

## RESPONSE-DEPENDENCE OF CONCEPTS IS NOT FOR PROPERTIES

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**R**esponse-dependent properties are among the prime candidates for the paradigm subjective properties. Response-dependence, it is said, is sufficient to make a property ontologically subjective. On the surface, this seems reasonable. After all, what is subjectivity if not dependence on something subjective, such as a subjective response? And surely, something that is response-dependent must be dependent on a response; what else could it mean?

What must be considered in this respect is whether response-dependence is a metaphysical notion or a semantic one. Is the response-dependent property ontologically dependent on a subjective response or is it a subject's conceptualization of the property that depends on the response? This consideration is made difficult, however, by the fact that a significant proportion of the existing literature on response-dependence is apt to induce a confusion regarding the issue. Many authors seem to ignore or neglect the distinction between response-dependent properties and concepts, and some have downright claimed that whether response-dependence is applied to concepts or properties rarely matters (De Clercq 2002) or even that its application to a concept entails its application to the corresponding property (Devitt 2006).

The aim of this paper is to show that response-dependence is not a metaphysically significant notion unless applied directly to properties. Therefore, a distinction between response-dependent concepts and response-dependent properties must be kept clear. While a notion of response-dependent concepts can in some cases be useful, it is quite different from a metaphysically notion of response-dependent properties. Some common accounts of response-dependence are first described, and then it is shown how response-dependence can be applied to concepts without implications for properties. Two arguments for the claim that response-dependence for concepts implies response-dependence for properties are then considered and rejected.

### RESPONSE-DEPENDENT CONCEPTS

While accounts of response-dependence vary, the main idea is that a response-dependent property corresponds to a mental response had by a specific kind of subject under specific conditions. If the idea is that response-dependence is supposed to indicate that the property is mind-dependent or subjective, then the relevant kind of dependence is presumably ontological. In other words, the instantiation of the property is in some way

dependent on the mental response. Is this the case when the concept is response-dependent? A closer look is in order:

According to the legend, the term ‘response-dependence’ was coined by Mark Johnston in a seminar at Princeton University in 1986 (Wright 1992). Johnston’s definition of response-dependence is as follows:

[A] concept is response-dependent just in case it is either a response-dispositional concept or a truth-functional or quantificational combination of concepts with at least one non-redundant element being a response-dispositional concept. (Johnston 1993, p. 104)

In short, a response-dispositional concept is a concept of a disposition to produce a mental response in a certain subject or group of subjects under some specified conditions. For example, ‘nauseating’ would be such a concept, assuming it is a concept of the disposition to invoke nausea in a suitably positioned subject. Other response-dispositional concepts include, according to Johnston, color concepts and other perceptual or sensory concepts, concepts of pain and other emotions or experiences, and concepts of funniness and other evaluative concepts.

But even though Johnston defines response-dependence here as something that holds of concepts, his account is not really one of concepts that depend on responses. He does not seem to think of the existence of the concept as dependent in some way on the occurrence of the response, nor does he think of a subject’s possession or use of the concept as dependent on the response. What makes response-dispositional concepts special on Johnston’s account are the properties of which they are concepts; those properties are dispositions to produce a subjective response. And in fact, by 1998 Johnston has changed his terminology so that he now speaks of response-dependent properties instead of concepts (Johnston 1998). What does seem dependent on subjective responses on

Johnston’s account is the property to which the concept refers.

If Johnston’s account were the sole and final word on response-dependence, the term ‘response-dependent concept’ might simply be viewed as short for ‘concept of response-dependent property.’ In that case, a distinction between response-dependent concepts and response-dependent properties would merely be one of terminology. But a terminological distinction is not the only one to be made here. It seems possible to give an account of response-dependence for concepts that does not apply to properties, and such accounts have indeed been given.

If the term ‘response-dependent concept’ is taken at face value, it seems implied that the concept itself is somehow dependent on a response. As mentioned above, an example of such a concept could be the concept ‘nauseating’ being dependent on the mental response of nausea. But what kind of dependence is involved? Does the existence of the concept depend on the response having occurred for some subject? Is it a subject’s possession of the concept that requires personal experience of nausea?

First, assume that personal experience of the response is not necessary for possession of the associated response. Someone who is lucky enough never to have felt nauseated can still know that there is a certain kind of sensation that people have just before throwing up and to which they refer as nausea and which can be induced by certain things. While those who have never felt nauseated may have an incomplete *conception* of nausea, they can still possess a *concept* of it. Those who *have* felt nauseated could then be the experts defining the concept and the others form their incomplete conceptions on the basis of that. Presumably, the concept would not exist if it were not for those who have felt nauseated having that response. This is what makes the concept response-dependent. If nobody had

ever felt nauseated, it is unlikely that anyone would possess the concept 'nauseating.'

Some might reject this version and claim that personal experience of the response is necessary for possession of the concept. According to such a version, those who have never felt nauseated may possess a concept of nausea and nauseating things, but they cannot possess the same concept as those who have felt nauseated. There are two (or even more) concepts of nauseating in play and it is only the kind that requires experience of the response for possession that is response-dependent.

Note that neither version of response-dependent concepts as just described is coextensive with concepts of dispositions to produce mental responses. Take the concept 'bewitching.' Presumably, nobody has ever really been bewitched, yet people seem to have a fairly clear idea of what it would mean for something to have the property of being bewitching. Similarly, it seems possible to have a concept of a disposition to produce an after-death experience or a concept of the disposition to induce nirvana in a suitably receptive subject. Presumably, none of these responses have ever occurred (at least not in a subject who has been in a position to spread the word after the event) so having concepts of them can in no way be dependent on the occurrence of the responses. This means that these concepts are not response-dependent in either of the senses outlined above even though they are concepts of dispositions to produce mental responses. Hence, there are at least two fairly obvious ways in which a concept can be response-dependent that are not accounted for by Johnston.

An account of response-dependent concepts similar to what was just described has been given by Philip Pettit (1991, 1998) and Frank Jackson (Jackson and Pettit 2002). Pettit characterizes response-dependence in terms of what he calls response-privileging concepts:

It is a priori knowable that if something is red then it will look red in normal circumstances to normal observers, so ignorance is ruled out in that situation. And it is a priori knowable that if something looks red in normal circumstances to normal observers then it is red, so error is equally ruled out in that situation. (Pettit 1991, p. 597)

Here the "looking red"-response is privileged in the sense that it is guaranteed to be involved in the concept. A concept that is not that of looking red in the appropriate circumstances must be a concept of something other than redness because the referent of the concept is by definition the property of redness. In other words, people have this particular response they associate with things looking red and stipulate the property of redness as whatever property it is that prompts this response. The response characterizes the concept; not the property. Pettit emphasizes that the properties represented by response-dependent concepts do not have to be subjective. He claims that response-dependence is consistent with objectivism, which he describes in this way: "The objects posited exist and have their character fixed independently of the dispositions of participants in the discourse to assert and believe things about them" (Pettit 1991, p. 590). When a concept is response-privileging it means that a response had by a suitable subject under the specified conditions is guaranteed to be appropriate. By definition, the subject's response is a correct representation. However, that does not entail that the subject's response is what makes it so that the object in question has the property in question.

Hence, when Pettit writes "if something is red then it will look red in normal circumstances to normal observers," it should not be taken to mean that it is looking red that makes it so that an object has the property of being red. What it means is that if an object that has this property is viewed by normal observers in normal circumstances, it will look

red to them. The idea is that it is stipulated that whatever property it is that causes things to look red to normal observers in normal circumstances is the one that gets called redness. It is possible that objects could have this property even though things never looked red to any human (because humans did not have color vision, for instance). What is dependent on the subjective response on this account is the conceptualization of this property but not its instantiation in an object. Here is an analogous example:

Suppose Lydia has a bellyache and assumes it is caused by the cabbage she ate. Then she can say: "I hereby declare that whatever it is that causes my bellyache this time is *bacheness*." In other words, it is a priori knowable that an item of food is *bache* if it contains whatever it is that is causing Lydia's bellyache. Now suppose that the reason for Lydia's bellyache is that the cabbage she ate was contaminated with *Escherichia coli*. So unbeknownst to Lydia, being *bache* is the same thing as being contaminated with *E. coli*. Of course Lydia's bellyache is not what makes the cabbage contaminated by *E. coli* nor is her bellyache then responsible for the cabbage's *bacheness*. Lydia's concept of *bacheness* is dependent on her response to the cabbage (the bellyache) but the property of the cabbage represented by her concept of *bacheness* is not dependent on her response.

In the paper "Response-Dependence Without Tears," which Pettit wrote in cooperation with Frank Jackson, response-dependence is defined as follows:

[A] response-dependent term or concept is one whose ordinary possession-conditions or mastery-conditions involve the disposition to respond in a certain way to the corresponding referent (cf. Peacocke 1992). That is why there is an a priori connection between 'T's applying rightly to something in our linguistic community and that thing's being apt to produce the T-response in us under conditions that count for

independent reasons as favourable. (Jackson and Pettit 2002, p. 102)

Jackson and Pettit's description seems consistent with Pettit's earlier accounts of response-dependence. In addition, it suggests the stricter version of the two possible ways of taking the term 'response-dependent concept' at face value outlined above: In order for someone to possess the concept, she must learn it through having this particular response. Jackson and Pettit, as well as Pettit alone in his writings, emphasize that a property represented by a response-dependent concept can just as well be objective as subjective. The idea is that it is the mastery of the concept that is dependent on the subjective response. The instantiation of the property in an object may or may not be dependent on something like a subjective response, but that is not a matter of the response-dependence of the concept.<sup>1</sup>

As was argued above, a concept can be response-privileged in Pettit's sense without it implying one thing or another about the represented property. It could be that the represented property is dependent on some mental response, but it could also be that it is not. The same is true if a response-dependent concept is considered one that cannot be possessed without experience of the response. Lydia might insist that a subject cannot possess the concept of *bacheness* without having personal experience of bellyaches. Nothing follows from that about what kind of property *bacheness* is and it does not make being infected with *E. coli* a subjective property.

The point, here, is that for a concept to be dependent on a subjective response is not the same thing as for a property to be dependent on a subjective response. A property is response-dependent if its instantiation is dependent on a subjective response; for instance if what makes a joke amusing is that a subject finds it amusing. This is not entailed

by the accounts of response-dependence for concepts given by Pettit and Jackson.

### FIRST OBJECTION

It is now time to turn to doubts that have been expressed about what might be called the independence of response-dependence for properties from response-dependence for concepts. Some suggest that it does not matter much whether response-dependence is applied to properties or concepts, such as Rafael De Clercq:

In what follows, I shall refer to response-dependent properties and not to response-dependent concepts, although response-dependence is sometimes considered to be a characteristic of concepts in the first place. . . . At least in some contexts, the difference between the two approaches does not seem to matter, and indeed I think that much of what I have to say here still applies when the necessary substitutions are made. The only context (I can think of) in which the difference does matter is one in which the choice for the ‘response-dependent concept’ idiom is inspired by the belief that all properties are (in the end) primary qualities. (De Clercq 2002, p. 160)

What exactly does De Clercq claim and what does he mean by it? Now, if the definition of response-dependence used is Johnston’s—according to which a response-dependent concept is a concept of a property that is a response-disposition—it seems clear that it hardly matters whether response-dependence is attributed to the concept or the underlying property. If this is what De Clercq means, he seems likely to be right. But as was shown above, there are other definitions of response-dependence that are better suited than Johnston’s to illustrating the difference between response-dependent concepts and properties.

In a footnote, De Clercq clarifies that what he is referring to by “the belief that all properties are primary qualities” is Richard Holton’s account of response-dependent

concepts—an account that seems similar to Pettit’s. According to Holton, there can be a response-dependent concept of redness representing a property that is in fact a reflectance property and can also be described in scientific terms without reference to things looking red (Holton 1991). De Clercq calls this a ‘primary quality’ view of color. What he seems to mean is that a property that can be described purely in scientific terms is a primary quality, whereas a secondary quality is to be described in terms of something like subjective experiences and is grounded in one or more primary qualities. Hence, being contaminated would be a primary quality while bacheness would be secondary, unless a primary quality view of bacheness is adopted, according to which bacheness and being contaminated with *E. coli* are one and the same quality.

If all properties are primary qualities in this sense, it does not seem possible for a property to be response-dependent. On such a view, there is no property that is a disposition to produce a mental reaction, or that in some other way is ontologically dependent on a subjective response. This may suggest that De Clercq is in the quote above merely justifying his application of response-dependence to properties and that he does not really mean to indicate that there is no difference, or no important difference, between response-dependence for concepts and properties. In other words, it seems possible that what De Clercq means to convey is that the only plausible reason for downright rejecting the application of response-dependence to properties is the view that all properties are what he calls primary. However, his wording does suggest that he means something more than this, and that when he speaks of “the difference” he is referring to the question of whether response-dependence is attributed to concepts or to the properties they represent. And if it is not supposed to matter whether it is the concept or property that is called

response-dependent, it seems natural to assume that the response-dependence of one is considered to follow from the response-dependence of the other.

Whether or not the stronger reading of De Clercq represents his actual views, it does represent a view that involves an objection to the claim that distinguishing between response-dependence for concepts and for properties is important. The issue here (again) is how concepts relate to properties. On Holton's view, there can be two (or more) different concepts of a property such as redness; one based in perceptual responses to red things and the other based in a scientific description of spectral reflectance profiles. When De Clercq alludes to this as the view that all properties are primary, he seems to be thinking of the very notion that different concepts can have one and the same property as their referent. Another view (which may or may not be De Clercq's) would be that different concepts picked out different properties. Hence, the concept of a scientifically characterized spectral reflectance profile is bound to represent such a property whereas the concept of redness, based on the responses had when things look red, must represent a corresponding property that is not the same as the spectral reflectance property. Humans have one concept characterized by their subjective "looks-red" response that refers to some kind of "looks-red" property (a phenomenal property, perhaps) and another concept of what it is for something to be a spectral reflectance profile that refers to the spectral reflectance property. On this view, the assumption seems to be that a response-dependent concept is bound to represent a correspondingly response-dependent property so the difference between response-dependence for concepts and for properties is unimportant.

This second view does not have to entail that two different concepts can never represent the same property; only that if the concepts are sufficiently different or if they differ

in some significant way they must represent different properties. It does seem true that if this view of the relation between concepts and properties is assumed, it is unimportant whether one speaks of response-dependence for properties or concepts as one follows from the other. But is it true that the only way to reject this view is to adopt a primary quality view of all properties?

This assumption involves too big a leap. It is possible to think that *some* properties represented by response-dependent concepts are, in fact, primary qualities without thinking that *all* of them are. Someone might, for instance, think that the property represented by the concept 'redness' was identical with a spectral reflectance property while the property represented by the concept 'funniness' had no such basis and could only be characterized in terms of amusement responses. In other words, on such a view, both redness and funniness would be properties represented by response-dependent concepts but only one of them, funniness, would be a response-dependent property. Apparently there is more than one context in which it matters whether response-dependence is applied to concepts or properties.

## SECOND OBJECTION

Another charge that the view that there is a difference between response-dependent concepts and response-dependent properties must meet, and perhaps a more serious one, comes from Michael Devitt. In his paper "Worldmaking Made Hard: Rejecting Global Response Dependency," Devitt argues that if a concept is response-dependent, it is implied that the property for which it stands is response-dependent as well (Devitt 2006). That is, response-dependent concepts are bound to represent properties that are also response-dependent. This is not a result of assuming some particular view of the relation between concepts and properties. Devitt's claim is that it is logically entailed that if a

concept is response-dependent, the property to which it refers is as well.

Devitt's argument is primarily directed at Pettit's account of response-dependence. Devitt argues that a response-dependent concept or term as defined by Pettit can only refer to a property that is response-dependent likewise. Given Pettit's definition of a response-dependent term and the way the reference of a term works, it logically follows that the property to which the term refers is equally response-dependent and Pettit's claim that a response-dependent concept can refer to an objective, response-independent property is then incoherent. Devitt uses the term 'redness' as an example: "Necessarily( $x$ )(REDNESS applies to  $x$  iff for normal humans in normal conditions  $x$  looks red and thus causes REDNESS tokens)" (Devitt 2006, p. 21). To this he applies a principle of reference: "Necessarily( $x$ )(K-ness applies to  $x$  iff  $x$  is K)" (p. 20), simplifies the definition, and gets the following definition of the property redness: "Necessarily( $x$ )( $x$  is red iff  $x$  looks red to normal humans in normal conditions)" (p. 22).

This resulting definition of redness, says Devitt, describes a response-dependent, or subjective property. Presumably, the reason for that claim of Devitt's is to be found in the biconditional: " $x$  is red if and only if  $x$  looks red to normal humans in normal conditions" seems to imply that looking red is what makes it so that  $x$  is red. The property of redness is instantiated in object  $x$  if and only if the mental response corresponding to something's looking red occurs in normal humans in normal conditions. In other words, the instantiation of the property redness is dependent on the occurrence of this particular response in humans.

This seems like a mischaracterization of Pettit's account. The definition as described by Devitt suggests that if an object is to have the property red it is required that the object really does look red to some normal humans

in normal conditions. This is inferred from the assumption that for the term 'redness' to apply to an object, the object must look red to normal humans in normal conditions. However, it is hardly Pettit's view that the term 'redness' can only apply to things that are actually seen. Surely, the definition of the term 'redness' ought to leave the door open for red things that are hidden in the dark or that inhabit remote places never visited by normal humans in normal conditions. In that senses of "looks," things never seen by humans never "look" one way or another to any human, be it a normal or abnormal one.

That is, Devitt seems to read Pettit's "if something is red then it will look red in normal circumstances to normal observers" in a literal way. But if Pettit is understood to mean that if something is red then it has the property that makes things look red in normal circumstances to normal observers, the response-dependent property definition " $x$  is red iff  $x$  looks red to normal humans in normal conditions" does not follow. Devitt's assumption that Pettit is committed to "Necessarily( $x$ )(REDNESS applies to  $x$  iff for normal humans in normal conditions  $x$  looks red and thus causes REDNESS tokens)" should then be replaced with something like "Necessarily( $x$ )(REDNESS applies to  $x$  iff  $x$  has the property that makes things look red to normal humans in normal conditions and thus causes REDNESS tokens if viewed under such conditions)" and the resulting definition of redness is this: Necessarily( $x$ )( $x$  is red iff  $x$  has the property that makes things look red to normal humans in normal conditions). According to this definition, being red is equivalent to having a certain property but not to looking one way or another, and it is by no means obvious that redness is a response-dependent property.

A similar problem with Devitt's characterization of response-dependent accounts of concepts appears in his objection to the claim that response-dependent concepts can refer to

objective properties if they are ‘rigidified.’<sup>2</sup> In short, the idea of rigidified response-dependence is that a term such as ‘redness’ is response-dependent but rigid if its reference is fixed as whatever it is that prompts the redness response of normal humans as they actually are in normal conditions as they actually are. This should mean that if  $x$  is red in the actual world, it is still red in any possible world in which it has the same intrinsic properties as in the actual one, even if the responses of humans and the standard conditions for perception are vastly different.

Devitt’s objection to the rigidified version is centered on what he claims is the rigidified definition of a response-dependent redness: “Necessarily( $x$ )( $x$  is red iff  $x$  looks-red-in-the-actual-world)” (Devitt 2006, p. 21). On this view, it appears that looking-red-in-the-actual-world is an essential property; if  $x$  looks red in the actual world, it has the property of looking-red-in-the-actual-world in all possible worlds. However, redness is not an essential property;  $x$  can be red in one possible world while not in another (pp. 21–22, fn. 31). Hence, Devitt considers the definition incoherent.

This objection of Devitt’s is much in tune with his essentialist view of rigidity (Devitt 2005). Given his view, a property term can only be rigid if it designates an essential property, i.e., a property that is such that an object that has it in one world must have it in all possible worlds in which it exists. Color terms obviously fail to designate essential properties; the roof of Jerry’s house could easily be blue in one world and red in another without being counted as a different object. Thus, it is no wonder that Devitt should find the idea of making a term such as ‘redness’ rigid unacceptable.

However, ‘looks-red-in-the-actual-world’ literally interpreted is hardly the definition of redness that the proponents of rigidified response-dependence have in mind. Furthermore, they might be hesitant to make the

definition of the term a necessary truth; some of them might want to consider it a case of the contingent a priori. However, speculations about consistency or necessity of a priori truths are not needed here, nor is a response to essentialism about rigidity in general. Devitt’s mistake here is, as already mentioned, a misleading characterization of rigidly response-dependent terms, which seems to involve some kind of scope confusion.

The purpose of rigid property terms is very similar to that of rigid designators for individuals, such as proper names. It yields the ability to point to a particular property and say: “this one; this is the one I mean, whatever happens to it.” To define a rigid property term through using it as a predicate of some object seems like an indirect way of going about things. If ‘redness’ is a rigid term, the most direct definition would be something like this: “ $A$  is redness iff  $A$  is the property that makes things look red in the actual world.” This is not equivalent to the definition described by Devitt. An equivalent definition in which ‘red’ is used as a predicate would be this: “ $x$  is red iff  $x$  has the property that makes things look red in the actual world.”

It seems as if Devitt is assuming that the rigidification is meant to apply to the whole sentence “ $x$  is red” rather than just the term ‘red.’ But applying “actually” to a whole sentence is not equivalent to applying it to one of its part in this case. The referent of the term ‘redness’ is meant to be whatever it is that makes it so that something looks red or would look red; not the state of looking red. The problem appears when “actually” is similarly applied to a whole sentence in which the rigid term is used for predication of another subject.

Consider an analogous example concerning an individual term. It can be presumed (at least within the context of a novel) that ‘The Scarlet Pimpernel’ is a rigid designator referring to the actual person hunted by Citizen Chauvelin. That yields the definition “ $A$  is the

Scarlet Pimpernel iff  $A$  is the person hunted by Citizen Chauvelin in the actual world.” Someone recounting the plot of the story might (somewhat sloppily) say, “It so turned out that Marguerite was actually married to the Scarlet Pimpernel.” However, what the storyteller really means is not “ $x$  is married to the Scarlet Pimpernel iff  $x$  is actually married to the person hunted by Citizen Chauvelin.” The scope of “actually” is meant to involve the identity of the person to which Marguerite is married; not Marguerite’s marital status. Marguerite was surprised by the discovery of her husband’s identity; not by a sudden realization that she was married.

If ‘The Scarlet Pimpernel’ is used in a predicate with ‘Marguerite’ as the subject, it becomes clear how misplacing the scope of “actually” creates the same kind of inconsistency as Devitt attributes to the rigidified response-dependent view. Suppose the following definition is derived from the definition of ‘The Scarlet Pimpernel’: “ $x$  is married to the Scarlet Pimpernel iff  $x$  is married to the person hunted by Citizen Chauvelin in the actual world.” If the scope of “in the actual world” is taken to be the whole sentence beginning with “is married to,” there seems to be an essential property involved. It is true of Marguerite in all possible worlds that in the actual world she is married to the person hunted by Citizen Chauvelin. However, it is not true of Marguerite in all possible worlds that she is married to the Scarlet Pimpernel; she could have married someone else or remained single. This is an inconsistency. But of course the scope of “in the actual world” is only meant to be “the person hunted by Citizen Chauvelin” and no real inconsistency is involved.

Now back to the rigidified account of ‘redness’: “ $x$  is red iff  $x$  has the property that

makes things look red in the actual world” seems to make redness an essential property if the scope of “in the actual world” is taken to be “has the property that makes things look red.” But the rigidified account makes far more sense if the scope of “in the actual world” is understood to be “makes things look red.” Consider again the roof of Jerry’s house: It is true of Jerry’s roof in all possible worlds that in the actual world it is red, i.e., that in the actual world it has the property that makes things look red. But it is not true of Jerry’s roof in all possible worlds that it is red, since that would mean that redness were an essential property, which it hardly is. What this means is not that the rigidified account of response-dependent is inconsistent but rather that the definition of “ $x$  is red” is meant to be “ $x$  has the property that in the actual world makes things look red” rather than “in the actual world,  $x$  has the property that makes things look red.”

## CONCLUSION

When response-dependence is applied to concepts, nothing in particular follows about the properties represented by the concepts in question. This does not preclude response-dependent concepts from representing properties that are response-dependent as well, but the response-dependence of the latter must consist in something different; something that applies more directly to the property. When it comes to concepts, response-dependence is a semantic notion: A concept is response-dependent if certain criteria are fulfilled regarding its meaning. The criteria for the response-dependence of properties, on the other hand, concern its instantiation. They are ontological and consist in what is for something to have that property.<sup>3</sup>

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## NOTES

1. Jackson and Pettit endorse global response-dependence, i.e., that all concepts are response-dependent or derived from response-dependent concepts. According to their account, a response-dependent concept or term is what they call semantically basic. It is ostensively introduced via an experience of the response, such as that caused by perception. Terms that are not ostensively introduced, the terms that are not basic, are derived in one way or another from the basic terms. It can vary from one person to another which terms are semantically basic; for instance, the color-blind will obviously not be introduced to color terms by ostension.

The question of whether response-dependence is global or only limited to certain concepts is not significant here. What matters is that response-dependence for concepts can be defined without any implication for the represented properties; not how great a proportion of our concepts is response-dependent.

2. For an example of such an account, see Railton 1998.

3. My deepest thanks go to Emily Esch, Tamar Szabó Gendler, Anne Nester, Christina Van Dyke, and an anonymous referee for comments on earlier drafts of this paper and/or enlightening discussion of ideas preceding it.

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