers to such questions—this, according to Shoemaker’s schema, would somehow render Coleman and Sarch undeserving of the label of “RI theorists of blameworthiness.” This, I take it, is a patently absurd way of carving up the conceptual space: when we say that somebody endorses an RI theory of *F*-ness, surely this should mean only that they are committed to the response independence of *F*-ness.

To sum up, it seems that, as a number of theorists define things, the difference between RI and RD approaches to theorizing certain relation-response properties boils down partly to a mere verbal disagreement and partly to a disagreement over how to answer certain instances of QS-III. The merely verbal disagreement is easily won by the RD theorists, since they respect word structure and their opponents do not. The nonverbal disagreement, on the other hand, seems neither here nor there with respect to the joints that seem most apt to be carved by the labels “RI theory of *F*-ness” and “RD theory of *F*-ness.” We would do better to reserve these labels precisely for theories of *F*-ness that affirm its response independence or dependence respectively. If we do, we find that the RI/RD disputes over putative relation-response properties entirely reduces to the question of whether to respect word structure. That question, I have claimed, is easily answered.

5. CLOSING THOUGHTS: ON THE LIGHTNESS OF FAITHFULNESS

Still, you may have lingering doubts. You may worry in particular that to embrace a faithful analysis of a property like blameworthiness is to do something much bolder than I have been suggesting. After all, look at all of the mileage Shoemaker and D’Arms and Jacobson seem to get out of the claim that blameworthiness, say, is response dependent. Recall that for Shoemaker, the “fundamental fitting response-dependent feature of [the normative or fitting-RD theory of angry-blameworthiness] is really about what makes certain objective features the *anger fitmakers* in the first place,” namely, that such features “trigger our [refined] anger sensibilities.”⁶⁵ And recall that D’Arms and Jacobson’s special brand of response dependence about self-blameworthiness implies the startling claim that the grounds of self-blameworthiness must themselves be covertly response dependent. These are controversial claims. Must the RD theorist, *qua* RD theorist, accept any of them?

No. To be an RD theorist of *F*-ness, I have argued, ought just to be to affirm the response dependence of *F*-ness. In other words, it ought just to be to give

65 Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility,” 509–11.

a response-dependent answer to the *F*-ness instance of QS-I. What you then go on to say about the *F*-ness instances of QS-II and QS-III is your own business. Shoemaker's and D'Arms and Jacobson's respective answers to the blameworthiness instances of QS-III that they each consider are particular to their respective conceptions of fittingness, as is D'Arms and Jacobson's requirement that answers to the blameworthiness-instance of QS-II be covertly response dependent. RD theorists *as such* are not required to conceive of fittingness in these ways and thus are not required to answer questions of these sorts in these ways. In fact, in light of our results from section 3, RD theorists of *F*-ness may choose (in relevant cases) to avail themselves of an alethic conception of fittingness, paired with cognitivism about the type of response involved in *F*-ness, to yield a theory of *F*-ness that offers different answers to the *F*-ness instances of QS-I–III than those offered by D'Arms and Jacobson and Shoemaker, as Rosen does. Or else RD theorists may go in for an entirely different conception of fittingness, yielding entirely different answers to these questions. The point is that there is room to maneuver here, as faithfulness leaves much unsettled. That is a virtue, not a vice: it is part of what makes faithfulness a good starting point for theorizing about relation-response properties.⁶⁶

University of Notre Dame
ssmith62@nd.edu

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