Response-Dependence

On the Idea of Fittingness

Mathias Helseth

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Supervised by Professor Christel Fricke

Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas
Faculty of Humanities

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

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Mathias Helseth
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IV
Abstract

This thesis deals with the idea of fittingness, in the context of response-dependent accounts of value. I consider three approaches to the problem of determining the fittingness of emotional responses, in order to identify the problem and further challenges related to this problem. Roughly, the challenge seems to be that of accounting for the response-dependent nature of values, as well as the idea that we can have veridical or fitting experiences of objects, actions, or circumstances to which we subsequently ascribe values. I argue that we cannot solve the problem by appeal to a circumscribed set of a particular kind of reasons of fittingness, because values are not associated with uniquely fitting responses. Nor can we dig for stability in our emotional dispositions by an increased awareness of factors that obscure our perspective on certain aspects of our environment. Moreover, I argue that we cannot specify a class of relevant subjects on the bases of rationality or statistical normality. This is because I contend that the dispositions of the affected subject bear on the fittingness of their responses. In light of this consideration, I argue that perspectival perception does not serve as a good model for response-dependent value. In addition, I argue that harmfulness should not be modelled on colour because the objectivity of colour is derived from fixing on the experiences of relevant subjects. Moreover, the variables that determine our experiences of colour are, in large part, ‘external’ to the subject of the experience, while the factors that determine our experiences of harm are, to a significant extent, ‘internal’. Harmfulness seems to be a relational value. Therefore, in line with Deonna, I identify harmfulness with what merits a subject's resistance. And instead of modelling this value on colour, I propose that odour may serve as a better model. Furthermore, I contend that we can identify reasons that determine the fittingness of a given subject's response. These reasons are represented by what I term individual-relative factors, and the non-evaluative facts pertaining to the circumstances that prompt the subject's response. The reasons pertinent to the fittingness of sentimental responses will therefore vary depending on the particular circumstances and the particular affected subject. However, determining the weight of these reasons will be a communicative endeavour. I therefore conclude by identifying the problem concerning fittingness as that of developing strategies to aid such negotiations, and alleviate conflict.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Response-dependent (RD) accounts of value hold that values are in some way dependent on our emotional responses to the objects to which we ascribe value – that values are anthropocentric in nature. RD accounts thus accord with the intuitive idea “that values depend in some way on the existence of beings to whom things matter” (D'Arms & Jacobsen, 2000, 723).

This has led many philosophers (e.g., McDowell, 1985; Joshua Gert, 2010) to use secondary qualities, namely colour, as a model for values in order to elucidate their nature. Locke (1694 [1975]) famously distinguished such qualities from primary qualities, which include, for instance, an object's size or shape. In contrast to primary qualities, secondary qualities cannot be conceived of independently of our responses to them. Our experiences of colour are partly explained by the fact that we are equipped with a human perceptual system capable of perceiving colours. Similarly, on the model of secondary qualities, ‘evaluative properties,’ or ‘evaluative features,’ are only accessible through our responses to the objects to which we ascribe values, as opposed to the qualities of size or shape, which are mind-independent. While primary qualities are applied to objects solely in virtue of the properties of the objects, secondary qualities can only be applied to objects in view of our experiences of them.

If we conceive of values on the model of colours, the nature of values can be understood along realist or constructivist lines. A realistic account of response-dependent value modelled on colour may amount to dispositionalism: that certain features of our environment are disposed to elicit, in normal human beings in standard conditions, a specific kind of response. And that this is akin to how certain aspects of our environment are disposed to elicit an experience of a certain colour in subjects with the capacity for colour-perception, in standard conditions. For instance, that ‘the funny’ is what elicits amusement in normal human beings in standard conditions. The challenge in the evaluative domain is to pick out the right ‘perceiver,’ and the circumstances in which an object is disposed to elicit the correct responses in such a subject, in the face of obvious interpersonal and intrapersonal instability of affect. This will be especially difficult in the moral domain, because our ideas of ‘moral expertise’ will diverge in line with people's underlying moral theories – say, a consequentialist and a deontologist may both see themselves as moral experts. However, there have been attempts to legitimise an appeal to moral expertise (e.g., Sneddon, 2009).
Alternatively, we may conceive of colours not merely as dispositions to induce responses but as categorical properties, and understand ‘evaluative properties’ on such a model (e.g., Philip Pettit, 1991; Joshua Gert, 2010\(^1\)). On this model, a categorical evaluative-or colour-property “would count as response-dependent in the sense that the best way to pick out that property will be by appeal to contingent patterns in characteristic human responses: to the nature of our eyeballs or affective system” (Gert, 2010, 81). If we endorse such an account, we can say that there is a *tracking relation* between our emotions and the ‘evaluative properties’ of objects or circumstances, in the same manner as we can say that there is a tracking relation between our perceptual system and purported ‘colour-properties.’

On the other hand, a constructivist account would hold that we respond to non-evaluative facts of our environment, and that any subsequent evaluation is constructed by our emotional responses. That is, that we respond to non-evaluative physical properties of the world, and we evaluate our environment in line with such information (e.g., Wiggins, 1987; Peter Railton, 1998). On constructivist, RD accounts we may therefore understand the emotions as receiving information from the environment. This information may be modelled on colour (depending on our understanding of the nature of colour), or on other types of perceptual information, such as *affordances* (Deonna, 2006). Moreover, a constructivist understanding of values do not necessarily entail that evaluative judgements amount to expressions of attitudes or subjective approbation/disapprobation. But, in order to avoid this outcome we will have to elucidate the rational aspects of evaluation (Jacobsen & D'Arms, 2000, 722). That is, we will have to explain what makes a response aligned with the non-evaluative facts of our environment in order to secure the idea that evaluative judgements are truth-apt.

In addition, we can distinguish between constructivist views that purport to understand our responses as conceptually prior to the evaluative concepts or properties they explain (e.g., Jacobsen & D'Arms, 2009\(^2\)), and those that hold a ‘no-priority’ view (e.g., McDowell, 1987; Wiggins, 1987). ‘No-priority’ views thus seem committed to a circular explanation of value: our responses are explained by way of the properties they purportedly respond to, and these properties are explained by reference to the responses. However, this does not mean that they are viciously circular, because such explanations may prove to be informative.

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1. It is not entirely clear whether Gert endorses this kind of realism or a dispositional account. But, he nevertheless holds that his account can accommodate such a realist conception of harmfulness.

2. Whether Jacobsen and D'Arms' account is constructivist is, however, something I will question in chapter 2. But their view is intended to be constructivist, as I understand it.
So, one of the advantages of RD theories is that they do not necessarily presuppose the existence of mind-independent evaluative properties. This is an advantage because we seem unable to specify the nature of evaluative properties, due to the fact that the properties of objects, actions, and circumstances to which we may ascribe the same value are disjunctive. And this is especially clear in the moral domain: indeed, what properties do the morally apprehensible acts of theft, murder, adultery, harassment, telling a lie, etc. share? Or, as Jesse Prinz puts it: “What do these things have in common other than the fact that we frown on all of them?” (2007, 48).

Further, response-dependent theories, in virtue of their claim that values are intrinsically linked to people's responses, secure internalism. That is, by claiming that evaluative judgements are inextricably linked to our sentiments, the question of how evaluative judgements can motivate becomes superfluous – it is self-evident that emotional responses may prompt action (e.g., fear may lead to a fight or flight response).

In sum, response-dependent theories of value accommodate the intuition that it does not make sense to speak of value in a world devoid of beings to whom things matter. And, by developing theories that are fundamentally anthropocentric, they do not necessarily involve reference to *sui generis*, non-natural *evaluative* properties. Nor do RD theories necessarily reduce evaluative properties to natural properties, or claim that evaluative facts and properties are somehow ‘out there’ in the world, independently of our minds. And, by linking evaluative judgements to our responses, they provide an explanation for how such judgements can motivate us to act. What the aforementioned anthropocentrism consists in, however, is a subject of debate.

1.1. Fittingness

As David Wiggins (1987), I will use a quote by Bertrand Russell to illustrate a problem that response-dependent theories attempt to tackle:

I cannot see how to refute the arguments for the subjectivity of ethical values, but I find myself incapable of believing that all that is wrong with wanton cruelty is that I don't like it. (*RoE*, 1999, 310-311)

By arguing that values are (in some way) contingent upon our responses, we run the risk of
making evaluative judgements mere expressions of subjective approval/disapproval, or expressions of taste or attitudes. While this would be unproblematic with regard to what colours I find aesthetically pleasing or what flavour of ice-cream I like, it seems highly problematic with regard to moral judgements. The challenge therefore appears to consist in reconciling the subjectivity involved in evaluative judgements with the idea that such judgements are apt for truth.

The central topic of my thesis will therefore be the idea of fittingness. Regardless of their metaethical stance, advocates of RD theories seem to converge in the claim that to judge something valuable in some way is to think it fitting to have a particular emotional response to it (Jacobsen & D'Arms, 2000, 729). In turn, to deem some response fitting is to endorse this response. In order to determine whether evaluative judgements are apt for truth, we therefore have to understand what makes an emotional response fitting to the object that prompts our response, and as the basis of our evaluative judgements.

The resulting question is what a proper endorsement of a response consists in. Some philosophers have argued that this endorsement must be reached in light of the right kind of reasons. This raises the question of what kinds of reasons are pertinent to evaluation (Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2004). These reasons could, for instance, be understood as pertaining to what the subject of the response is warranted in feeling (e.g., Gibbard, 1990), or as a circumscribed set of reasons that are separate from considerations concerning warrant, prudence, or morality (e.g., Jacobsen and D'Arms, 2000).

Alternatively, we may, for instance, conceive of the reasons that pertain to the fittingness of an emotional response as reducible to the non-evaluative facts of the matter. Say, that I am angry with someone is explained by the fact that this person punched me, and that humans of a certain kind, say, prefer not being punched. On such an understanding of fittingness, our responses are seen as natural responses to certain aspects of our environment that elicit particular responses in a particular class of humans, depending on their preferences, desires, attitudes, and so on (e.g., Gert, 2010). However, such an account would, it seems, have to specify the class of persons who are subject to such ‘natural’ responses, as opposed to, say, someone who might have a positive response to being punched.

1.2. Outline

I will look at three suggestions as to what the problem of determining fittingness consists in,
and what a possible solution would look like. As will become apparent, these theories have
quite different understandings of the nature of response-dependent value. From chapter 4
onwards I will focus on attempting to give a preliminary response-dependent account of
relational harmfulness, and the fittingness of responses relative to this value.

In chapter 2, section 2.1, I will elucidate Daniel Jacobsen and Justin D'Arms' understanding of the problem as securing the univocity of our evaluative concepts by
grounding them in what they contend are (nearly) universal sentiments, and as explicating the
right kind of reasons for endorsement of a sentiment. In section 2.2, I will explain their
attempt to distinguish between fundamental evaluative disputes and disputes grounded in
alienated judgements by revealing the underlying sensibilities of the subjects involved. I will
then, in section 2.3, argue that their contention that we can dig for stability in our emotional
responses is unfounded in light of the dynamic nature of our dispositions, and the observation
that the purported obscuring factors influence the generation of our dispositions. Further, in
section 2.4.1, I will contend that we cannot determine the fittingness of emotional responses
by appeal to a class of context-independent reasons for endorsement. Moreover, in section
2.4.2., I suggest that Jacobsen and D'Arms' idea of the right kind of reasons for endorsement
implies that sentimental values are associated with uniquely fitting responses, and that this has
realist implications. Then, in 2.4.3., I argue that their implicit assumption that sentimental
values are associated with uniquely fitting responses is what gives rise to the instability
problem. I conclude that we should not look for a circumscribed set of the right kind of
reasons for endorsement, and that we should not assume that values are associated with
uniquely fitting responses.

In chapter 3, section 3.1, I will look at Julien A. Deonna's suggestion that we should
model emotion on perspectival perception, and his resulting relational account of value. On
his account, fittingness will not be determined by a particular kind of reasons for
endorsement, but rather on the non-evaluative facts that prompt the response and the relevant
facts pertaining to the affected subject. This is thus akin to how the veridicality of our
perceptions of affordances must be assessed in terms of facts pertaining to the subject of the
perception (e.g., her height, strength, etc.) and the external facts of the environment. In section
3.2.1, I will briefly reiterate my objections to Jacobsen and D'Arms' idea of underlying sensibilities, in response to Deonna's suggestion that we can make sense of normal interaction between a subject's emotional system and the environment. In 3.2.2., I will argue that we
cannot deem some emotional systems defective, because the dispositions of the subject, at
least in some cases, seem to bear on the fittingness of their responses, and that this marks a disanalogous aspect of value vis-a-vis perspectival perception. In 3.2.3., I argue that Deonna's account contains the implicit assumption that evaluative features of her environment are correlated with responses that are uniquely fitting to her. I will reject this assumption on the basis of the considerations above: namely, that the idea of normal interaction between a subject's environment and her emotional system seems implausible, and that the dispositions of the subject seem to bear on the fittingness of their responses, at least in some cases.

In chapter 4, section 4.1., I will outline Joshua Gert's multiple-aspect account of colour. In section 4.2., I will explain his account of harm modelled on the multiple-aspect account of colour. In 4.3., I will demarcate the limits of the analogy by elucidating that the variables which determine our experiences of colour are disanalogous to the variables that determine our experiences of harm. In 4.4., I will argue that we cannot identify harms with our experiences of harms, at least not if we want to retain a realist conception of harmfulness, as it seems Gert attempts to do.

In chapter 5, section 5.1., I will appeal to three counter-examples to the claim that we can demarcate a class of relevant subjects along the lines of statistical normality, and argue that normality does not entail normativity. In section 5.2., I will, in line with Peter Railton (1998), argue that we should not model harmfulness on colour, because by fixing on the responses of actual relevant subjects we, again, do not take into account that the dispositions of the affected subject, at least some times, bear on the fittingness of their responses. Instead, I return to Deonna's idea of relational value, as regions of attraction or resistance to the affected subject, and apply it to the case of harm. In 5.3., I attempt to elucidate some of the considerations that may bear on the fittingness of responses relative to harm, in terms of the function of our emotional responses to the environment.

In chapter 6, I will explore the idea of modelling harm on odour. This is because our experiences of odours tell us something about our relation to the external world, as meriting resistance or attraction, as opposed to colours which, in large part, inform us about the external world (i.e., the viewing circumstances and the properties of the perceived objects). I have to stress, however, that this idea is in need of further development. The phenomenology of smell is an extensive field which I have not had sufficient time or space to explore properly.

In 7.1., I will argue, in line with Peter Railton, that we can conceive of the objectivity of harmfulness as independence from our attitudes. That is, that the truth of what is harmful to
me is derived from the nature of myself and the nature of the circumstances that prompt my response. In 7.2., I will examine whether the reasons I cited in 5.3. are vulnerable to any of the objections raised throughout the thesis. I will conclude, in 7.3., by summarising the findings from this thesis, and define the problem of fittingness as a matter of finding strategies for aiding our negotiations concerning fittingness.
2. SENSIBILITIES AND THE RIGHT KIND OF REASONS

2.1. Jacobsen and D'Arms' Framing of the Problem

According to Daniel Jacobsen and Justin D'Arms, the central problem that all response-dependent theories of value must overcome “is to preserve the idea that values are somehow grounded in the sentiments, while at the same time making sense of the rational aspects of evaluation” (2000, 722). So, according to Jacobsen and D'Arms, if we want to construct a response-dependent theory of value that amounts to more than simple subjectivism or simple expressivism – that is, to argue that our evaluative judgements amount to more than mere reports of subjective disapproval or to expressions of attitudes – we will have to elucidate the rational aspects of value-ascriptive.

They contend that there is an underlying agreement among neosentimentalists which they term the “Response Dependency Thesis” (RDT): “to think that X has some evaluative property Φ is to think it appropriate to feel F in response to X” (2000, 729). To deem a particular sentiment appropriate, on their account, is to give that sentiment a rational endorsement; and this endorsement must be reached by considering the right kind of reasons.

Further, Jacobsen and D'Arms argue that one's sentimental responses may run counter to one's underlying sensibilities. In light of this, they draw attention to obscuring factors to elucidate what they term alienated judgements: judgements that are not grounded in a subject's underlying sensibility. These judgements, they contend, do not reflect a subject's fundamental evaluative perspective. Jacobsen and D'Arms are thus attempting to dig for stability in a subject's emotional responses, so as to reveal fundamental evaluative disagreement, in contrast to evaluative disagreements caused by alienated judgements.

I will nevertheless argue that their idea of distinct underlying sensibilities relative to sentimental values does not hold up in view of the dynamic nature of our dispositions, and the observation that distinguishing between the factors that shape, say, one's sense of humour from those that obscure it will, at best, be very difficult. Further, I will argue that even if we could reveal our fundamental evaluative perspectives through our underlying sensibilities, their idea of the right kind of reasons begs the question as to the nature of sentimental value. This is because such an idea presupposes that sentimental values are associated with uniquely
fitting responses. This assumption, in turn, questions the ontological neutrality of their account, because it denotes an understanding of sentimental values as stable features of the objects of a subject's response. Moreover, unless we presuppose that sentimental values are associated with uniquely fitting responses, the instability problem does not necessarily pose a problem for response-dependent theories.

2.1.1. Non-cognitivism

Jacobsen and D'Arms point out that neosentimentalists have blurred the line between cognitivism and non-cognitivism (2000, 730). They argue that all neosentimentalist theories, in light of RDT, are committed to the claim that there are no intrinsic evaluative properties. Rather, response-dependent theories hold that values are anthropocentric in nature. Nevertheless, they point out that “the phenomenology of valuing is such that sentiments purport to be sensitivities to features of the world – that is, to evaluative properties” (2000, 730). In view of this, they agree with McDowell's claim that to accommodate our experience of sentimental responses as corresponding to some external feature(s) amounts to being prepared “to attribute, to at least some possible objects of the responses, properties that would validate the responses” (1985, 119).

They do however draw attention to the fact that talk of evaluative properties is open to interpretation. What Jacobsen and D'Arms are interested in explaining is “the particular species of appropriateness of response that is relevant to property ascription – to whether some X is Φ” (2000, 730-731).

2.1.2. The Right Kind of Reasons

As mentioned above, Jacobsen and D'Arms argue that to think it appropriate to feel F in response to X is to endorse the sentiment F. This endorsement, they argue, will have to be undertaken in terms of the right kind of reasons. This means that in order to examine the truth of the claim that X is Φ we will have to differentiate between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons for feeling a sentiment in response to X, which they contend is the “foundational problem” for all sentimentalist theories of value (2000, 746).

They see the problem above as a symptom of what they term the conflation problem (2000, 729-732): any sentimentalist theory, on their view, is vulnerable to the objection that
“it offers no resources to differentiate (and hence to preclude conflating) moral and prudential reasons for feeling a sentiment – such as that the joke was offensive or that you don’t want to fall from your friend’s graces – from reasons bearing on whether X is Φ” (2000, 732). Hence, they hold that we cannot appeal to the rationality or prudence of a change in sensibility to determine the correctness of the subsequent responses (i.e., to determine whether a particular response is appropriate in terms of the true value of the object to which one responds), nor do they think we can appeal to moral considerations.

The example of being told a joke at a funeral may lend support to their claim that moral reasons are not the right kind of reasons for endorsing a sentiment. In this case, it may not be appropriate to respond with amusement because one might find it morally inappropriate to do so (e.g., someone may be offended, it is a sign of disrespect towards the deceased, etc.). Yet, this does not mean that the joke is not extremely funny. Similarly, one may have prudential reasons for not feeling F in response to X while this prudential reason has no bearing on whether the response is appropriate (2000, 741). They give the example of Dennis, a philosophy student who feels ashamed by his inability to articulate his views properly, but who nevertheless believes that he should not feel this way because it will only exacerbate the problem. But this does not make his inability to articulate his views any less shameful.

In addition to ruling out moral and prudential reasons, Jacobsen and D’Arms contend that the conflation problem shows that we cannot appeal to a notion of warrant (e.g., as proposed by Gibbard, 1990) (2000, 732-738). This is because what is warranted to feel in response to a given set of circumstances is limited by the agent’s access to the relevant information. Therefore, an agent A can be warranted in feeling a certain sentiment F towards X while failing to register that X is Φ. Consequently, A’s response F may be inappropriate. For instance, if I fail to register the hungry lion behind my back, and as a result I do not respond with fear to these circumstances, I am having a warranted yet inappropriate emotional response to the facts of my environment. This is because the absence of fear was warranted in light of the information that was available to me, but inappropriate in light of the actual circumstances: I failed to register that X was in fact Φ. This is why they argue that “[t]alk of truth demands that the deliverances of our new sensibility are more likely to be correct: that this improvement constitutes an increased sensitivity to the Φ” (2000, 734).

2.1.3. Disagreement
D'Arms points out that evaluative disputes are often caused by disagreement over the proper definition and application of an evaluative concept, and that this kind of disagreement cannot be solved by empirical investigation (2005, 11-14). He argues that these phenomena suggest that evaluative concepts are ‘essentially contestable’ (2005, 12). A claim about an evaluative concept's essential contestability, according to D'Arms, does not merely amount to the claim that the concept is too vague to settle disputes about their application. Rather, concepts are essentially contestable if “there is room for dispute over their application without linguistic impropriety, even in cases which one party to the dispute regards as clear or paradigmatic instances” (2005, 12). This kind of disagreement can therefore not be settled by an appeal to the concept's rules of application, nor to the non-evaluative facts of the matter. In turn, if the essential contestability thesis is correct, it seems we cannot secure the notion that we are not talking past each other in (at least some) evaluative disputes.

In view of his contention that the essential contestability thesis is plausible, D'Arms proposes that we may secure univocity in our genuine evaluative disputes – i.e., disputes that do not originate in epistemic failure, or a failure to abide by the rules of the proper application of the relevant evaluative concept – by appeal to “a common sentiment that somehow supplies a shared subject matter for the discussion” (2005, 13). This, he argues, may allow us to disagree substantively over the proper application of an evaluative concept, which would, if sentimentalists are correct, amount to disagreement about “what a thing has to be like in order to be such that one should feel this sentiment toward it” (2005, 13). These debates (about the proper application of evaluative concepts) would, on this view, function as a means of regulating “a particular kind of emotional responses to the world” (2005, 13). D'Arms therefore argues that a sentimentalist theory of value will need to offer an account of our sentiments which shows that, at least in some cases, disputes of the kind above are rooted in the same sentiments in order to secure the univocity of evaluative concepts (2005, 14). Consequently, he rejects the no-priority view of sentimental value (e.g., McDowell, 1987; Wiggins, 1987). That is, the view “that the responses to which sentimentalism appeals cannot be understood as conceptually ‘prior to’ the evaluative concepts or properties these responses are invoked to explain” (2005, 14).

So, D'Arms claims that the essential contestability thesis is plausible. He therefore argues that fixing on the putative evaluative properties of actions, objects, or circumstances will not secure the univocity of evaluative concepts. Rather, D'Arms argue, fixing on our
shared and nearly universal sentiments (a term of art that I will elucidate below) appears to offer a possible avenue of dealing with this problem in light of their (near) universality.

2.2. Towards a Solution

On Jacobsen and D'Arms' account, the right kind of reasons are those that pertain to the relation between my response and the actual circumstances. These reasons bear on whether a given sentimental response \( F \) is appropriate to \( X \), and consequently whether it is appropriate to ascribe the evaluative property \( \Phi \) to \( X \). In turn, to solve the conflation problem, D'Arms and Jacobsen propose that we substitute the term *appropriateness* for *fittingness* in RDT: to think that \( X \) is \( \Phi \) is to think it fitting to feel \( F \) in response to \( X \).

They are “stipulating that to judge \( F \) fitting is to endorse the response in the relevant way, which constitutes taking the circumstances to be genuinely \( \Phi \)” (2000, 746). To deem a response fitting, they argue, “is to give it a specific and limited form of endorsement, which is neither a judgement of rightness, prudence, or warrant, nor an all-in endorsement of the sentiment as what to feel” (2000, 746). Moreover, they claim that in order to make a distinction between the reasons that are relevant to the fittingness of a response from those that are not, we have to analyse how our actual emotions represent features of our environment to us (2000, 746).

It therefore appears that they view our emotions as somehow analogous to perception. This becomes apparent from their claim that “emotions are independent from and yet responsive to reason” (2005, 9). Emotions are independent from reason in the sense that they may come about independently of our considered convictions (like perceptions). Moreover, our emotions may conflict with these convictions, and in these instances they may prompt us to reflect on the validity of the opposing considered conviction (2005, 9). It is our emotions' responsiveness to reason that Jacobsen and D'Arms see as “of the first importance for … sentimentalism” (2005, 10). They thus wish to construct a vocabulary by which we can critically assess our sentiments, in light of their contention that “assessments of fittingness are attempts to make sense of or criticise our emotions using standards that speak to the distinctive concerns we take them to embody” (2005, 11). And the utility of this endeavour obviously rests upon our emotions' responsiveness to reason.

In addition to their counter-examples to relying on prudential or moral reasons for correctly ascribing value, they point out that our prudential reasons for feeling or not feeling an emotion is much less likely to influence our actual emotions than considerations about its
fittingness in relation to the actual circumstances (2005, 11). For instance, I may find it prudent not to be nervous when giving a presentation as this will surely make it more likely that I leave something out, rely too heavily on my notes, and so on. Yet, this consideration will most likely not alleviate my stress. Rather, an assessment of the fittingness of such a response may have the above effect. For instance, I may remind myself that the people in the audience are friends of mine, and that the consequences of giving a bad presentation are not as severe as my emotional response would signify. Moreover, they claim that “the considerations relevant to fittingness have a kind of contextual independence that other considerations about what to feel do not” (2005, 11), which would lend credence to their endeavour to explicate the fittingness of our emotions in value-ascription in light of our experience of value-ascription as property-ascription.

2.2.1. The Function of Evaluative Concepts and their Associated Sentiments

As we have seen, according to Jacobsen and D'Arms, we can disagree about the application of an evaluative concept, like ‘the funny’, but these disagreements concern “a common subject matter, founded in our shared sentiments” (2009, 586). They refer to the sentiments as a term of art, which denotes a class of emotions that are nearly universal among human beings, and they “adopt a broad conception of the emotions, so as to include disparate states, some of which are culturally constructed rather than anthropologically universal” (2009, 586). The sentiments, on their account, include “amusement, anger, contempt, disgust, fear, guilt, pride, and shame” (2009, 586). In turn, sentimental values are those values “whose conceptual connection to independently identifiable sentiments seems especially clear: values such as the funny, shameful, fearsome, disgusting, enviable, pride-worthy, and the befitting of anger” (2009, 587).

These evaluative concepts are therefore response-dependent: they cannot be explained without reference to their requisite sentiment (2009, 587). These are, on their view, regulative concepts “whose primary function is to guide or regulate specific kinds of emotional response by appeal to reasons of a particular sort” (2005, 2). An evaluative concept's function, and its requisite reasons for endorsement of a sentiment should, moreover, be explained in relation to “the enduring human needs and interests to which it answers” (2005, 6).

2.2.2. Underlying Sensibilities and Obscuring Factors
In this section I will outline Jacobsen and D'Arms' idea of underlying sensibilities, and the factors they contend obscure such underlying sensibilities. As will be made apparent, they postulate underlying sensibilities in response to the tension between the instability in our affective responses and the stable features they are supposed denote.

2.2.2.1 The Instability Problem

According to Jacobsen and D'Arms, the interpersonal and intrapersonal instability of our responses to the funny, the shameful, the befitting of anger, and so on, pose a serious problem for response-dependent theories of value (2009, 588-589). This is because “[o]ur concepts of these values [sentimental values] take them to be relatively stable features of the objects to which they are properly attributed” (2009, 588). This threatens Jacobsen and D'Arms' proposal that we ought to fix on the sentiments in order to secure the univocity of evaluative concepts: if our sentimental dispositions are as unstable and inconsistent as our applications of evaluative concepts, then it seems fixing on these sentimental responses will not secure the univocity of evaluative concepts.

In response to this worry, they attempt to reveal fundamental evaluative disputes as disputes between differences in people's sensibilities, “constituting relatively stable and coherent perspectives on these values” (2009, 589). Sensibilities, on their account, “consist in facts about … [a person] (some idiosyncratic, some common to most human beings) that underlie and explain many of his dispositions to specific sentiments – though not all dispositions” (2009, 596). They see this undertaking as necessary in order to make sense of evaluative disputes, which they see as the first step in securing the univocity of evaluative concepts (2009, 589). That is, they argue that positing more or less stable and coherent sensibilities will make sense of internal conflict as the product of alienated judgements. In turn, this will make it possible to distinguish between fundamental evaluative disputes and disputes that are caused by these alienated judgements (2009, 596).

Further, they make a distinction between a person's sensibilities and her reflective verdicts (2009, 595). This is what distinguishes their theory from other sensibility theories. In contrast to McDowell and Wiggins' contention that critical reflection can indefinitely alter our

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3 They use the term reflective verdicts because they hold that evaluative judgements are grounded in affect. That is, they hold that reflective verdicts can operate independently of affect.
sensibilities, Jacobsen and D'Arms contend that the sentiments are “natural psychological kinds common to human nature” and that “variation in comic or esteem sensibility is limited by what kinds of things can elicit these specific responses, the nature of which is not determined by critical reflection” (2009, 595). This means that a person's evaluative sensibilities may, and they argue that they often do, conflict with a person's reflective verdicts.

They nevertheless underscore that their argument concerning sensibilities and obscuring factors is not intended to show that morality is grounded in sensibility, but rather to show that sensibilities underlie our senses of humour, honour, shame, and the like (2009, 597). They thus rightly categorise the moral sense as the most difficult case, and they do not claim to offer a theory of this sense. However, their argument is, as I understand it, a precursor to an argument for a sensibility theory about moral value.

Nevertheless, it seems the instability problem only constitutes a problem if we assume that sentimental values are associated with uniquely fitting responses (i.e., the uniqueness assumption). And this assumption, in turn, denotes a realist understanding of sentimental values. This is because this problem presupposes that our sentimental responses track stable features of the objects that cause such responses. I will return to this issue below (in section 2.3).

2.2.2.2. Obscuring Factors and their Connection to Sentimental Values

Jacobsen and D'Arms use the sense of humour as a model to elucidate their points. As I have mentioned above, they contend that some sentimental responses may run counter to a person's relevant underlying sensibility. For instance, if a joke one initially found extremely funny is repeated too many times one may eventually fail to be amused by it, although it still jibes with one's relevant sensibility (i.e., one's sense of humour). In this case, it appears one's response to the joke is at odds with one's evaluative judgement of it as funny. This tendency (of amusement at a joke to taper off with repetition) is not “itself an expression of the sense of humor (or other sensibilities) but a feature of our dispositions that does not reveal anything about our values” (2009, 597). The tendency to become desensitised as a result of overexposure is something that they contend is common to many sentimental values: “[w]hen we become used to even outrageous behavior, it gradually ceases actually to outrage us” (2009, 597).

Further, they hold that when our dispositions to sentiments such as amusement or
disgust no longer reflect our relevant underlying sensibility as a result of overexposure, then we can say that this overexposure constitutes an obscuring factor as regards a joke's funniness or an object's disgustingness (2009, 597). That is not to say that overexposure (or repetition) always constitutes an obscuring factor even if it does change one's responses, since some objects may reveal their complexity upon further inspection. Moreover, these purported underlying sensibilities are dynamic, they “change over time, especially early in life, and an important factor in their development is exposure and habituation” (2009, 597). And they draw attention to the fact that, despite certain clear cases, there is not always a clear-cut answer to the question of when a sensibility has changed or is contradicted by a response caused by an obscuring factor. This however seems to question the utility of appealing to these underlying sensibilities, since they may not afford us the stability needed to deal with the purported instability problem. Consequently, it may not be helpful in securing the univocity of evaluative concepts – I will return to this below.

Jacobsen and D'Arms, by illuminating a range of obscuring factors, thus attempt to uncover conditions under which a person's relatively stable perspective on a given value is revealed (2009, 599). This, they argue, will help locate genuine differences in evaluative perspectives. They identify one of the least controversial obscuring factors as mood effects (2009, 599). If I am irritable or sad, for instance, I may not respond with amusement to a joke that I would find amusing in the absence of these mood effects. Mood effects are therefore understood as obscuring factors because the sentimental responses they give rise to do not reveal the underlying sensibility (e.g., one's sense of humour).

Moreover, they draw attention to the fact that certain emotions are mutually incompatible. Say, fear may inhibit or override my amusement or pride, and these incompatibilities “are sometimes caused simply by the fact that emotions direct our attention to certain features of objects rather than others” (2009, 600). Furthermore, while some emotions may inhibit or override a fitting sentimental response, some may exaggerate or even cause responses in ways that would obscure rather than reveal a person's underlying sensibility. Emotional contagion may cause one to be amused by a joke that runs counter to one's underlying sensibility; or, similarly, social ingratiation may cause one to have an excessive response of amusement to a joke told by an attractive co-worker – that is, a response which is not attuned to one's underlying sensibility (2009, 600-601). Moreover, antipathy towards the teller of a joke may result in a failure to react with amusement to a joke which actually jibes with one's sense of humour. This is because the feeling of antipathy may
draw one's attention to aspects of the teller that are not relevant to the funniness of the joke, and consequently this feeling of antipathy may cause a sentimental response that runs counter to one's underlying sensibility (2009, 601).

Furthermore, in cases where amusement in response to a joke hinges on the butt of the joke being a fitting target, they still maintain that feelings of antipathy obscures rather than reveals the underlying sensibility (2009, 601). Similarly, jokes delivered at the expense of oneself or people with whom one sympathise may fail to amuse. In these cases – when one's amusement is deflected by one's esteem sensibility (in cases where oneself is the butt of it), or when one's sympathy for someone hinders one's amusement at her expense – the anger, shame, or anxiousness felt “often prevent amusement by creating incompatible psychological states, or merely by directing our attention away from what is funny about the joke” (2009, 603).

What's more, differences in background beliefs may obscure one's underlying sensibilities (2009, 603-604). If I do not believe that the wall a carpenter is attempting to tear down is a supporting wall I will not respond with fear, yet if I had this piece of information I would respond with fear “without changing anything about my fear sensibility” (2009, 604). In addition, my belief concerning a proposition about the butt of a joke (e.g., about the self-righteousness of her character) will influence my level of amusement in response to it, and my consequent evaluation of the joke's funniness (2009, 604-605). However, two people may disagree about the truth of such a proposition while having mutually compatible underlying sensibilities – they may disagree about, say, the self-righteousness of the butt of the joke while no such disagreement exists in their senses of humour. In the same manner, “judgements of difficulty alter our dispositions to pride, despite not issuing from our esteem sensibility” (2009, 605).

The purpose of illuminating these obscuring factors is, again, to reveal fundamental evaluative disagreement as disputes where “the disputants differ specifically in the relevant sensibility” (2009, 606). Evaluative disagreements that are not the result of differences in sensibility will, they argue, be caused by alienated judgements (2009, 607). These judgements constitute “a failure of self-understanding” because they do not reflect the person's underlying sensibility, yet they purport to do just that (2009, 607). These alienated judgements will inevitably mislead others in that they misrepresent one's actual underlying sensibility, and the opaqueness of obscuring factors will lead one to think that the sentimental responses they give rise to actually do reflect one's underlying sensibility (2009, 607).
The evaluative disputes that still stand in the absence of obscuring factors, and when all the relevant empirical facts have been agreed upon, are genuine evaluative disagreements: disagreements between underlying sensibilities. Now, let us say we have two disputants who are engaged in a genuine evaluative disagreement (a disagreement based in conflicting underlying sensibilities). The question still remains as to which of the two sensibilities is more likely to be correct. That is, there is still the question of which of the sensibilities is more sensitive to the sentimental value in question (the $\Phi$). This disagreement, according to Jacobsen and D'Arms, will have to be resolved by an appeal to the right kind of reasons for endorsing a particular sentiment (and its underlying sensibility). These reasons, as we have seen, cannot be moral reasons, prudential reasons, nor reasons of warrant, but rather reasons of fittingness – reasons that speak to “the enduring human needs and interests to which it answers” (2005, 6).

2.3. Underlying Sensibilities

As I have made clear above, I am reluctant to endorse the idea that we can access underlying sensibilities that reveal our fundamental evaluative perspectives on sentimental values. This is because, first, as Jacobsen and D'Arms concede, these purported sensibilities would be dynamic – they would be subject to constant changes. This observation questions the purported stability of these sensibilities, which, in turn, brings into question their status as the basis of our fundamental evaluative perspectives. Second, Jacobsen and D'Arms also concede that the changes in our underlying sensibilities would include the integration of various obscuring factors. For instance, my sense of humour will inevitably be influenced by emotional contagion. This makes it unclear what these obscuring factors are in fact obscuring. Unless we can attribute sentimental responses that run counter to a person's underlying sensibilities to obscuring factors, then the stability (and existence) of these sensibilities are brought into question.

In response to the second point, they would argue that an obscuring factor ceases to be an obscuring factor once it has been integrated into the relevant underlying sensibility. That is, obscuring factors, such as social ingratiation, emotional contagion, and so on, obscure a subject's relevant sensibility up until the point when these obscuring factors are reflected in the underlying sensibility. For instance, I may laugh at my boss' jokes as a result of an interest in ingratiating myself with her. But, over time, I may find myself reliably being genuinely
amused by her jokes.

However, let us say that time goes by again, and I find myself, in some instances, becoming aware of the fact that my sensibility has changed in accordance with my wish to ingratiate myself with my boss – I become aware of the influence this previously obscuring factor has had on my sense of humour. Consequently, in those instances in which I become aware of this fact, I feel no genuine amusement in response to my boss' jokes. It seems that Jacobsen and D'Arms would be committed to the claim that becoming aware of this obscuring factor that has contributed to shaping my relevant underlying sensibility constitutes an obscuring factor in this case. This is because such awareness would obscure my underlying sensibility, as I reliably respond with amusement in the absence of such awareness. However, it here seems open to question whether it is the social ingratiation or my awareness of this obscuring factor that obscures my underlying sensibility. That is, it is not entirely clear whether my present disposition to respond with genuine amusement to my boss' jokes or my previous disposition to the contrary reflect my fundamental evaluative perspective.

Jacobsen and D'Arms may argue that until my awareness of this integrated obscuring factor is itself integrated into my underlying sensibility (i.e., until I stop reliably responding with amusement to my boss' jokes, in the absence of my awareness of the origin of this genuine amusement), this awareness constitutes an obscuring factor. But these considerations indicate that, in many cases, it will be very difficult to distinguish the responses that are attuned to our underlying sensibilities from those that are not. Moreover, it will often be difficult to distinguish the factors that have merely contributed to my underlying sensibility from those that obscure it. One will arguably never be able to completely disregard the attractiveness of the teller of a joke or one's feelings of antipathy towards her in assessing the funniness of said joke; one will always be influenced by the laughter of others, and more generally the opinions of others; there are very few instances where one's mood does not affect one's level of amusement in response to a joke, or one's understanding of what qualifies as shameful behaviour or the befitting of anger, and so on.

The fact that these obscuring factors help shape my dispositions, and the fact that our dispositions are generally subject to constant changes that are prompted by a myriad of factors, renders the notion that we can access underlying sensibilities that reveal our fundamental perspectives on sentimental values dubious. It seems therefore that fixing on our underlying sensibilities does not present a viable step in the process of securing the univocity of our evaluative concepts.
I have indicated that we cannot make sense of the idea of underlying sensibilities correlated with specific sentimental values. And that the purported obscuring factors, in virtue of having a formative influence on our underlying sensibilities, are not a clearly circumscribed set of factors. These deliberations suggest that these underlying sensibilities do not exist, or at least that they may not serve to elucidate our fundamental evaluative perspectives. If this is correct, then it seems that the obscuring factors they cite may bear on a subject's evaluative perspective. That is, if we cannot draw a clear distinction between the factors that obscure my fundamental evaluative perspective and those that shape it, it appears we are left without grounds for disregarding certain factors in order to gain access to our fundamental evaluative perspectives. This, again, indicates that digging for fundamental evaluative perspectives relative to sentimental values may be a futile endeavour.

2.4. The Right Kind of Reasons, Ontological Neutrality, and the Instability Problem

In this section, I will argue that we cannot determine the fittingness of sentimental responses by appeal to context-independent (right kind) of reasons for endorsement. Moreover, the idea that the considerations that bear on assessments of fittingness are context-independent suggests that sentimental values are associated with uniquely fitting responses, regardless of the particular circumstances and the particular affected subject. This, in turn, suggests that Jacobsen and D'Arms are begging the question as to the nature of sentimental values. Further, if we do not endorse the idea that sentimental values are tantamount to stable features of the objects to which we respond, then the instability problem, in itself, does not seem to pose a problem for response-dependent theories of value.

2.4.1. The Right Kind of Reasons

Even if we could gain access to our unobscurred fundamental evaluative perspectives through our underlying and distinct sensibilities relative to sentimental values, there is still the question of how we should alleviate fundamental evaluative disputes. This, Jacobsen and D'Arms argue, will have to be settled by appeal to the right kind of reasons for endorsement.

They aim to provide a vocabulary for criticising and regulating sentimental responses, and they seem to think that such a vocabulary would need to specify context-independent standards for ascribing sentimental values. Their adherence to the context-independence of
sentimental value is evident from their framing of the instability problem, and their contention that “common sense presupposes that [say] funniness belongs to the joke, in that it will be there to be appreciated when the joke is repeated to a new audience” (2009, 587).

However, first, the notion that sentimental values can be ascribed without reference to the context of such ascription rests on an assumption about the nature of sentimental value – say, that an action is befitting of anger regardless of the particular affected subject and the particular circumstances. Jacobsen and D'Arms therefore adhere to the assumption that sentimental values are associated with uniquely fitting sentimental responses. This assumption, as will be made apparent, is what gives rise to the instability problem.

Second, these reasons are, according to Jacobsen and D'Arms, grounded in “the enduring human needs and interests to which [the sentimental value] ... answers” (2005, 6). But it seems our needs and interests diverge significantly between individuals, and that a variety of needs and interests are subject to change. So, the question remains as to what needs and interests of individuals qualify as enduringly human. We all have an interest in being happy, well-fed, and so on. But what, for instance, happiness involves for a particular individual may differ from what it implies in relation to another individual. It therefore seems counterproductive to suppose that a sentimental response will have to be justified by appeal to the right kind of, context-independent, reasons for endorsement. This, again, speaks against the notion that we can associate sentimental values with uniquely fitting responses, regardless of the particular circumstances and the particular affected individuals.

Finally, if the correctness of sentimental responses is determined by context-independent standards for ascribing sentimental values (i.e., the right kind of reasons for endorsing a sentiment), then sentimental values are grounded in our reasons for endorsing these sentiments, as opposed to the sentiments themselves. That is, the idea that we can determine the uniquely fitting sentimental response relative to a sentimental value by considering our reasons for endorsing that sentimental response seems to question the role of our responses in value-ascription. If my sentimental response arises out of a concern for the right kind of reasons for endorsement, then it appears my sentimental response is redundant – all I have to do is consider the right kind of reasons for having a sentimental response, and make a corresponding evaluative judgement regardless of my dispositions and subsequent sentimental responses. Again, effectively, sentimental values will be grounded in the reasons we utilise in determining the uniquely fitting sentimental response associated with a given sentimental value. This indicates that what Jacobsen and D'Arms are offering is not a
response-dependent account of sentimental value.

In sum, Jacobsen and D'Arms' idea of the right kind of reasons presupposes that sentimental values are associated with uniquely fitting responses. Moreover, it is unclear what concerns these reasons are grounded in, because the needs and interests of individuals appear to diverge to a significant extent. Finally, an appeal to the right kind of context-independent reasons appears to make our sentimental responses redundant in value-ascription. In turn, it appears that Jacobsen and D'Arms are not offering a response-dependent theory of value.

2.4.2. Ontological Neutrality

Despite their contention that their view is metaethically neutral (2000, 730), Jacobsen and D'Arms' framing of the problem seems to render this claim dubious. That is, by positing contextually independent evaluative properties they are begging the question as to the nature of value. Despite their interest lying in explaining what makes an emotional response fitting relative to sentimental values, the idea that we can find a uniquely fitting response (relative to a sentimental value) by reference to the right kind of reasons for endorsement has realist implications. That is, they assume that a response-dependent account of fittingness pertains to “what a thing has to be like in order to be such that one should feel this sentiment toward it” (2005, 13). But this assumption circumvents the possibility that the nature of the affected subject has a bearing on the fittingness of their responses – that, say, the needs and interests of an individual may bear on considerations of the fittingness of their responses.

They presuppose, by claiming that we can achieve a greater sensitivity to evaluative properties, that it is only the properties of the object that can validate our responses. Consequently, any solution to the problem of evaluative disagreement will be marred by this assumption.

2.4.3. The Instability Problem

Moreover, it appears that the Instability Problem is a symptom of the assumption above. This is because the obvious instability in our sentimental responses only constitutes a problem if these responses are understood as tracking evaluative properties of the objects to which we respond. That is, unless we assume that sentimental values are stable features of the objects we ascribe such values to, the instability of our affective responses will not, in itself, pose a
problem for response-dependent theories of value. Such instability appears to be inevitable in the face of, among other considerations, the diverging needs and interests of individuals.

2.4.4. Summary

I have argued that Jacobsen and D'Arms' framing of the problem begs the question as to the nature of sentimental values. This is because they presuppose that a given sentimental value is associated with a uniquely fitting response, and that we can ascertain the fittingness of our responses by considering the right kind of context-independent reasons for endorsement. This implies that our emotional responses track stable features of the objects to which we respond, which denotes a realist understanding of sentimental value.

Furthermore, it is unclear what concerns these reasons are grounded in because the needs and interests of individuals will diverge to a significant degree. And the notion that we can ascertain the fittingness of a response by considering the right kind of context-independent reasons appears to question the role of the sentiments in value-ascription. If I can reach the correct evaluative judgement independently of the sentiments, then it seems my sentimental responses are redundant in value-ascription. If this is correct, then Jacobsen and D'Arms do not appear to be offering a response-dependent account of sentimental value. That is, they fail to reconcile the rational aspects of evaluation with the notion that values are somehow grounded in the sentiments.

2.5. Where to Go From Here

The considerations above indicate that in constructing a response-dependent theory of value we should not look for evaluative properties, or the right kind of reasons for endorsing a sentiment. Instead, we may adopt a relational understanding of value. By conceiving of values as relational, we may circumvent the instability problem because such a conception of values does not necessarily contain an assumption that values are stable features of objects. In contrast to the notion that we can find context-independent standards that determine the veridicality of our emotional experiences, the reasons for endorsing a sentiment may vary from one case to another, depending on the circumstances and the affected subject.

In light of this, I will present Deonna's account of emotion modelled on perspectival perception in the following chapter. This account attempts to make sense of our emotions as
tracking aspects of our environment in terms of what merits our attraction or resistance. 

*Evaluative features*, on this account, therefore denote calls for action, in contrast to the idea of stable evaluative properties.
3. MODELLING EMOTION ON PERSPECTIVAL PERCEPTION

In the preceding chapter I argued that Jacobsen and D'Arms' account of sentimental value does not amount to a response-dependent theory of value. This is because their account relies on an idea of the right kind of reasons, reasons that can be ascertained independently of the sentiments – effectively, the sentimental values will not be grounded in the sentiments. This reliance on context-independent reasons, together with their postulation of evaluative properties, indicate that what they are offering is a realist conception of value. Further, the instability problem posed by Jacobsen and D'Arms does not seem to be a problem unless we understand sentimental values as stable feature of our environment. In addition, I argued that an appeal to distinct, underlying sensibilities (i.e., “senses” of, for instance, the funny, the shameful, etc.) may prove futile in view of the dynamic nature of our dispositions. And in light the observation that obscuring factors may not be so easily discernible from the underlying sensibilities they supposedly obscure, which further indicates that we should not look for underlying sensibilities in relation to sentimental values. Moreover, the fact that an obscuring factor may become ‘integrated’ into the relevant underlying sensibility raises the question of what it obscured in the first place.

In this chapter I will elucidate Julien A. Deonna's account of emotions modelled on perspectival perception. Deonna conceives of our emotional experiences to aspects of the world (in the evaluative domain) as calls to act, generally either in the form of attraction or resistance. Consequently, this relational account does not denote a realist interpretation, as in the case of Jacobsen and D'Arms' account of sentimental value. Deonna thus promises to make sense of the notion that values originate in the relation between the subject and the circumstances. And that my evaluative judgement of the circumstances originates in my emotional response to it, not in a generalised set of criteria.

I will however draw attention to an aspect of our emotional interaction with the environment which it seems Deonna has, to a certain extent, overlooked. Namely, that our dispositions bear on the fittingness of our responses – say, whether I have long-standing trauma associated with a given aspect of my environment will bear on the fittingness of my response to that aspect of my environment. Further, as I argued in the preceding chapter, there does not seem to be much merit to the idea of normal interaction between a subject's
emotional system and her environment. And this consideration, in conjunction with the former consideration, renders the idea of a frame of reference for the emotions implausible.

Nevertheless, there is much merit to the idea of our emotional experiences signifying what merits our attraction or resistance. That is, to the idea of ‘evaluative features’ of our environment conceived as calls to act, (generally) either in the form of attraction or resistance. And, as will be made apparent, I will ultimately rely on this idea in constructing a preliminary account of harmfulness in the remaining chapters.

3.1. Perspectival Perception and Emotion

Deonna attempts to model emotion on perception. He does this as a means of elucidating emotion through the more familiar phenomenon of perception (2006, 29). In particular, he argues that emotions track for the subject relational evaluative features of her environment, in the same manner as perspectival perception (which I will elucidate below) tracks for the subject essentially relational facts about her environment (e.g., a branch as graspable, a ditch as jumpable, etc.). This means that Deonna does not endorse a realist conception of value, because values, on his account, exist in virtue of the subject's relation to the circumstances that cause her response.

This project thus promises to make sense of the idea that values are not “out there in the world” independently of human sentiment, but rather that they originate in our relation to the external world. On this account, experiencing aspects of one's environment as valuable is tantamount to experiencing the circumstances as calling for certain kinds of behaviour. And having such an emotional experience is a defeasible reason for making a corresponding evaluative judgement. I will outline Deonna's account of emotion modelled on perception in the following.

3.1.1. Perspectival Facts

Deonna distinguishes between two aspects of perception: a factual dimension, and a perspectival dimension (2006, 32-34). The factual dimension of perception tracks for the subject facts about the world, facts that exist independently of the subject's relation to her environment (e.g., that a tree is a tree, a square is a square, etc.). While the perspectival dimension of perception tracks for the subject essentially perspectival facts that spring from
the subject's relation to her environment.

The most important perspectival facts to keep in mind will be *affordances*: those features of one's environment that are perceived as affording possibilities of action and reaction (e.g., a branch is not only perceived as a branch but as graspable or out of reach). This is because it appears Deonna conceives of evaluative facts on the model of affordances – as *calls to act*. Akin to the way affordances present themselves as possibilities of action and reaction that can be utilised or not, emotional experiences present circumstances as calling for certain actions. These calls may, in turn, be dismissed in view of the defeasible nature of the emotional experience. I may experience an aspect of my environment as dangerous, and therefore be called to avoid this aspect. Yet, this experience may be false, in the sense that I may come to understand that my experience of the circumstances does not align with the facts of the matter (i.e., that I was wrong in thinking that this feature of my environment presented a danger to me, under the present circumstances). Similarly, a branch may be perceived as graspable, but when I attempt to grasp it I may realise that it is not.

The perspectival facts, tracked by the agent's perceptual system, is subcategorised, by Deonna, into species-relative facts and individual-relative facts (2006, 33-34). The perspectival species-relative facts tracked by the human perceptual system are facts about one's environment that present themselves to the subject in a manner particular to the human perceptual system (e.g., secondary qualities, like colour). The perspectival individual-relative facts tracked by one's perceptual system are such properties as affordances, properties that are true in virtue of my situation in time and space and other relevant individual properties of me (e.g., my height, my strength, etc.). Say, the branch in front of me is perceived as graspable because of my situation relative to the branch, the length of my arm, and my height, and these conditions will not be satisfied for every member of my species.

These categories of perspectival perception (i.e., species-relative and individual-relative facts) make up the *frame of reference* that, according to Deonna, makes sense of perspectival facts. A green jumper can be categorised as green in virtue of the perceptual system shared by most members of the human species; and the fact that a branch is graspable rests on the fact that I am situated at a certain distance to the branch, that I have a certain height, and that my arm has a certain length, in conjunction with the fact that I am equipped with a human perceptual system. So, the frame of reference registers the way in which the information derived from our environment through our perceptual system can be expressed: either as information that rests on the fact that the subject is equipped with a human
perceptual system, or as information that rests on the preceding fact in conjunction with the relevant individual properties of the subject.

Again, as in the case of factual perception, appearances of species-relative and individual-relative perspectival facts are defeasible – a branch may present itself to me (through my perceptual system) as graspable, yet when I attempt to grasp it I fail to do so. Consequently, this information will be revised to accommodate the individual-relative perspectival fact that the branch is not graspable. While the defeasibility of information derived from one's perceptual system is irrefutable, this fact does not present a serious objection to the claim that the human perceptual system generally tracks for the agent how the world is, and how the world is to the perceiving agent – that we can, in general, rely on information derived from our perceptual system. The fact that our perceptual system provides us with defeasible general knowledge of the world does not show that perception is a significantly unreliable source of information about the world. Indeed, most of our knowledge about the world is in principle defeasible and its derivation often hinges on our perceptual capacity.

3.1.2. Emotional Input as Tracking Perspectival Facts

Based on the preceding account of perception, Deonna proposes that we model emotion (at least some of the emotions) on perspectival perception (2006, 34-35). This means that emotions, on this model, track for the subject facts constituted by the subject's relation to the object she responds to. In the case of tracking, say, the dangerousness of an object, this evaluative feature will be a relational fact that hinges on the fact that I am a human being, together with individual properties that are true of me and my situation relative to the dangerous object. For instance, if I perceive a lion in close proximity to me and the lion is acting erratically, I will 'sense' the danger the lion poses to me through my emotional response of fear and consequently be called to avoid this potential threat to myself. The information derived through my emotional system in such a case will be defeasible in the same manner as in the case of perspectival perception: The fact that the lion constitutes a

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4 Tracking may be an ill-suited term to use as it denotes a realist understanding of value. It is therefore important to keep in mind that the emotional system, on Deonna's account, track for the subject essentially relational facts, modelled on such perspectival facts as affordances.

5 ‘Evaluative features’ should not be understood as denoting evaluative properties. Rather, these features signify what merits a given subject's resistance or attraction.

6 Fact, again, denotes a realist conception of value. It is nonetheless a fact as a result of the subject's relation to her environment.
threat to me rests on the fact that, in virtue of being a human being, I am vulnerable to a potential attack from the lion (in view of my inferior physical strength, my ‘tender flesh’, etc.). It may also rest on certain individual properties that are only true of me, such as that I have a very limited knowledge of the behaviour of lions (I will therefore be more vulnerable to the dangerous features of the lion than, say, a professional lion tamer) (2006, 36). If, to the contrary, I am situated safely behind a tall fence, effectively protecting me against any potential attack, then we can say that the fear I experience in response to my perceiving the lion should be revised to accommodate the fact that the lion does not pose a threat to me (2006, 36). The relational fact that constitutes the lion's dangerousness to me in the former case is not true in the latter case; my fear in the latter case does not track any potentially dangerous aspect of my environment (in relation to myself), so the information it provides is false relative to the facts of the matter. That the information derived from our emotions is defeasible shows that one's emotional response and one's evaluative judgement can be disjunctive – as in the case of being fearful of a lion behind a tall fence, or, in the case of perception, perceiving an ungraspable branch as graspable.

It should be stressed that ‘evaluative features’ do not denote evaluative features of the object, in the sense that they belong to the objects themselves (as, it appears, the evaluative properties on Jacobsen and D'Arms' account). That is, Deonna does not suppose that the factual dimension of perception has its counterpart in emotion, he instead models emotion on the perspectival dimension of perception. Evaluative information therefore rests upon the frame of reference for emotions (which I will explain below), in the same manner as perspectival facts rest on the frame of reference constituted by the human perceptual system and the relevant individual properties of the subject. From this it should be clear that, on Deonna's account, emotions do not track for us how the world is as in the case of factual perception, but rather how the world is from the perspective of the subject, as in the case of perspectival perception. He therefore provides a relational account of evaluative information, on which the information presented by the emotional system would not exist in the absence of our relation to the environment. And the relational facts derived from this system also, in many cases, rest on the fact that one is a particular individual of the human species, with particular individual properties and a particular situation in time and space.

Deonna suggests the following understanding of evaluative information: “an emotional experience of object $o$ is a case of representing object $o$ as calling for a certain behavior [sic]” (2006, 34). As perspectival perception tracks for the subject essentially
relational facts about her environment, emotions track for the subject evaluative information in the form of relational facts about the subject's environment relative to her, presented to her as calls for certain actions. In the lion case, absent a tall fence, the subject will be called to mitigate the threat that is presented to her through her emotional response to the lion's presence, and this mitigation will, presumably, in most cases take the form of avoidance. So that certain emotional responses to objects in the subject's environment will constitute calls to act, in general terms, either in the form of attraction or resistance. The case of emotionally responding with fear to an erratic lion in close proximity to oneself will fall under the domain of resistance, while the emotional response of pride to a child's achievement will fall under the domain of attraction (e.g., one may be moved to congratulate the child).

It is here important to keep in mind that the calls to act presented by the subject's emotional experience to the circumstances are, on Deonna's account, conceived as grounds for an evaluative judgement of the circumstances (2006, 44-45). That is, the circumstances that call the subject to act in certain ways are the (apparent) cause of her emotional experience, and her emotional experience is a defeasible reason to think that the representation of the circumstances delivered by her emotional experience is correct. Say, experiencing an object as dangerous relative to oneself is a defeasible reason to think that this object is in fact dangerous to oneself under the present circumstances; just as perceiving a branch as graspable is a defeasible reason to think that the branch is graspable.

3.1.3. A Frame of Reference for the Emotions

Deonna makes clear, however, that the viability of the preceding idea is dependent on the viability of a frame of reference for the emotions (2006, 35-38). To conceive of an *emotional system* analogous to the perceptual system, we will have to show that human emotional dispositions – both those that spring from our human nature and those that spring from our individual human nature – can exhibit a sufficient degree of stability. Human emotional dispositions have to exhibit a degree of stability that is comparable to the stability exhibited by the deliverances of perspectival species-relative and individual-relative facts through perspectival perception. In the following I will outline Deonna's account of a frame of reference for the emotions.

We can often make accurate predictions as to what a given individual will feel in a given situation, and, consequently, predictions as to how they will behave. These predictions
seem to be possible in virtue of a frame of reference for the emotions. Such a frame of reference would be made up, as in the case of perspectival perception, both of the fact that we (or most humans) are equipped with the same emotional system in virtue of being human beings, and facts that are true only of the particular affected subject. There are therefore two types of emotional dispositions at play in these predictions: (i) emotional dispositions that we can ascribe to most people, in the absence of contextual intruding factors; and (ii) individual emotional dispositions – that is, emotional dispositions that can only be ascribed to an individual member of the human species.

The latter category can, according to Deonna, be subcategorised into emotional dispositions that arise from an individual's long-standing evaluative tendencies, and emotional dispositions that arise from an individual's character-traits. Long-standing evaluative tendencies will include such dispositions as reliably feeling contempt in response to people exhibiting (perceived) stupidity or clumsiness. But the having of such a long-standing evaluative tendency may not be endorsed by the agent in the form of a corresponding evaluative belief. That is, the agent may espouse a contradictory evaluative belief, such as the belief that clumsiness and stupidity do not merit disdain because these traits are outside of the control of the person exhibiting them. The difference between the two types of individual emotional dispositions is, on Deonna's account, merely that character traits can be exhibited in a wide variety of circumstances, while long-standing evaluative tendencies are exhibited in a more or less clearly circumscribed set of circumstances.

The contextual intruding factors that may hinder an individual's normal interaction with their environment are, as I understand Deonna's account, akin to the obscuring factors on Jacobsen and D'Arms' account. They will include such things as intoxication, lack of sleep, social ingratiation, and so on. For instance, Finn is generally calm and magnanimous, but when he drinks he tends to act aggressively and without concern for other people's well-being. Further, an individual's particular history will often influence her emotional responses to specific circumstances. For example, someone who has grown up in Australia may respond more calmly to the threat of a poisonous spider than someone who has never been exposed to this threat. These considerations show that generalisations about human and individual emotional dispositions will, in many cases, have to be supplemented by a detailed description of the circumstances and of the affected agent, in order to account for the interpersonal and intrapersonal variation in people's emotional responses to the same object. Deonna's claim

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7 I have borrowed this example from Jacobsen & D'Arms (2009)
here seems to be that, absent such contextual intruding factors, humans are equipped with relatively stable emotional dispositions. And these stable dispositions either spring from the fact that they are human beings, or from this fact in conjunction with the fact that they are particular individual human beings.

It is here, again, important to keep in mind that Deonna models the emotional system on the perspectival dimension of the perceptual system. Both systems track *perspectival facts*, facts that exist in virtue of the subject’s relation to her environment. The above deliberations indicate that we may think of emotions as constituting a system. And a frame of reference for the emotions would catalogue different types of calls for action, and the evaluative presentation of the circumstances that go with these calls, with their correlative emotional experience. For example, fear will be catalogued with danger (2006, 37): The emotional experience of fear prompts a fight or flight response, which gives rise to the evaluative judgement that the circumstances the subject is confronted with poses a danger to her – her emotional response of fear is a defeasible reason to think that the circumstances are potentially dangerous to her. Deonna seems therefore to assume that we can catalogue certain aspects of the environment with their uniquely fitting responses (in line with our “true” dispositions, absent any contextual intruding factors).

The emotional system, as conceived by Deonna, thus tracks facts that are analogous to perspectival species-relative facts, and perspectival individual-relative facts. For instance, the fact that a lion behaving erratically in my proximity poses a threat to my person at the time of my having the response of fear (i.e., a perspectival species-relative fact); or, the fact that I will be in grave danger if I got lost in a storm on a mountain, something that may not be true for someone with greater knowledge of how to survive in such situations (i.e., a perspectival individual-relative fact).

The conditions of correctness for the emotions are thus individually determined, as in the case of perspectival perception. Emotional experiences that are misaligned with the particular individual's catalogue of emotional experiences and their correlative evaluative presentations (i.e., their frame of reference for emotions) must, on Deonna's account, be attributable to contextual intruding factors that hinder the normal reactions of the individual. These contextual intruding factors are analogous to *defeaters* in perception, such that an awareness of contextual intruding factors (e.g., fatigue, social ingratiation, long-standing trauma, etc.) will correct the information received by the emotional system. Deonna's conception of a frame of reference for the emotions therefore presupposes that there exists a
normal interaction between one's emotional dispositions and one's environment, one that can be seen as analogous to the normal interaction (absent perceptual defeaters) between the perspectival dimension of the perceptual system and the environment that causes these kinds of perceptions.

Nevertheless, in view of the ever-evolving nature of human emotional dispositions and the prevalence of contextual intruding factors that appear in many varieties, and in a vast array of circumstances, it is unclear what this normality would consist in. I am therefore reluctant to endorse the idea that such a normal interaction between one's individual emotional dispositions and their correlative evaluative presentation exists, for the same reasons as I am reluctant to the idea of positing distinct underlying sensibilities relative to sentimental values (see the preceding chapter on Jacobsen and D'Arms' account of sentimental value). There does not seem to be a significant difference between positing an individual frame of reference constituted by a table that catalogues different kinds of emotional dispositions correlated with evaluative features (i.e., regions of resistance or attraction) of one's environment, and positing distinct underlying sensibilities relative to sentimental values. In both cases, the implicit claim is that we can make sense of the idea that one can access an unobscured emotional perspective on one's environment by eradicating obscuring factors/contextual intruding factors.

3.1.4. Defects of the Emotional System

Deonna also points to a set of emotional mistakes that are not attributable to contextual intruding factors: emotional mistakes that occur as a result of a defective emotional system (2006, 38-40). He illustrates this phenomenon by way of the example of a man who responds with fear whenever he is in a room with a female person. In this case, one can argue that the man in question suffers from a defect in his emotional system, and that this kind of reliable misrepresentation by the subject's emotional system has its counterpart in perception. Deonna analogises this kind of defect with our perceptual system's systematic misrepresentation of the lengths of the lines in the Muller-Lyer illusion. In both cases, it is probable that the agent is aware of the defects, and that he can correct the information provided by his emotional response, or his perception, so that his beliefs become aligned with the facts (i.e., that women are not dangerous in virtue of being female, and that the lines in the Muller-Lyer illusion are actually of equal length) (2006, 39).
But the analogy between pathological fear and the systematic misrepresentation of the lines in the Muller-Lyer illusion cannot in fact illustrate this point. This is because the Muller-Lyer illusion pertains to the factual dimension of perception, while, as we have seen, Deonna attempts to model emotion on the perspectival dimension of perception. We can nevertheless compare the case of pathological fear with a case of reliably misrepresenting a perspectival fact like an affordance, as a result of a defect in the perceptual system: If I have a condition called micropsia, which makes objects appear smaller than they are, I may reliably perceive graspable branches as ungraspable. This potential defect in a subject's perspectival perceptual system is therefore analogous to the example of the man who suffers from gynophobia.

Nevertheless, as I will argue below, this represents a misguided attempt at introducing objectivity to an inherently subjective account of value. If values are conceived of as regions that merit the attraction or resistance of a given subject, we cannot exclude certain experiences by claiming that they originate in defective emotional systems. This is because what merits my resistance will, in some cases, be partly determined by my (sometimes irrational) dispositions.

### 3.2. Stability and Subjectivity

In this section I will briefly reiterate my rejection of the idea of normal interaction between our emotional system and the external environment, which I outlined in the preceding chapter. Then I will argue against Deonna's contention that we can identify defective emotional systems by appeal to their irrationality. This is, as will become apparent, because our dispositions often bear on assessments of what merits our attraction or resistance, that is, a subject's dispositions bear on the fittingness of their requisite responses. Irrational dispositions often give rise to vulnerabilities, and such dispositions can therefore not be disregarded as defective. This, in turn, questions the utility of modelling emotion on perspectival perception. Further, Deonna's account contains the implicit assumption that particular aspects of a subject's environment are associated with uniquely fitting responses. I will reject this assumption on the basis of the preceding considerations.

#### 3.2.1. The Stability of Dispositions

Deonna contends, in line with Jacobsen and D'Arms, that we can make sense of the idea of
stable dispositions – that, absent any contextual intruding factor(s), our emotional dispositions exhibit a high degree of stability. Further, he holds that the viability of modelling emotion on perception is contingent upon the stability of our emotional dispositions. This is because the viability of the idea of a frame of reference for the emotions is contingent upon intrapersonal instability in emotional responses being attributable to the presence of contextual intruding factor(s) (2006, 38).

However, as I argued in the preceding chapter, contextual intruding factors (or obscuring factors) may shape a subject's dispositions, which brings into question what they are intruding on (or obscuring). Our dispositions are dynamic: they change over time and internalise contextual intruding factors along the way. For instance, emotional contagion may shape my sense of humour; long-standing trauma may influence what aspects of my environment elicit fear, and so on. I therefore contend, on the grounds of the arguments from the preceding chapter, that Deonna's attempt to find stability in our dispositions by disregarding contextual intruding factors is ill-founded (just as Jacobsen and D'Arms' contention that we can dig for stability in our sensibilities by disregarding obscuring factors).

### 3.2.2. A Subject's Dispositions Bear on What Merits Her Attraction or Resistance

Further, Deonna's claim that we can determine whether an emotional system is defective rests on a mistaken understanding of the relational nature of values (or of what merits attraction or resistance from the perspective of a given subject). This is because, as Deonna contends, what merits a subject's attraction or resistance will be partly determined by facts pertaining to the particular affected subject. We can exemplify this by reference to harmfulness: the death of a subject's child will be more harmful to her than the death of another person's child; peanuts will be harmful to a subject with a peanut allergy, but not to others; the noise from fireworks may be harmful to a person suffering from PTSD, while innocuous to another person; losing a leg may be more harmful to a football player than to an accountant, and so on. That is, my preferences, desires, etc., as well as my personal relationships, my allergies, phobias, mental illnesses, and many other factors pertaining to my disposition bear on what aspects of my environment merit my resistance, as well as to what degree they merit my resistance. This is because such factors give rise to individual vulnerabilities. Consequently, the dispositions of a subject often bear on the fittingness of their responses.

Let us imagine John who is arachnophobic (i.e., he has a pathological fear of spiders).
John has done everything in his power to remedy his irrational fear, but is incapable of doing so. And let us say his flatmate Ashley is aware of this. But, despite having this knowledge, she throws an innocuous spider in his face for her own amusement. In this case, I contend that Ashley is not justified in doing so merely by the fact that, in view of the circumstances, the spider does not pose a threat to John. Ashley's contention that John's statistically oversensitive response was unjustified, in light of the fact that the circumstances presented no real danger to him, does not have a significant bearing on the fittingness of his response. That is, illuminating the irrationality of his fear will not justify Ashley's action, nor will it delegitimise John's response. Rather, his statistically abnormal (overly sensitive) disposition is partly justified by appeal to his arachnophobia. Furthermore, let us say that these circumstances have debilitating effects for John: the experience causes him to miss a day of work, he becomes increasingly paranoid at the prospect of any further “spider-attacks” – in short, it exacerbates his debilitating fear of spiders to the extent that it affects his life in a significantly negative respect. Ashley's action is thus harmful to John because of the negative effects of the extreme fear he experiences in response to the innocuous spider being thrown in his face.

My point is that we cannot disregard certain emotional experiences on the basis that they are not tracking the right aspects of a subject's environment. This is because what aspects of a subject's environment merit attraction or resistance, and to what degree certain aspects merit a subject's attraction or resistance, is partly determined by the dispositions of the affected subject. While John wishes he could rid himself of his pathological, and thereby irrational, fear, he is incapable of doing so. He recognises that his disposition towards spiders is erroneous in the sense that it does not denote what is physically dangerous to him. But spiders may nevertheless merit his resistance in view of the debilitating effects of his experiences in response to spiders in his proximity. John's disposition to extreme fear in response to spiders therefore constitutes a vulnerability. And this kind of considerations will be particularly relevant in the social sphere, upon deciding what we can and cannot do to each other.

I therefore contend that such factors as a subject's pathological fear or long-standing trauma, and the dispositions they generate, bear on the fittingness of their responses, in contrast to Deonna's claim that they should be regarded as contextual intruding factors (2006, 40). And this further indicates that we cannot reach a stable and ‘true’ disposition by eradicating contextual intruding factors, because some of the factors that obscure a disposition on Deonna's account are relevant to a subject's assessment of what merits her attraction or
Besides, this is akin to how violent horror movies do not merit fear because they do not pose any threat to the viewer, but they may merit the resistance of, say, a child (or another impressionable person). Regardless of the lack of an actual threat, the child's emotional experience of such movies may have a debilitating effect on their development. Moreover, an adult responding with fear to a horror movie would be fitting, although it does not pose any threat to her; even adults are disposed to respond with fear to movies of this kind. These kinds of films play on our disposition to respond with fear to certain aspects of our environment, aspects that would be dangerous if they were not fictional. And, in most cases the fictional nature of these films will influence one's response, unless one is subject to a specific vulnerability to what is depicted in the film (e.g., if one is suffering from PTSD). So, again, whether a horror movie merits my resistance is determined by the effect of the fear it predictably prompts in one, and the extent to which it merits one's resistance will be determined by one's disposition – if such a film will cause me significant distress, to lose sleep, etc., then it does merit my resistance.

So, it appears that considerations as to the rationality of a subject's fear is not enough to determine the fittingness of their response. And this is because their dispositions, in many cases, have a bearing on the fittingness of their requisite responses, in view of the vulnerabilities they give rise to. This is an aspect of our emotional interaction with the environment that goes into assessments of the veridicality of emotional responses which I contend Deonna has overlooked.

That said, we should attempt to remedy pathological and debilitating fears because we all presumably have an interest in limiting our experiences of fear to those instances in which such fear denotes danger in our environment. But, in the absence of an effective cure, such irrational dispositions cannot be disregarded as defective. These experiences have debilitating effects, and the subjects of these experiences are justified in avoiding them. As a branch's graspability may be influenced by physical disabilities (e.g., paralysis, arthritis, parkinson's disease, etc.), what is harmful to someone (i.e., merits their resistance) may be influenced by psychological disabilities (e.g., pathological fears, PTSD, clinical depression, etc.).

So, what merits my resistance is not only determined by my human nature and facts about my physical constitution (as with perspectival species- and individual-relative facts in perception), but also by my dispositions to respond. And my dispositions are influenced by my preferences, desires, etc., as well as many other factors, such as facts about my personal resistance.
relationships, mental illnesses, long-standing trauma, and so on. Consequently, it seems we have located a disanalogy between perspectival perception and emotion. This is because the conditions of correctness of perspectival perception are determined by my situation in time and space, and facts about my physical constitution (such as my height, my strength, etc.). While what is harmful to a subject is partly determined by the same factors, it is also partly determined by the subject's dispositions, and their consequent vulnerabilities. These deliberations therefore question the utility of perspectival perception as a model for our emotional interactions with the environment (in the evaluative domain), since perspectival facts are not influenced by a subject's emotional dispositions (or at least not to a significant degree).

3.2.3. The Uniqueness Assumption

Deonna appears to assume that particular aspects of one's environment are associated with uniquely fitting responses. However, he does not adhere to the assumption that sentimental values are associated with uniquely fitting responses regardless of who figures as the affected subject, in contrast to Jacobsen and D'Arms' account. But he nonetheless appears to hold that certain aspects of a particular subject's environment are correlated with uniquely fitting responses, although such responses will be uniquely fitting with regard to the subject's frame of reference for her emotions. This is evident from his idea of a frame of reference for the emotions as “a table correlating different types of evaluative properties (or calls for actions) with their corresponding emotional experiences” (2006, 37).

I reject this assumption on the basis of the two preceding considerations: (i) it appears that we cannot make sense of the idea of a normal interaction between a subject's emotional system and her environment; and (ii) it appears that a subject's emotional dispositions bear on the fittingness of their emotional responses. Deonna's idea of a frame of reference for the emotions “presupposes that there is such a thing as normal interaction between one's emotional dispositions and the environment, i.e., a tracking relation which parallels the one existing in perception” (2006, 38). The first consideration indicates that such a normal interaction does not exist, and therefore speaks against the idea of a frame of reference for the emotions, and thereby against the notion that we can associate certain aspects of the environment with uniquely fitting responses.

But let us say that we can somehow make sense of the idea that we are “disposed to
react to token stimuli of the same type with the same type of emotional experience”, absent any contextual intruding factor(s) (2006, 37). Even so, the second consideration indicates that we cannot exclude certain experiences because they originate in so-called defective emotional systems. That is, if irrational dispositions, such as John's pathological fear of spiders, influence the fittingness of their responses (to some degree) then we cannot disregard the emotional experiences of those who are subject to such dispositions by claiming that they are defective. If we have no avenue of classifying certain emotional systems as defective, and thereby as irrelevant to assessments of what merits the subject's attraction or resistance, then Deonna would have to contend that statistically disproportionate fear is correlated with spiders in John's frame of reference for his emotions.

Now, let us imagine that, to John's surprise, a pill is invented which effectively remedies his pathological fear of spiders. Would this mean that, in the absence of pathological fear, John's response to spiders is no longer fitting? This is obviously counter-intuitive (and counter-productive) because such a change in his emotional disposition would most likely improve his life, and it would make his disposition more attuned to what is actually dangerous to him.

My contention is therefore, again, that Deonna has failed to appreciate the dynamic nature of our dispositions, and that our emotional dispositions partly determine what merits our resistance or attraction. These considerations render the uniqueness assumption ill-founded, even if it only pertains to the subject's uniquely fitting responses. If my dispositions bear on what merits my resistance or attraction, and my dispositions are subject to change, then correlating different emotional experiences with different aspects of my environment seems futile (other than as a temporary heuristic tool perhaps).

3.2.3. Summary

I have argued that we cannot make sense of the idea of normal interaction between one's emotional system and the environment in light of the dynamic nature of our dispositions, and because factors that amount to contextual intruding factors on Deonna's account (such as long-standing trauma) shape our dispositions to a significant degree. Furthermore, Deonna fails to take into account that our emotional dispositions, even if they are caused by purported contextual intruding factors, partly determine what merits our attraction or resistance. Consequently, it seems we cannot exclude certain emotional systems on the basis of their
These considerations make the idea of a frame of reference for the emotions implausible. And, since the viability of Deonna's account is dependent on the plausibility of such a frame of reference, it seems we should not model emotion on perspectival perception. The implausibility of the idea of a frame of reference, in turn, suggests that we cannot correlate aspects of our environment with uniquely fitting responses. This is because the fittingness of our responses may change along with our dispositions.

### 3.3. Subjectivity

Although Deonna's account overlooks the role of our dispositions in assessing the veridicality of our emotional responses, his understanding of evaluative features as calls to act has merit. Such an account promises to give us the means to explain what makes an emotional response fitting without reference to the elusive category of *the right kind of reasons* for endorsement. That is, we can explain the fittingness of our responses in light of the *function* of our emotional system as notifying us of regions of attraction and resistance in our environment relative to our individual nature.

Nonetheless, in light of my contention that our dispositions influence what merits our attraction or resistance, the resulting account will run the risk of becoming too subjective. That is, we will be left without any means by which we can deem a particular emotional response unfitting, because we have no means by which we can distinguish between those dispositions that bear on the fittingness of a response, and those that do not. After all, a spoiled adult's disposition to statistical oversensitivity in response to criticism is not on par with an arachnophobic person's disposition to being statistically oversensitive to spiders.

Joshua Gert attempts to model a specific value, harmfulness, on the multiple-aspect view of colour. In doing so, he attempts to construct a realistic account of harmfulness. In contrast to Jacobsen and D'Arms' account, however, his account of harmfulness accommodates the idea that our dispositions bear on the fittingness of our responses. This approach may, in light of its realist aspirations, alleviate the present worry concerning oversubjectivity. I will therefore elucidate and review his account in the following chapter.
4. A MULTIPLE-ASPECT ACCOUNT OF HARM

I have argued that Jacobsen and D'Arms' account of sentimental value fails partly because of its reliance on an idea of the right kind of reasons for endorsing a sentiment. In positing these reasons, the role of the sentiments in value-ascript are put into question, and thereby the status of their theory as response-dependent. In addition, the instability problem does not necessarily pose a problem for response-dependent accounts of value, unless we assume that sentimental values are stable features of the objects to which we respond, and that sentimental values are associated with uniquely fitting responses. Furthermore, I have argued that Deonna's contention that there is a sense in which one can have a defective emotional, and that these emotional systems can be dismissed in assessments of what merits a subject's attraction or resistance, overlooks the role of the affected subject's dispositions in value-ascript. Moreover, both accounts appear to rely on the idea that we can make sense of the idea of normal interaction between one's emotional system and the environment. I have rejected this idea in light of the dynamic nature of emotional dispositions, and the plethora of factors that influence them.

In this chapter, I will outline Joshua Gert's multiple-aspect view of harm. This is a Fitting Attitude account, in that he considers fitting responses to give rise to fitting attitudes. Further, the account offered by Gert yields a realist conception of the value of harm, modelled on the multiple-aspect view of objective colour. A colour's (or evaluative property's) objectivity consists in a given colour's (or evaluative property's) associated functions from possible viewing circumstances (or possible perspectives) to apparent colours (or fitting emotional responses).

This account is interesting because it attempts to accommodate a realist conception of value as well as the idea that there is no sense in talking about harmfulness without incorporating the dispositions of the affected subject(s). So, on this account, an objective value is associated with its functions from the perspectives of relevant subjects to the fitting responses of these subjects. Gert consequently argues against the uniqueness assumption implicit in many response-dependent accounts of value (e.g., Jacobsen and D'Arms' account) – that is, the assumption that a given value is associated with a uniquely fitting response. However, Gert does not abandon the idea that harmfulness is associated with aversion. This
connection holds, Gert argues, if the harm is avoidable. If, on the other hand, one has an agreeable attitude in response to avoidable harms, then such agreeableness will have to be explained by appeal to adequate reasons. Further, he holds that such an account is compatible with it being fitting to have an attitude of aversion to unavoidable harms, despite the prudential reasons that speak against such aversion.

I will nonetheless argue that this multiple-aspect account of harmfulness is not wholly analogous to the multiple-aspect account of colour. This is because the variables that determine the functions from possible perspectives (or dispositions) to possible fitting responses are very different from those that determine the functions from possible viewing circumstances to possible apparent colours. Further, I will argue that the harmfulness of, or in, circumstances cannot be attributed to the experiences they produce if we want to model harm on the multiple-aspect account of objective colour. If I am right, then this renders a realist conception of harmfulness on the multiple-aspect model problematic, because the same set of circumstances may yield incompatible, yet fitting, emotional responses and subsequent attitudes. This presents a problem for Gert because he holds that avoidable harms merit aversion from all possible (relevant) perspectives. In light of this, I contend that the multiple-aspect account is sound, but that it nevertheless yields a relational account of harm. The resulting challenge will be to impose normative constraints on the functions from perspectives to fitting responses to circumstances on a multiple-aspect account of relational value.

4.1. A Multiple-Aspect Account of Colour

Gert aims to defend the analogy between colour and value by constructing an account of the value of harm modelled on a multiple-aspect account of colour. In this section I will outline Gert's multiple-aspect account of colour (2010, 61-65).

The human perceptual system's representation of colour exhibits a high level of constancy. This means that, across a wide range of viewing circumstances, say, a green apple continues to look green through the human perceptual system. In light of this, it may seem that in identifying the colour of an apple, we are visually representing an unchanging property of the apple through perception: its colour-property, a secondary quality in virtue of its dependence on the particular perceptual system humans are equipped with. There is, however, also significant variation in said representation correlative to changing viewing circumstances, which brings into question what these colour-properties consist in.
Experiences of apparent colours of objects will change relative to the nature of the light reflecting off it, the distance between the perceiver and the object, the angle from which the object is viewed, and the particular perceptual system of the perceiver. That is, the particular viewing circumstances under which an object is perceived will give rise to a particular experience of the colour of said object. The particular viewing circumstances will therefore influence the subject's capacity to identify and discriminate between colours. Moreover, certain subjects will be less adept at ascertaining colours in their environment as a result of deficiencies in their perceptual systems.

It appears that contextual variation in visual representations of colour relative to viewing circumstances will, if we want to argue that the colour of an object is an unchanging property of said object (i.e., if we want to endorse a realist conception of colour), have to be attributed to error (2010, 62). But fixing on a certain class of viewing circumstances and a certain class of viewers that are apt to reveal the true colours of objects seems like an unmanageable task. Nor does identifying a specific objective colour by associating it with one of many possible experiences of this colour seem right in light of the obvious heterogeneity of subjects' experiences of it. But we can exclude some people as unfit to ascertain and discriminate between colours by pointing to deficiencies in their visual systems (e.g., people who are colour-blind). Therefore, while it makes sense to say that ascertaining the colour of an object is an epistemic endeavour, fixing on one experience of a given colour as the correct experience seems futile. Again, this is because of the obvious heterogeneity of visual experiences of colours, even within the class of subjects who do not suffer any deficiencies with regard to colour-perception. Gert therefore attempts to make sense of the idea of a realist conception of colour, while refraining from attributing contextual intersubjective and intrasubjective variation in visual experiences to error.

In view of this, instead of attempting to specify the appropriate viewers and viewing conditions (i.e., those viewers and viewing conditions that produce the experience of the correct apparent colour), Gert's approach to establishing the veridicality of colour perception is by constructing a multiple-aspect account. On this account, one can draw a distinction between the apparent and the objective colour of an object. In turn, this approach promises to make sense of inconsistency in colour experiences relative to contextual variation without attributing such inconsistency to error. On the multiple-aspect view, the objective colour of an object is the object's capacity to present itself (to humans with the capacity to perceive colour) as having a range of possible apparent colours relative to a set of possible viewing.
circumstances. Gert gives the following biconditional account of the multiple-aspect view of colour:

\[ x \text{ has color } R \leftrightarrow \text{subjects of kind } S \text{ would have responses to } x \text{ that can be summarized as a function } F_R(c) \text{. The domain of } F_R(c) \text{ is the set of possible viewing circumstances, and the range of } F_R(c) \text{ is the set of possible apparent colors (2010, 63).} \]

Subjects of kind S denote a class of perceivers that excludes subjects who suffer some kind of visual impairment with regard to colour perception, such as subjects who are colour-blind. The objective colour of an object, according to Gert, is therefore the functions from all possible viewing circumstances to all possible apparent colours, as they appear to subjects who do not suffer some kind of visual impairment relative to colour. On this account, objective colour cannot be identified under a certain class of viewing circumstances, because its objectivity is associated with these functions (i.e., the colour's associated functions from viewing circumstances to apparent colours). The objective colour of an object is not one of a range of possible apparent colours relative to a set of possible viewing circumstances, but rather the functions from all possible viewing circumstances to all possible apparent colours represented by the human perceptual systems of subjects of kind S. This means that an apple is objectively green if it exhibits the functions from possible viewing circumstances to possible apparent colours associated with green objects.

However, there seem to be perspectives that are more informative with regard to the objective colours of objects than other perspectives, such as viewing an object outside on a sunny day as opposed to viewing it inside under incandescent light. That is, certain conditions are such as to accommodate the human perceptual system in a way that allows us to discriminate between colours more effectively. With insufficient lighting all objects look grey, which means that under these viewing circumstances, for any object we can associate all possible functions of the kind above; all objects perceived in sufficiently poor lighting can be associated with the functions \( F_R(c) \) of all colours R. By contrast, when an object is viewed (by relevant subjects) under favourable viewing conditions, such as indirect sunlight, it can only be associated with a limited range of functions \( F_R(c) \), and these functions will be those constituting the objective colour of the object. Under unfavourable viewing circumstances, the range of functions relevant subjects can associate with any given colour becomes too wide to effectively discriminate between the colours in their vicinity, but under the right viewing
circumstances they can discriminate between colours as their associated functions become apparent to them. Therefore, we can say that certain viewing conditions are more informative with regard to objective colour, but this does not entail that there is one class of viewing circumstances that count as most informative. In addition, within the class of viewing conditions that count as highly informative, different perspectives may still produce different apparent colours.

Ascertaining the objective colour of an object is, as we have seen, an epistemic task. Under favourable conditions – conditions that are conducive to present a human subject with the experience of an apparent colour which associated functions are sufficiently narrow – we can derive more accurate information about the colours of objects, and we can confidently maintain that some subjects have the capacity to derive such information from their environment while others do not. Gert aims to model the value of harm on this account of colour, so as to accommodate the idea that many differing perspectives of relevant subjects that give rise to different emotional responses to harmful circumstances can all be veridical experiences of the harm in question. As in the case of colour, a harm is associated with a range of functions from possible perspectives (viewing circumstances) to possible fitting responses (apparent colours).

4.2. A Multiple-Aspect Account of Harm

Gert defends the validity of the analogy between colour and value by applying the multiple-aspect account to the value of harm. The multiple-aspect account shows promise as a defence of normative realism in the context of response-dependent accounts of value, since objections to such views are often directed at what Gert terms single-aspect accounts. I will outline his account of harm modelled on the multiple-aspect view of colour in the following (2010, 71-80).

4.2.1. A Realist Conception of Harm Accommodating Diverging Fitting Responses

In positing a multiple-aspect account of harm, Gert aims to make sense of non-relativised harm without appealing to a uniquely appropriate response correlative to a given value. He

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It nevertheless seems open to question whether the evident bundle of experiences denote something like colour-properties, as opposed to “redness-for-S-in-C” (2010, 70), but I do not have enough space to flesh out this concern. I will instead focus on the analogy between Gert’s multiple-aspect accounts of colour and harmfulness.
thus endorses a realist conception of value, where the value is to be found, as it were, in the circumstances, or where the circumstances constitute the value, as opposed to a constructivist account where the value of the circumstances is in some way constructed from the emotional experiences of relevant subjects. Therefore, on Gert's conception of value, there is a tracking-relation between one's emotional experience and the value in, or of, the circumstances.

What makes his approach interesting is that it promises to accommodate both such a realist conception of value and allow for different responses to the same circumstances to be fitting. He thus argues against the uniqueness assumption implicit in many response-dependent accounts of value (e.g., Jacobsen and D'arms' account outlined in chapter 1), where a certain value has a uniquely fitting response associated with it. On this account, harmfulness can be interpreted as response-dependent in the same manner as objective colours, since the “best way to understand why we have a term or concept that picks out that property [i.e., a colour property or an evaluative property] will be by appeal to contingent patterns in human responses: to the nature of our eyeballs or affective systems” (2010, 81). And he claims that this is true even if these properties are not “dispositions to produce responses, but are, rather, categorical properties” (2010, 81). Such a categorical property may be understood as “a massively disjunctive physical property”, or as being irreducible to the physical, but that it supervenes on it (2010, 81). Gert intends to defend an account of intrinsic value, and “that value claims are often simply true in the same sort of way in which unproblematically true claims are also true” (2010, 59).

4.2.2. The Relevance of Perspective

On the multiple-aspect view, as we have seen, an objective colour is associated with its functions from viewing circumstances to apparent colours, rather than with one of many possible apparent colours (2010, 69-71). According to Gert, single-aspect accounts of harm fail to accommodate the idea that the possible perspectives of relevant subjects (temporal and spatial, and with regard to the subject's personal relationships (e.g., kinship) and her preferences, tastes, etc.) relative to the circumstances affect the fittingness of a given subject's response. In assessing the harm of some set of circumstances, it matters whether it is in the past, in the present, or in the future; whether it is my child or someone else's child that is

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9 This understanding of response-dependence is based on Gert's interpretation of Philip Pettit's view (1991)
harm, relative to the harm such circumstances constitute for me; I might prefer death over a risky and painful operation, and so on. It is counter-intuitive to suppose that we ought to have the same attitude towards, say, pain regardless of whether it belongs to the past, present, or future, of what kind of pain it is, or of whether it is I, a stranger, or someone I care about who is experiencing the pain. Contrary to single-aspect response-dependent accounts of value, Gert's multiple-aspect account allows for numerous emotional responses, and consequent attitudes, to be fitting the same harm relative to the perspectives of the subjects involved.

So, a virtue of the multiple-aspect account is that it can make sense of harm as meriting different patterns of response, depending on the nature of the harm and the perspective of the harmed. It is here, nevertheless, important to stress that although this view accommodates the idea that there is more than one fitting response to harmful circumstances, or the harm that figures in these circumstances, and therefore that there are different kinds of harm (relative to whether the harm is in the past; whether it is you, someone you care about, or someone else who is afflicted by the harm; whether the harm was avoidable; etc.) this does not involve abandoning the idea of a connection between harm and aversion. This connection, according to Gert, is explained by the appeal to reasons in explaining willing suffering of avoidable harms (2010, 73-74). On this account, the connection between harm and aversion holds if the harm is avoidable. And, if one has a positive affective response to harm that is avoidable, such responses will have to be explained by adequate reasons. Moreover, this is obviously compatible with it being fitting to be averse to harms that are unavoidable as well.

Such a connection between aversion and harm seems akin to Deonna's contention that the human emotional system presents certain features of our environment as calls to act, generally, in the form of attraction or resistance. Yet, while Deonna aims to construct a relational account of value, Gert attempts to reconcile such an idea with a realist conception of harmfulness. Therefore, on Gert's account, these regions of resistance, or circumstances that call for aversion, exist as functions from possible perspectives to possible fitting responses in relevant subjects, as opposed to existing only relationally between specific subjects and specific circumstances, at specific times.

4.2.4. Objective Harm

So, in light of the heterogeneity of harm relative to differing perspectives, an adequate account of harmfulness has to incorporate the perspective of the harmed. But this does not
mean, according to Gert, that we need to forego the idea of non-relativised, objective harm. This is because we can conceive of the objectively harmful on the model of the multiple-aspect account of objective colour above: as functions from possible perspectives on circumstances to the set of possible fitting responses in relevant subjects. On this model, it appears we can make sense of the idea that there is more than one fitting response to a given harm, while holding on to a realist conception. Gert therefore suggests the following account:

MA: $x$ is a harm of kind $H \iff$ (i) any subject of kind $S$ would have responses to perceived instances of $x$ that can be summarised as a function $\alpha F_H(p)$, where the domain of $F_H(p)$ is the set of possible perspectives on such instances and the range of $F_H(p)$ is the set of possible fitting responses. (ii) The value of $\alpha$ functions like a scalar multiplier. (iii) When a perspective $p$ is one from which an instance of $x$ is regarded by $S$ as something that can be avoided by $S$, the value of $F_H(p)$ will be intrinsic aversion to that instance (2010, 74).

The scalar multiplier, $\alpha$, indicates differences in degree of the same kind of harm. So that two harms of the same kind, $H_1$ and $H_2$, differ in the sense that they merit responses of differing intensity, “by the ratio of $\alpha_1$ to $\alpha_2$” (2010, 74). That is, two kinds of harm will be of the same kind as long as the patterns of fitting response associated with the two harms differ only in intensity. There is obviously no sense in which we can measure degrees of, say, anger with mathematical precision, but Gert claims that such mathematical precision is not necessary in order to make sense of the idea above (2010, 75). The possibility of comparing similar responses to two harms by reference to their intensity is enough to make sense of the idea that two harms that yield responses that differ only in intensity are of the same kind, according to Gert. That is, it makes sense to say that I am, say, angry to a lesser or greater extent than someone else, or that the intensity of my anger is more or less on par with someone else's anger. This presents a clear avenue of making sense of what it means that one harm is worse than another: if the harm is such that it merits a particular pattern of affective response, then a harm of this kind will be worse than another if it merits a pattern of response that is of a greater intensity than the other.

4.2.5. Harms as Necessary Means to Achieve a Goal
Gert considers a possible counter-example to the multiple-aspect view of non-relativised harm above. In some cases, harms such as pain and fear figure as parts of a given desire (2010, 76-77). He gives the example of the desire to become a firefighter, which seems to involve the desire to overcome pain and fear in battling fires and saving people. Such desires are not, according to Gert, abnormal or pathological (or irrational), so that the subjects who have such desires should be included in the class of relevant subjects. The question then becomes whether the appropriate attitude to harm that figure in such a subject's desire is aversion. It is, after all, possible to avoid the pain and fear associated with being a firefighter by not becoming a firefighter. Gert, nevertheless, argues that this is only the case if the harms in question are modally separable from the desire – if the agent would prefer the goal of becoming a firefighter absent the harmful aspects associated with this goal – and, in the case of the desire to become a firefighter, the potential harms seem inextricably linked to the desire to become a firefighter, and, subsequently, the desire to save lives at the risk of suffering harms to oneself. In this case, “[w]e can still see the overall appropriateness of our hero's desire as the joint product of an aversion to pain and fear, and an attraction to saving people and being heroic” (2010, 76-77).

Pain and fear will therefore remain objectively harmful, even in the case of someone who wants to become a firefighter to overcome such harms in order to save lives. The person who desires to become a firefighter is averse to pain and fear, but his desire is bound up with overcoming such aversion in order to save lives, and such a desire is rational because it serves as a means to a proportionate end – his desire is supported by adequate reasons. On the other hand, if the subject desired to undergo the same kind of fear and pain (and the prospect of death) in order to, say, save a kitten then this would not be the case; such a subject would not be included in the class of relevant subjects S, and she would not have adequate reasons for desiring to overcome such aversion.

4.3. Relevant Variables

As we have seen, the multiple-aspect account of harm accommodates the heterogeneity of responses to harm relative to the perspectives of the harmed, and this seems to have its counterpart in colour perception in that the apparent colour of a given object is determined by one's perspective on the object (i.e., the experience of the apparent colour results from the viewing circumstances and the fact that the subject has a human perceptual system capable of
representing colours). In the colour case, the variables that determine a relevant subject's experience of an objective colour are spatial distance, the angle from which the object is viewed, coupled with the nature of the illuminant (e.g., sunlight/incandescent light) and the manner in which it hits the surface of the object (e.g., direct/indirect light).

Gert contends that, as in the case of colour, the functions from possible perspectives to possible fitting emotional responses are explained causally in the case of harm (2010, 85-87). That is, just as the fact that one is equipped with a normally functioning perceptual system coupled with the facts of the present, particular viewing circumstances explain why one is subject to a given experience of colour, the fact that one is equipped with a normally functioning emotional system combined with one's perspective on some set of circumstances explain why one has a fitting emotional response. Fitting responses are the product of the emotional system's interaction with the external environment, just as colours are the product of the visual system's interaction with the external environment, on Gert's account. While Deonna argues that the emotional system picks up essentially relational information about the subject's environment, Gert argues that particular fitting emotional responses figure in a finite set of functions from possible perspectives to possible fitting responses. The implicit assumption seems to be that all relevant subjects of kind S will, as in the case of colour, experience a particular harm in the same way if they experienced it from the same perspective.

But, in the case of harm the variables that determine the fittingness of a given subject's response is not as easily identified as in the colour case. It is clear that the subject's distance (both temporal and spatial) to the potential harm will be relevant. But the function from a relevant perspective to an emotional response to some set of circumstances will not be influenced by the lighting, nor will the angle from which the circumstances are viewed affect the requisite emotional response. That is, the circumstances will give rise to the same fitting emotional responses, regardless of the nature of the illuminant or the angle of one's perspective, as long as the relevant non-evaluative facts that constitute these circumstances are accessible; these variables will not influence the “apparent harm”, or the emotional responses the circumstances give rise to, unless they somehow obscure the relevant non-evaluative facts that constitute the circumstances. It is therefore clear that talk of perspective in the case of colour-perception can be taken quite literally, while it must be understood metaphorically in the case of harm (i.e., as denoting a person's dispositions). In the following I will attempt to elucidate some of the variables of possible perspectives on circumstances.
which constitute harm, or in which harm figures.

4.3.1. Individual-Relative Factors

The set of possible perspectives that figure in a biconditional, multiple-aspect account of harm will not merely be determined by external factors such as spatial and temporal distance, but also by factors inherent to these possible perspectives; we may call these individual-relative factors. This class will include, as was pointed out by Deonna in the preceding chapter, (individual) facts about the subject: age, gender, weight, etc. This is because such facts will give rise to a specific set of vulnerabilities for a given subject, and they will contribute to the formation of a specific set of interests, preferences, tastes, etc., which I will henceforth refer to as a subject's motivational base (another term borrowed from Deonna (2012, 56)). For instance, someone's age will be a contributing factor to the harmfulness of an offensive remark because one's particular personal history may be embedded in a different era, or because this offensive remark is directed at people of a certain age; pneumonia is much more harmful to an aged person than to a healthy young adult; someone who is allergic to peanuts will be fittingly averse to peanuts in their proximity, and so on.

But, while such facts about the subject will influence a normally functioning perceptual system's representation of affordances, they do not seem to influence the subject's experiences of colour. It is clear that, say, my height will influence my perceptual system's representation of graspable branches, but it is also clear that it will not influence its representation of colour. That is, facts pertaining to specific individuals who have the capacity to perceive colour do not influence these individuals' experiences of apparent colours. This means that they are not relevant factors in the colour case because they do not determine the functions from possible viewing circumstances to possible apparent colours. Consequently, since facts about particular individuals (other than the fact that they have the capacity to perceive colour, and facts about their perceptual system's sensitivity to colours) are irrelevant to the explanation of why, under the present viewing circumstances, I experience an object as (say) red, these factors do not have their counterparts in colour-

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10 As I am here concerned with elucidating harmfulness, as such, I will not elucidate what I term agent-relative factors. These factors pertain to instances of harmfulness that amount to wronging – harms that are caused as a result of human volition.

11 Age may influence a person's capacity to identify and discriminate between colours, but this will come as a result of a deterioration of the subject's perceptual system (e.g., glaucoma), not as a direct result of the subject's age. Moreover, these subjects will not be included in the class of relevant subjects S, on Gert's account.
In addition, what matters to an individual will be relevant to an assessment of harmfulness. This is because some harms may be more harmful to some than to others relative to their motivational base. The motivational base falls under the class of individual-relative factors because it pertains to particular individuals. For instance, a given person's preferences may be such that the prospect of death is less disagreeable than the prospect of permanent generalised paralysis (2010, 78); the harmfulness that a broken leg constitutes to a professional athlete will be greater than what it would constitute to an accountant, and so on. Further, specific facts about a given subject will, as was pointed out above, contribute to the formation of her motivational base. However, it is obvious that these variables do not pertain to the colour case: my motivational base does not affect the functions from viewing circumstances to apparent colours as it does the functions from possible perspectives to possible fitting responses to harm.

The class of individual-relative factors that contribute to the harmfulness in, or of, circumstances, and subsequently the fittingness of emotional responses to such circumstances, will also include facts about the subject's personal relationships, and the subject's relation to the circumstances. This is because, for instance, it matters whether one is told that one's own child has been killed in traffic or that someone else's child has been so killed, and these two circumstances will therefore merit different degrees of emotional response. Similarly, it matters, say, whether it is I or someone else who is being handed a death sentence. Both circumstances may be harmful, but they merit different degrees of emotional response relative to the perspective of the subject.

4.3.2. Summary

While distance seems to affect the functions from possible perspectives to possible fitting responses to circumstances, other variables in the biconditional, multiple-aspect account of colour do not have their counterparts in a multiple-aspect account of harm. In the case of harm, perspectives are in large part determined by facts pertaining to particular individuals, and their relation to the circumstances and the people involved. I have elucidated one class of variables that determine the relevant kind of perspectives, and, in turn, affect the fitting emotional responses of relevant subjects in the case of harm: individual-relative factors. This class of variables includes, among other factors, facts about the subject (e.g., height, age,
gender, etc.), her motivational base, and facts about relevant personal relationships.

These deliberations show that there are limits to the analogy between harm and colour. This is because the variables that determine the functions from possible perspectives to possible fitting responses in relevant subjects are, in large part, different in kind from the ones that determine the functions from possible viewing circumstances to possible experiences of apparent colours in relevant subjects.

4.4. Diverging Individual-Relative Factors

MA states that harm figures in, or is constituted by, circumstances that merit intrinsic aversion from all possible perspectives from which these states of affairs are avoidable (2010, 79-80). Subjects of kind S are, on this account, analogous to subjects who suffer no visual impairments with regard to colour, and they will include people who have rational motivational bases. Without specifying which motivational bases should be excluded, Gert considers sociopaths and those who are clinically depressed as obviously excluded from the class of relevant subjects (2010, 76). Nevertheless, people within the class of relevant subjects will have diverging motivational bases, and, generally, specific individual-relative factors will pertain to any given perspective.

This means that there will be certain circumstances that merit aversion relative to some perspectives (of subjects of kind S), while they merit attraction from other perspectives (2010, 79-80). A bag of peanuts, for instance, will merit aversion from the perspective of someone who is allergic to peanuts, while it will merit attraction from the perspective of someone who loves peanuts. In this case, Gert holds that what merits aversion is not the peanuts, but the allergic reaction the peanuts cause for a subject who is allergic (2010, 80). Similarly, with regard to taste, we can say that it is the unpleasant experience of, say, drinking coffee that merits aversion (for someone who dislikes coffee), not the coffee itself. The peanuts and the coffee do not constitute harms, but the harmful effects they have relative to certain perspectives are what constitute their harmfulness. It therefore seems that Gert's account is still an account of non-relativised, objective harmfulness because all rational people are averse to allergic reactions and unpleasant experiences in general. What is harmful is, say, the pain of the allergic reaction produced by eating peanuts, and the prospect of dying as a consequence of it.
4.4.1. Mental States and Colour-Properties

However, if the unpleasant experiences caused by an object (as opposed to the object itself) constitute the harm, then this marks another limit to the analogy between colour and harm. This is because, on a realist, multiple-aspect account of colour, the colour of an object is not attributable to a mental state. A realist conception of colour entails that it is the colour-property of the object that makes it tenable to associate it with functions from possible viewing circumstances to possible apparent colours. But a mental state, on the other hand, is not a property of an object or a particular set of circumstances. It is rather analogous to an apparent colour in the sense that it represents one of many possible experiences of the object or circumstances in question. Having a negative emotional response to peanuts is one of many possible fitting emotional responses to peanuts, and what causes this response in people who are allergic is the knowledge that peanuts cause allergic reactions in them.

Indeed, it does not make sense to say that the harm is constituted by the circumstances, or figures in the circumstances, if it is the experience of pain, or the allergic reaction, caused by the circumstances that constitute harm. Therefore, if we want to contend that harm is an evaluative concept that tracks evaluative properties external to the subjects responding to them (analogous to how colour concepts track colour-properties) then attributing the harm to mental states or allergic reactions will run counter to this endeavour. That is not to say that prolonged pain and fear, or allergic reactions, are not harmful in their own right, but that, for instance, physical pain is caused by something (e.g., by being exposed to flames and fumes). So that the person who desires to become a firefighter is averse to pain and fear, but the pain and fear associated with being a firefighter result from the harm of being exposed to flames and fumes. So he is, in fact, averse to being exposed to flames and fumes, the pain and fear merely point to the harmfulness of such exposure.

In the case of colour, we can say that certain people have colour vision deficiencies and thereby explain their inability to represent the colours that are purportedly out there in the world. In turn, we can argue that these colours are real in the sense that they have associated functions from viewing circumstances to experiences of apparent colours in relevant subjects of kind S. But, contrary to the colour case, it does not make sense to say that the allergic person is misrepresenting peanuts as harmful, nor that the non-allergic person erroneously represents peanuts as harmless. This is because, as has been made apparent, the harmfulness of peanuts is determined by the individual-relative factors pertaining to the relevant subject.
So, if we want to model harm on the realist conception of colour outlined in section 1, we will have to say that the peanuts themselves constitute harm. However, among this object's associated functions from possible perspectives to possible fitting responses, there are also possible perspectives, and subsequent fitting responses, that yield attitudes of attraction. This would challenge Gert's claim that “what unifies the set of harms is that they are precisely those things which merit only aversion, at least from the relevant perspectives: perspectives that include the possibility of avoidance” (2010, 80). Peanuts merit aversion from the perspective of those with a peanut-allergy, but not necessarily from the perspectives of everyone else. And attributing harmfulness to the effects of aspects of the environment on particular subjects would render the realist aspirations of the multiple-aspect account of harmfulness dubious.

4.4.2. The Masochist

Gert could acknowledge this disanalogous aspect of harm relative to colour, and claim that it is nevertheless the having of an allergic reaction or the experience of pain that constitutes the harm in examples like the ones above. Yet, even if he could retain a realist conception of harm on such an account, it is not clear that it is always rational for subjects to be averse to experiences of avoidable pain and fear. This is because there exist people who are masochistic, which means that they take pleasure in experiencing pain and fear, at least under certain circumstances. If I take pleasure in experiencing pain that does not cause any harm to me that exceeds the purported harm of the pain in question, then it seems perfectly rational that I abstain from being averse to such instances of pain. Indeed, why should I be averse to instances of pleasure, even if the pleasure is derived from pain?

Gert could reply to this by arguing that pleasurable pain is not, in fact, pain, but rather instances of pleasure. And it is obviously correct to say that such instances qualify as instances of pleasure, but it is not clear that they do not also qualify as instances of pain. This is because these experiences would not be pleasurable to the masochist unless they were painful. It is, by definition, painful experiences that cause pleasure in the masochist, and if they were merely pleasurable they would not cause such distinctive pleasure.

Gert could nevertheless claim that masochists are irrational people and should therefore be excluded from the class of relevant subjects. Yet, this seems counter-intuitive in light of the deliberations above. It does not seem irrational to be agreeable to experiences that
are pleasurable, even if most people do not find such experiences pleasurable.

He could, however, argue that the masochist's willing suffering of the harm of pain and fear is supported by adequate reasons – that is, reasons derived from the fact that she takes pleasure in these harms. But it still does not seem right to conclude that these instances of pain and fear experienced by the masochist count as instances of harm. This is because instances of pain and fear that do not exceed the purported harm of the experience of pain and fear will not be harmful to the masochist since she takes pleasure in such experiences.

4.4.3. Harmfulness as a Relational Value

In sum, if we want to model objective harm on the multiple-aspect account of colour, then it appears we will have to say that it is, say, the bag of peanuts that is harmful. This is because, on a realist account of colour, experiences of apparent colours are caused by the properties of the object represented by the human perceptual system under particular viewing circumstances. If harmfulness is identified with the effects of causes (such as being in close proximity to peanuts) then this would be tantamount to identifying colour properties with the experiences they purportedly cause in relevant subjects. Therefore, if the realism of the value of harm should be modelled on the realism of colour properties (on the multiple-aspect account above), then harmfulness cannot be reduced to its effects. That is, the harmful cannot be identified with particular experiences of a set of circumstances if we want to retain the idea of objective harmfulness, analogous to objective colours.

Consequently, if we wish to follow the analogy, there is no sense in talking about the categorical harmfulness of peanuts because their harmfulness will depend on the particular vulnerabilities of the subject being exposed to them. So, the possible perspectives of subjects of kind S will encompass perspectives from which it will be fitting to be averse to peanuts. These considerations strongly indicate the relational nature of values such as the harmful, and Gert does not provide sufficient argument in favour of a realist conception of this value. A more plausible account will therefore deem peanuts harmful to some subjects relative to the relevant individual-relative factors pertaining to their perspectives, while innocuous to other subjects relative to the relevant individual-relative factors pertaining to their perspectives. Alternatively, as we have seen, Gert can bite the bullet and diverge from the analogy between colour and harm by holding that mental states and allergic reactions are what constitute the harms of (some) circumstances. But this would mean that it is not the circumstances, nor
some property that figures in the circumstances, that constitute(s) the harm. Consequently, the realism of the property of harm will not be analogous to the realism of objective colours (as outlined in section 1), which brings into question what this realism consists in.

4.4.3. Internal Factors

I have pointed to variables that determine the functions from possible perspectives to possible fitting responses in the case of harm. Apart from distance, the variables that determine the functions in a multiple-aspect account of harm are not analogous to the variables that determine the functions in the colour case. The vast amount of variables relevant to the harm case will inevitably lead to diverging fitting emotional responses to circumstances, and this puts into question the purported objectivity of harmfulness.

Colours are associated with a bundle of experiences. The veridicality of these experiences can be assessed along the lines of the viewing circumstances (i.e., certain viewing circumstances obscure the associated functions (e.g., incandescent light) while others sufficiently narrow the associated functions (e.g., indirect sunlight)) and the subject's capacity to perceive colours. We can therefore exclude certain subject's experiences as irrelevant to assessments of the colours of objects. In contrast to the external factors represented by the viewing circumstances in the multiple-aspect account of colour, what is harmful to an individual is, in large part, determined by factors internal to the subject (i.e., the relevant individual-relative factors). This suggests that we cannot exclude certain subjects' experiences as irrelevant to assessments of harmfulness, in contrast to Gert's suggestion.

I have, furthermore, argued that we cannot construct a realist account of the value of harm (at least not on the model of the realism of colour in section 1) by attributing harm to the experiences aspects of one's environment cause. Whether a peanut is harmful to me at a specific time and place depends on whether or not I am allergic to it, and the distance between me and the peanut. The harm consequently figures in the relation between me and the peanut. I therefore contend that the multiple-aspect account of harm is sound only as a relational account. That is, even though it is true that harms figure in the world as functions from possible perspectives (or dispositions) to possible fitting responses, these functions are determined by factors pertaining to particular individuals' relation to particular circumstances, at specific times. What we are left with is therefore a relational account of harmfulness.

In the following chapter I will challenge Gert's claim that we can demarcate a class of
relevant subjects S. I will then attempt to elucidate ways in which we can impose normative constraints on our emotional responses, in view of the worry that the resulting account may be too subjective.
5. RELEVANT SUBJECTS AND REASONS

To recap, we have rejected the uniqueness assumption: that values are associated with uniquely fitting responses. Consequently, the fittingness of responses cannot be determined by reference to the right kind of reasons. Moreover, the exclusion of defective emotional systems as irrelevant to assessments of what merits a subject's attraction or resistance will have to be justified by more than an appeal to their irrationality, because our dispositions seem to influence what merits our resistance or attraction.

In the preceding chapter I outlined Gert's multiple-aspect account of harm, and pointed to some disanalogous aspects relative to colour. Furthermore, I argued that if we want to contend that harms are categorical properties, then we cannot hold that these properties are constituted by our emotional experiences. If this is true, then, on the realist conception of harm espoused by Gert, objects that merit incompatible responses from different perspectives will be both harmful and innocuous.

In this chapter, I will argue that the statistical normality of dispositions does not ensure their fittingness. This is because, first, it seems that certain dispositions to respond (statistically) abnormally will be partly constitutive of the value itself. And, second, an appeal to mere statistical normality would only demonstrate that a given response is statistically normal, not that it is fitting.

I will then refer to Peter Railton (1998), and argue that we cannot rigidly fix the value of harm on the actual responses of relevant subjects. This is because the particular vulnerabilities of the affected subject will be partly constitutive of the harm that these circumstances pose to her.

Furthermore, I will argue that statistically disproportionate responses can be justified in light of reasons, in terms of the facts of the subject's individual vulnerabilities and the circumstances. I should stress, however, that these reasons do not amount to the right kind of reasons, pointed to by Jacobsen and D'Arms, as we have rejected the uniqueness assumption.

5.1. Fittingness and Relevant Subjects

The fittingness of responses on Gert's account is tied up with his notion of the class of
relevant subjects $S$. If $A$ does not respond in a given way to $x$ from $A$'s individually specified perspective, then she is regarded as emotionally defective, and she will therefore be excluded from the class of relevant subjects (2010, 86-87). Gert thus gives a causal explanation of human emotional interaction with the external environment: we react naturally to some set of circumstances, and this reaction leads us to form an attitude of aversion to the perceived harm of these circumstances.

In the case of colour-perception, a given subject's experience of colour does not come about as a result of her deliberating about her reasons for experiencing colour. Rather, the colour of a given object is associated with a range of functions from possible viewing conditions to possible apparent colours. So that “if an object is a certain color, then, from a given perspective, certain responses are the ones that are correct or appropriate” (2010, 86). In the same manner, harmful circumstances are associated with a range of functions from the possible perspectives $p$ of the class of relevant subjects $S$ to the possible fitting responses of these subjects, on Gert's account.

The fittingness of our emotional responses (and our subsequent attitudes) to avoidable and unavoidable harms are not, on this account, dependent on a particular kind of reasons for endorsement other than the reasons implicit in the causal explanation. Let us say that $A$ has harmed $B$, and consequently $B$ responds in some specific way that leads to $B$ being averse to $A$. $B$'s emotional response and subsequent attitude toward $A$ are simply a function of $B$'s perspective on the circumstances to her response. So that $B$'s emotional response can be explained, causally, by the fact that $A$ harmed $B$. $A$'s response “is simply a natural response from that perspective” (2010, 87). And the fittingness of such a response is derived from the fact that $B$ belongs to the class of relevant subjects.

Still, it seems that, by positing a class of relevant subjects $S$, Gert holds that certain responses are ‘unnatural’. That is, he seems to suggest that if one is subject to statistically abnormal or pathological responses, one will be excluded from the class of relevant subjects $S$. But, as we have seen, the factors that determine the perspectives of relevant subjects, and, in turn, the functions from their perspectives to fitting responses, are disanalogous to the factors that determine the viewing circumstances in the colour case (apart from the parameter of distance). While the viewing circumstances that determine one's particular experiences of colour are determined by factors external to the subject, the perspectives that determine the particular fitting responses to harms are, in large part, determined by individual-relative factors. And these factors are ‘internal’ to the subject in the sense that they are made up of
facts about particular individuals (e.g., their motivational base, their personal relationships, etc.), as opposed to the external factors that determine the viewing circumstances in the case of colour (e.g., the nature of the lighting, the angle from which the object is viewed, etc.).

In this section, I will challenge the idea that statistical normality bears on the fittingness of responses by appealing to three counter-examples. I take these counter-examples to indicate that we cannot exclude some perspectives \( p \) on the basis of an appeal to their statistical abnormality. I will, further, point out that an appeal to mere statistical normality will not elucidate the fittingness of emotional responses that figure in the biconditional of the multiple-aspect account of harm. This is because an assessment of an emotional response's statistical normality will merely show that it is either statistically normal or statistically abnormal.

I will however, in section 3, suggest that we can distinguish statistical normality that has been generated in response to our shared vulnerabilities, and statistical normality that has arisen merely as the result of social adaptation. And that the former kind of statistical normality may be an indication that one's emotional response runs counter to the emotional system's function of indicating what merits a subject's resistance.

5.1.1. Individual Vulnerabilities Give Rise to Relational Harms

While Gert acknowledges that perspectives will include the preferences and attitudes of the subject, he claims that not all preferences and attitudes should be taken seriously because some of them can be identified as irrational or abnormal (2010, 76). He therefore asserts that “[w]e … need not concern ourselves with the question of what sort of response a particular harm merits from the perspective of a sociopath, or from the perspective of someone who is clinically depressed” (2010, 76).

As we have seen (in chapter 2), the irrationality of a subject's disposition does not necessarily determine the fittingness of such a disposition. Nor does it seem right to determine the fittingness of responses in terms of their statistical normality. This is because, even in cases where we can say with certainty that the relevant subject has a response that is statistically abnormal, it is, I contend, wrong to assume that these perspectives do not contribute to the potential harm that some set of circumstances pose to the subjects of such statistically abnormal dispositions. This is because the perspective \( p \) that figures in Gert's biconditional multiple-aspect account of harm denotes the subject's disposition to respond, in
light of the relevant individual-relative factors and the circumstances. This disposition, in turn, reflects the subject's relevant vulnerabilities. I will therefore henceforth refer to perspectives $p$ as *dispositions to respond* to avoid any ambiguity.

For instance, the harm of being spoken of badly will most certainly constitute a greater harm to a subject who is clinically depressed, because it will result in an increased vulnerability. Someone who is clinically depressed will have a marked sense of worthlessness which will inevitably lead such a subject to experience the harm of being spoken of badly to a greater extent than someone who is subject to statistically normal responses to being spoken of badly. Moreover, a clinically depressed subject's negative responses to this kind of harm are likely to recede at a slower rate in such cases than in cases of subjects of kind S being spoken of badly. It therefore does not make sense to say that this individual-relative factor (i.e., a subject's clinical depression) is irrelevant to the assessment of harm in particular circumstances.

Further, in view of Gert's counter-intuitive contention that it is the *experience* of harm, such as fear or physical pain, that constitutes the harm of, or in, circumstances, discounting certain perspectives and consequent experiences needs sufficient justification. And, although we could make the argument that a clinically depressed person's response to such harms as being spoken of badly may be statistically disproportionate to the circumstances, or to the intentions of the person who inflicted the harm, this does not make their experience any less harmful to them. That is, unless such subjects could become aware of the statistical disproportionality of their responses, and, in turn, have the capacity to change their degree of vulnerability, the functions from their perspectives to their responses will remain the same.

In contrast to Gert's claim that it is the *experience* of an aspect of one's environment which constitutes the harm of those circumstances, a more plausible claim would be that a subject's experience bears on the potential harm that an aspect of her environment poses to her. If this is correct, then it seems we should include mental illnesses (such as clinical depression) into the relevant factors that determine the subject's disposition to respond (i.e., the functions from perspectives to fitting responses in Gert's biconditional). These factors seem to belong to the class of individual-relative factors pointed to in the previous chapter, and they therefore mark another limit to the analogy between colour and value, and another indication of the relational nature of harm.

Another group of people that seem to belong to the class of abnormal subjects on Gert's account are people with eating disorders. Now, let us say I make a snide remark about
the speed at which some person is ingesting her food, and coincidentally this person is bulimic. This would certainly amount to a greater harm to the person in question than it would to a person that belongs to the class of relevant subjects S. This is because, again, the bulimic person will have an increased vulnerability relative to comments concerning weight and eating habits.

In the cases of clinically depressed subjects and subjects with eating disorders it seems wrong (indeed, anachronistic) to suppose that such subjects are not on par with subjects that suffer physical illnesses. Akin to the manner in which the harmfulness of blowing smoke in the face of a subject with lung-cancer is worse than blowing smoke in the face of cancer-free subjects, berating someone who is clinically depressed or making jokes about the eating habits of someone suffering from an eating disorder is worse than the same kinds of harm relative to subjects of kind S. Similar to how the cancer patient has an increased vulnerability to the harmful effects of tobacco smoke (both physically and psychologically), subjects who are clinically depressed or suffering from eating disorders will have increased vulnerabilities relative to certain aspects of their environment that are potentially harmful to them, but not necessarily to others (or to a lesser degree to others).

In the case of the arachnophobic person (from chapter 2), his reaction of intense fear to innocuous spiders is undoubtedly out of proportion to the circumstances, because these spiders do not pose a physical threat to him. Such reactions are irrational and statistically abnormal. But pathological fear may nonetheless influence the potential harmfulness that some set of circumstances pose to the subject. Although the arachnophobic's response does not alert her to aspects of her environment that are potentially physically harmful to her, the debilitating consequences of her experience makes her justified in avoiding Ashley so as to avoid further ‘spider-attacks’ (see chapter 2).

It therefore appears that as Gert includes tastes in his account, such as the unpleasant experience of drinking wine for those who dislike it, he has not provided any argument to justify the exclusion of any subjects from the class of relevant subjects S. An appeal to the idea that some people's motivational bases are irrational or statistically abnormal will not do – even sociopaths are subject to harms and their responses should not be deemed unfitting on the basis of an appeal to statistical normality or rationality.

In sum, it seems that such factors as clinical depression, bulimia, or pathological fear should not be excluded from the individual-relative factors that determine the dispositions and vulnerabilities (and consequent “perspectives” p) of relevant subjects. This is because a
subject's experience may influence the harmfulness a set of circumstances pose to her. Therefore, even though the responses of a clinically depressed person may diverge from the experience such a subject would have absent her mental disorder, her emotional experience of being spoken of badly renders her more vulnerable to this potential harm.

5.1.3. Statistical Normality and Normativity

It is here important to keep in mind that, as Jacobsen and D'Arms elucidate, “the normal isn't normative” (2000, 727). Even if it is the case that we can identify a class of subjects with statistically normal dispositions, there is still the question of what makes their statistically normal dispositions fitting.

Since Gert's account of harm accommodates the idea that it is fitting to be averse to harms that are unavoidable, the fittingness of responses to perceived harmful circumstances cannot solely be determined by an appeal to rationality. This is because it is arguably irrational to have negative responses to unavoidable harmful circumstances since such responses will only serve to exacerbate the harm – there are at least no prudential reasons for having negative responses to particular unavoidable circumstances.

The fittingness of emotional responses, on Gert's account, seems therefore to be determined by whether or not they are statistically normal. But an appeal to statistical normality would not be enough to determine what makes a given response fitting relative to the circumstances. This is because statistically normal responses may be unfitting: fittingness in terms of statistical normality could, at best, only show that some responses are statistically normal. An understanding of fittingness as tantamount to statistical normality therefore does not show in virtue of what a given response is fitting, just that it figures within the spectrum of statistically normal responses. As I will argue below (sect., 5.3), an appeal to statistical normality will have to be supplemented by an appreciation of the cause of such statistical normality. This is because there are countless examples of statistically normal dispositions that have arisen as a result of more or less arbitrary social norms.

5.1.4. Summary

I have indicated, by way of the examples above, that there is no sense in which we can incorporate the individual vulnerabilities of subjects in defining harm without also
incorporating the vulnerabilities of (at least some) subjects with statistically abnormal or pathological emotional dispositions. These kinds of dispositions, and consequent responses, will have to be taken into account because they are partly constitutive of the harm that the circumstances pose to the subject. That is, fitting yet statistically abnormal responses (i.e., responses that are outside the statistical norm of human affective interaction with the environment) result from individual-relative factors that partly determine the vulnerabilities of the subject. And, although these responses are disproportionate in the sense that they diverge from the statistically normal way to respond, they can be legitimised by appeal to the individual-relative factors (e.g., clinical depression, PTSD, etc.) that give rise to the relevant subject's individual vulnerabilities.

In addition, I have argued that an appeal to statistical normality is not enough to determine what makes a given response fitting. In turn, such a notion will not secure the normative force of evaluative judgements. This is because the fact that a given disposition is statistically normal does not explain what makes it fitting relative to the nature of the circumstances and the subject's particular vulnerabilities, it merely shows that the disposition is statistically normal. An appeal to statistical normality will therefore have to be supplemented with an explanation of the occurrence of such normality, something I will explain below.

5.2. The Colour/Value Analogy

In view of these deliberations, we should not conceive of our emotional responses to harmful circumstances as tracking categorical properties of the world. Rather, a more plausible conception of our emotional dispositions' relation to harmful circumstances is as representing features of the world as regions of resistance, as was suggested by Deonna (chapter 2). This, again, would make the value of harm relational: diverging individual-relative factors will give rise to diverging dispositions to respond, and this is because some circumstances are harmful to certain individuals at certain times while not to others.

But this puts into question the nature of harmfulness. This is partly because it shows that value is not entirely analogous to colour because colour-properties are not relational in this sense. I will therefore, by reference to Peter Railton (1998), argue that we should not model harmfulness on colour in the following.
5.2.1. Fixing Harmfulness on Actual Responses

Gert's multiple-aspect account of colour can be understood as implying the following: (1) that \( x \) is red means that it is associated with a range of functions from viewing circumstances to apparent colours, or experiences of redness, in human beings of kind S (i.e., human beings with the capacity to perceive colour).

Peter Railton points to Simon Blackburn's intuition about changes in our experiences of colour to illuminate a possible inadequacy of this conception of colour (1998, 132): if humans were to change in such a way that red things appeared green to us, and that blue things appeared yellow, then, according to the biconditional above, red things would be green and blue things would be yellow. While this may be acceptable in the case of the secondary quality of colour, it is unacceptable with regard to moral 'qualities'. This is because, as Railton makes clear, our attitudes do not determine what is in fact morally right and wrong. It does not become acceptable to torture babies just because the statistically normal dispositions to respond change in such a way as to accommodate such behaviour.

On the other hand, Railton points to Sidney Shoemaker's contrary intuition that a change in our experiences of colour does not entail that the colours themselves have changed, it simply means that the way we experience certain colours have changed: “it will have become the case that green things look the way red things used to, yellow things look the way blue things used to, and so on” (1994, 302). Since our actual experiences of colour purportedly tell us something about the world around us, such a change should not be interpreted as a change in the objects themselves, but as a change in our experiences of them.

We may change the biconditional, multiple-aspect account to allow for such an intuition:

\[
(2) \quad x \text{ is } R \iff \text{subjects of kind } S \text{ (i.e., normal humans) as they actually are would have responses to } x \text{ that can be summarised as a function } F_R(c). \text{ Where the domain of } F_R(c) \text{ is the set of actually possible viewing circumstances, and the range of } F_R(c) \text{ is the set of actually possible apparent colours.}
\]

This seemingly secures the non-relativism of colour by rigidly fixing this quality on actual human responses. Railton then raises doubts as to whether this can be done in the case of intrinsic value. He does this by imagining a future society devoid of intrinsic motivation for
kin relations (1998, 133-138). As it stands, actual humans do value kin-relations in their own right. Therefore, if values are rigidly fixed on actual human responses, as in the case of colour, then we would have to say that kin-relations enjoy the same kind of intrinsic value in a future society, where none of the inhabitants possess such motivation. Since this would be the case even in light of the fact that the future humans do not respond to kin-relations in a way that reflects their intrinsic value, we would have to contend that the future humans have become desensitised to the intrinsic value of kin-relations. But why should our intrinsic motivation to favour kin-relations determine its value on behalf of people who do not possess such motivation?

The multiple-aspect account of harm espoused by Gert implies the same kind of rigidification. This is because harms are fixed by the actual responses of relevant subjects: \( x \) is harmful if its associated functions from possible perspectives \( p \) (i.e., the relevant factors that determine the subject's disposition, and her antecedent, particular, vulnerabilities) of relevant subjects to fitting responses in relevant subjects are those that lead to the development of the attitude of aversion to \( x \). The qualification that the fitting responses are those of relevant subjects is equivalent to fixing the secondary quality of colour on the actual responses of normal humans. The problem here, as in the case of kin-relations in the future society exemplified by Railton, is that the account takes the individual-relative factors that apply to the functions from perspectives \( p \) to responses of relevant subjects to determine what is harmful. The harmful, on Gert's account, is rigidly fixed on the dispositions, and consequent responses, of a certain kind of human beings.

Furthermore, in the case of harm we do not have to posit a future world in order to exemplify the problem of rigidly fixing the harmful on the responses of actual relevant subjects. At least certain kinds of circumstances that qualify as harmful for those with statistically normal dispositions to respond are not harmful to the masochist. These kinds of circumstances are those that cause significant pain to the subject, but in controlled environments. Because the masochist takes pleasure in such pain, these circumstances do not seem to qualify as harmful to the masochist.

Now, masochists do not belong to the class of relevant subjects S because their dispositions are statistically abnormal. Does it makes sense to say that the kind of circumstances that masochists enjoy should be conceived as harmful based on subjects of kind S' intrinsic aversion to such circumstances? I hold that it does not. This is because, first, we do not have any means by which we can determine the class of relevant subjects, and the
notion of such a class does not hold up in light of concerns related to what I contend are fitting, yet pathological or statistically abnormal, responses. Second, it is simply implausible to hold that the vulnerabilities of one group of people should dictate what is harmful to everyone else. That is, again, if the factors that determine the vulnerabilities of a subject affect the harmfulness of circumstances in relation to her, then why should a certain kind of human's vulnerabilities dictate what is harmful for everyone else?

5.2.2. Harmfulness as Dependent on the Nature of the Circumstances and the Affected Subject

An alternative way of conceiving of the purported evaluative features of the world is as regions of attraction and resistance (as Deonna proposed (chapter 2)). Such regions cannot be fixed on the actual responses of relevant subjects because, as we have seen, the dispositions of the subject partly determine what merits their resistance or attraction. And these regions of resistance and attraction are determined partly by the subject's temporal and spatial distance to the circumstances, the particular individual-relative factors that pertain to the affected subject, and the state of things in general.

This conception of harmfulness would therefore accommodate differences in the individual-relative factors that determine people's dispositions and vulnerabilities. Moreover, it will accommodate changes in human sensibilities more generally, and the gradually changing circumstances of the world in general. So that, for instance, if humans evolved in such way that radon gas no longer had the potential to harm us, we would not be committed to saying that avoidable exposure to radon gas is intrinsically harmful.

5.2.3. Summary

I have argued, in line with Peter Railton's argument concerning intrinsic value, that we should not fix harmfulness on the responses of a certain kind of humans. This is because such a rigidification would fail to take into account the evolving nature of our dispositions, and how they may bear on the fittingness of our responses. In light of the considerations above, it seems that what is harmful should not be predicated upon the individual-relative factors, and subsequent dispositions, of relevant subjects S. That is, the vulnerabilities of the majority do not determine the harmfulness of circumstances to individuals who are subject to more or less
novel vulnerabilities. If we want to include the individual-relevant factors of the affected subject, we cannot exclude some subjects on the basis of their dispositions' statistical abnormality.

Our dispositions are partly constitutive (at least of certain kinds) of value. This renders talk of harm constituted of, or figuring in, circumstances problematic, because what is harmful to a subject is harmful partly in virtue of their particular vulnerabilities (which are given rise to by the particular individual-relative factors that pertain to their dispositions and vulnerabilities). Rather, this way of talking about harmfulness points to our interests in avoiding certain circumstances and seeking others, not to elusive evaluative properties of, or in, the circumstances themselves. So, instead of fixing the value of harm on actual and statistically normal responses, we should return to Deonna's conception of evaluative features of our environment as calls to act in certain ways, under the domains of regions of attraction and resistance.

5.3. Dispositions to Respond and the Weight of Reasons

On our conception of harmfulness, it exists in a relation between the particular circumstances and the particular individual-relative factors (and the subsequent vulnerabilities) of a specific individual. The problem here is that such an account may be too subjective. Consequently, we run the risk of predicing harmfulness solely upon the response, and consequent evaluative judgement, of the affected subject. But, as has been made apparent, any given subject may be over- or under-sensitive to the circumstances that prompt their response, either as a result of a misconstruing of the nature of the circumstances, or of the nature of their vulnerabilities. The challenge is therefore to reconcile the idea that we can have veridical or malfunctioning emotional responses with the fact that people will be subject to novel vulnerabilities and thereby novel dispositions.

As we have seen, the individual-relative factors that pertain to a given subject partly explain their disposition to respond to some set of circumstances. In turn, the individual-relative factors that partly give rise to a disposition justify that disposition to the extent that these factors give rise to genuine vulnerabilities. For instance, my over-sensitivity to a more or less innocuous remark may result from being intoxicated by alcohol. In this case, the factor that causes my over-sensitivity is easily remedied by ‘sleeping it off’, or by an appreciation of the typical effects of such intoxication. Consequently, in this case, it seems being intoxicated
by alcohol generates a low degree of vulnerability, at least in relation to certain kinds of harms. On the other hand, if I have grown dependent on alcohol, such oversensitivity may be seen in a different light, because I may be incapable of remedying the cause of my disposition (i.e., my alcohol dependence).

There will obviously be ample disagreement about which dispositions denote a subject's genuine vulnerabilities, and which dispositions merely distort the subject's understanding of their vulnerabilities and of the circumstances that affect them. It is therefore important to identify different strategies for alleviating such disagreement. In this section I will explore some of the considerations that may bear on the veridicality of emotional responses, and some of the different kinds of reasons we may deploy in justifying our emotional responses.

### 5.3.1. The Function of Emotional Responses

We learn from our parents, educators, and peers about how to respond fittingly to circumstances that merit our resistance. This direction will, however, be made in light of the educator's understanding of fitting responses (i.e., her understanding of what merits resistance). In addition, we learn from our experiences what should be avoided. For example, I learn from touching a hot stove that I should be weary of putting my fingers on it; I learn that certain relationships with other people merit my resistance because they reduce my quality of life, and so on. This learning amounts to learning about my own nature, the nature of the external world, and of how the external world relates to me.

So, our emotional responses to harmful circumstances guide behaviour: They let us know whether the circumstances we are confronted with should, in general terms, be avoided or approached. And what merits my resistance is partly determined by the relevant individual-relative factors that pertain to me. For instance, if I have a peanut-allergy, peanuts merit my resistance in view of my vulnerability to them; if I have traumatic memories associated with loud noises and violence, then action movies at the cinema might merit resistance in light of this vulnerability.

Further, there are good reasons to minimise our experiences of harm to the extent that these experiences only occur in relation to circumstances that do in fact merit one's resistance; we do not want to be disposed to avoid circumstances that do not merit our resistance, because this would inhibit the function of such dispositions. In addition, we all have an
interest in limiting our experiences of harmfulness because these experiences are negative in nature: I want my emotional system to guide my behaviour in terms of regions of resistance, but I want to avoid having unnecessary experiences of harm. In this domain, the human emotional system can be conceived as an instrument by which we become aware of potential harmfulness in our environment (in terms of regions of resistance), an instrument that can be more or less accurate. And such accuracy is marked by an appreciation of the relevant individual-relative factors and the actual circumstances.

It seems that a complete understanding of harmfulness in relation to human beings, and in relation to specific individuals, requires a sufficient understanding of human nature, and of the nature of the particular affected individual. Such understanding will presumably be aided by further scientific discoveries: as we learn more about the human body and mind, we will learn more about what is harmful to human beings. And on the individual level we accumulate experiences of harmfulness (i.e., regions of resistance) to guide our actions more accurately in the future.

Nevertheless, in the absence of a complete understanding of the shared and relatively novel vulnerabilities of human beings, we will have to negotiate the standards for fitting dispositions in terms of the function of these dispositions. This communicative endeavour will, in turn, be undertaken by appeal to the relevant individual-relative factors and the actual circumstances. The individual-relative factors, which partly explain a subject's disposition, therefore represent reasons that may or may not justify a subject's disposition. So, a problem arises as to how we should determine the weight of individual-relative factors (i.e., the reasons that explain our dispositions).

5.3.2. Two Kinds of Statistical Normality

There is an array of circumstances that are (potentially) harmful to all humans: such as being in proximity to hungry and erratic tigers, being stabbed, falling off a cliff, being berated, and so on. Our shared vulnerabilities are mostly not in need of any explanation because we are all subject to them. But relatively novel vulnerabilities, such as those associated with long-standing trauma, may need to be explained by reference to the individual-relative factors that partly determine the subject's disposition. I do not have to explain why I am keeping a safe distance to the steep cliff ahead of me. But if I run out in the middle of a film I may have to appeal to the reasons for my emotional response in prompting an empathetic response in
someone else.

So, statistically abnormal dispositions and responses may be in need of justification, in the social sphere. Again, the function of our emotional responses to harmful circumstances is to notify us of what merits our resistance. And, statistically over- or under-sensitive dispositions may run counter to this function. That is not to say that statistically normal emotional dispositions always adhere to the function of the human emotional system's interaction with circumstances that merit resistance. Nevertheless, the statistical abnormality of an emotional disposition may be an indication that it is not functioning as an effective means of alerting the subject of what merits her resistance; in some cases, it represents a reason to believe that a given emotional response does not align with the actual circumstances in relation to one's actual vulnerabilities. This is because statistical normality acquires a certain normative authority when we look at the development of statistically normal dispositions as a collective learning process. Most adults are disposed to not touch the stove, not to stand near to a cliff, to have a fight or flight response if we see an erratic tiger in our proximity, and so on. These statistically normal dispositions, given rise to by our shared vulnerabilities, have a function: they guide our actions in (general) terms of what merits our resistance.

Nevertheless, there are many examples of statistically normal dispositions that have not served this purpose. The seeming arbitrariness of some of the social norms that have existed renders the dispositions that have arisen from mere social adaptation dubious as a means of guiding our behaviour. This is because these dispositions may not have developed in response to human vulnerabilities. For instance, socialisation may lead to the normalisation of harmful activities. The normalisation of binding the feet of Chinese girls at a young age did not improve the accuracy of their disposition to respond to such treatment. And this is because a disposition to being approving of such a tradition does not reflect the vulnerabilities that make such activities harmful to those that are subjected to it, but rather reflects a wish to display status. For that reason, statistical normality is only helpful as a means of indicating the fittingness of a disposition if such statistical normality has arisen as a response to our shared vulnerabilities.

We can therefore distinguish between two categories of statistically normal dispositions: (i) those that have arisen as a result of our shared vulnerabilities, and (ii) those that have acquired statistical normality merely as a result of socialisation, and therefore do not reflect any shared vulnerabilities of those that are subject to this kind of disposition. If a
person's disposition runs counter to the statistical norm of the former kind, then this constitutes an indication that the subject's disposition may run counter to its function (i.e., to notify the subject of that which merits her resistance).

Obviously, statistically normal dispositions may arise from our shared vulnerabilities and social adaptation. An example of this may be the statistically normal disposition of resistance to incest. But unless it reflects a shared vulnerability, it cannot serve as guide for what merits a subject's resistance. This distinction thus points to a consideration that bears on assessments of the accuracy of our dispositions. If the individual-relative factors that partly give rise to a disposition originate in social adaptation, such a disposition is in need of further justification. Consequently, we can point to the origins of a statistically normal disposition in explaining why it runs counter to the function of guiding our actions away from that which merits resistance. If it is not grounded in our shared vulnerabilities it will not serve this function. In the following sections, when I refer to statistical normality/abnormality as a reason to believe that one's disposition runs counter to its function, it is with reference to those statistically normal dispositions that have arisen from our shared vulnerabilities, and not merely from socialisation.

5.3.3. Intentional Control and the Weight of Reasons

As we have seen, an understanding of what circumstances qualify as harmful to someone will require an understanding of the individual vulnerabilities of the affected subject. The vulnerabilities of the affected subject will, in turn, be partly determined by the relevant individual-relative factors pertaining to her. Having said that, certain individual-relative factors give rise to dispositions to respond that are statistically abnormal (in the specialised sense above). Such statistical abnormality gives the subject a reason to believe that their disposition may be in error, in that it gives the subject a reason to think that their emotional disposition runs counter to the function of such dispositions (in the domain of harmfulness). But it is important to stress that the statistical abnormality of dispositions does not necessarily denote its malfunction, because the individual-relative factors pertaining to particular subjects will partly determine their vulnerabilities and the degree of these vulnerabilities. Therefore, in contrast to Gert's claim, I contend that statistically abnormal dispositions are not necessarily erroneous, but that the statistical abnormality (in the specialised sense above) of a disposition may be an indication of its malfunction.
The problem consists in determining which dispositions reflect genuine vulnerabilities. And this will have to be assessed in view of the individual-relative factors that give rise to a subject's dispositions. But different individual-relative factors give rise to differing degrees of vulnerability. For instance, lack of sleep make us vulnerable to certain kinds of circumstances, but the degree of such a vulnerability is not very great. This is, at least in part, because it is usually short-lived (unless one is suffering from insomnia) and can easily be remedied (i.e., by getting some sleep). Nevertheless, say, if a subject's lack of sleep is somehow inevitable (e.g., if she may lose her job by compromising her work in favour of getting some sleep) then this may lend more weight to this factor because she cannot readily remedy it. Moreover, again, individual-relative factors such as phobias, clinical depression, mental illnesses, and so on, constitute reasons that partly justify a subject's disposition to respond to certain circumstances – they make the subject vulnerable to certain aspects of her environment, and the factors that cause this vulnerability cannot be easily remedied and are not short-lived. These kinds of individual-relative factors cannot be changed by the sheer will of the subject, and this constitutes a consideration that speaks against discounting such factors (reasons) in our assessments of harm in relation to particular individuals.

So, one measure by which we can assess the weight of an individual-relative factor (reason) is by reference to the means the subject has at her disposal to remedy the factor. This is because such assessments may indicate the degree of the vulnerability that is given rise to by the individual-relative factor(s) in question. And because we want to limit our experiences of harm to those instances in which our experiences guide our actions in terms of what merits resistance. For example, if by sleeping for a few hours I will be less vulnerable to, say, other people's criticism, then I should do so in order to limit my experiences of harm. Further, this factor (lack of sleep) leads to a disposition that does not effectively guide my actions in terms of what merits my resistance; a disposition to being statistically oversensitive to other people's criticism may make one less adept at assessing these criticisms and heeding the advice of others.

Nonetheless, this is not a decisive measure. This is because individual-relative factors may change not as the result of an interest in improving the accuracy of one's emotional experiences, but by normalising certain kinds of circumstances. For instance, the normalisation of binding the feet of Chinese girls at a young age does not improve the accuracy of their disposition to respond to such treatment. A person who is subject to this treatment may, in view of its ubiquity, change their motivational base in accordance with this
tradition. But such a change in the motivational base of the subject has no bearing on her vulnerabilities – foot-binding is still harmful to her, although her disposition may have changed in line with a change in the individual-relative factors that pertain to her case.

5.3.3. Deferring to Other People's Opinions

Another means by which we may assess the weight of the individual-relative factors (reasons) that explain our dispositions is by deference to the opinions of people we know and trust. In many cases, this will be a good course of action in order to become aware of the reasons for one's statistically abnormal dispositions, and their legitimacy. So, other people may question the adequacy of one's emotional disposition (as an instrument for becoming aware of regions of resistance in one's environment). And the views of other people may be more accurate than our own, in light of the truism that we are often not the best judges of our own dispositions and behaviour. Therefore, other people's criticism should, in many cases, be interpreted as a reason to inquire into the efficacy of the criticised disposition.

However, it is obviously not always the case that we should defer to other people's assessments: it may serve someone's interest to convince one that one's reasons for responding (i.e., the factors that give rise to one's disposition) are illegitimate (i.e., that they do not generate a genuine vulnerability). Therefore, upon taking someone's advice one will need to assess it in terms of the reasons they give to support their advice. Say, if they aim to convince you that you are drunk but you are in fact less intoxicated than they are, then this reason will not necessarily undermine your initial response. An additional problem with such deference is that one may be unwilling to accept such input on account of the factors that give rise to the initial response – factors, such as a lack of sleep, may make one less inclined to accept the reasons other people provide to explain one's statistically abnormal dispositions and responses. This, however, may be alleviated if the advice comes from someone trusted person, and by an increased awareness of the effects of such factors on oneself. All in all, it seems deference to other (trusted) people's assessments of one's experiences of harmfulness will often give one a better understanding of such experiences, and the vulnerabilities they reflect. But such deference will obviously be aided by the subject's own knowledge of how certain factors influence their dispositions, and their potential remedies.

5.3.4. Disagreement
Identifying which individual-relative factors are relevant to the assessment of harmfulness in relation to oneself, or in relation to others, will obviously be difficult – there will be ample disagreement about the weight of individual-relative factors (reasons) in assessments of fittingness. But this does not mean that many statistically abnormal emotional dispositions reflect genuine vulnerabilities (such as those that result from mental illnesses, traumas, etc.), and that many statistically normal dispositions also reflect genuine vulnerabilities (e.g., the disposition to stay away from the edges of cliffs; to not have sex with one's family members, and so on). That is, some circumstances do merit our resistance in view of our shared and individual vulnerabilities, and our dispositions may be more or less adept at alerting us of what merits our resistance.

Nevertheless, in the absence of a complete understanding of human vulnerabilities, it will be prudent to reserve criticism of abnormal dispositions to those instances in which such criticism is necessary and consequential. Being empathetic to novel dispositions and consequently reserving criticism will alleviate disagreement and conflict. Further, reserving criticism for instances in which such criticism is necessary and consequential will lend more weight to this kind of criticism. Therefore, a general rule of thumb will be to practice empathy where it is possible, in view of our limited knowledge of human vulnerabilities. We are all aware of the effects of certain individual-relative factors, such as a lack of sleep, and by keeping them in mind in deciding whether or not to criticise people for their emotional dispositions and responses one can avoid unnecessary conflicts. The individual-relative factors (reasons) that partly explain a given subject's emotional disposition therefore have their utility besides justification. Awareness of these factors is conducive to empathy, which in turn is conducive to minimising conflict – just as we want to minimise our experiences of harm, we presumably want to minimise our experiences of conflicts.

However, in justifying our emotional dispositions to others, we will have to articulate the individual-relative factors (reasons) that partly explain it. That is, a prerequisite for communicating the reasons for one's statistically abnormal dispositions will be the capacity to identify and articulate these reasons. This merits concern because the capacity to identify and articulate the reasons (factors) that give rise to dispositions will potentially be limited by the subject's genetic predispositions, and socioeconomic status. Moreover, if this is true, and if certain dispositions are more prevalent among those that belong to lower socioeconomic groups, this may result in less weight being given to the individual-relative factors that
contribute to the generation of such dispositions in general. For instance, the particular history of a subject who has grown up with little resources in a crime-ridden area is not given much weight in a legal context. But this concern may be alleviated by the fact that the individual-relative factors (reasons) that partly explain a subject's dispositions to respond are, at least to a certain extent, accessible independently of the subject's experience. Consequently, other people may illuminate the factors that were partly responsible for the generation of the subject's disposition.

5.3.5. Summary

In the interest of illuminating some of the concerns that have a bearing on the fittingness of a dispositions and responses, I have distinguished between two kinds of statistically normal dispositions: those that can be seen as figuring in a collective learning process, in virtue of reflecting shared human vulnerabilities; and those that result merely from socialisation. In contrast to Gert's account, my contention is that if a given disposition runs counter to the former kind of statistically normal disposition then this is an indication that the disposition in question runs counter to its function. The origins of a statistically normal disposition (in the domain of harmfulness) therefore constitute a consideration that will have a bearing on its fittingness. But dispositions that run counter to the statistically normal disposition (of the specialised kind) may nonetheless be justified by appeal to the individual-relative factors that are partly responsible for the generation of the subject's vulnerabilities, and to the actual circumstances.

The individual-relative factors may, in turn, be weighed with regard to the subject's capacity to remedy the cause of their statistically abnormal disposition (i.e., the relevant individual relevant factor(s)). But this is not a decisive measure. Furthermore, deferring to other people's opinions may contribute to the process of elucidating the individual-relative factors that give rise to a given statistically abnormal disposition, and possible avenues of remedying dispositions that do not serve the function of our emotional interaction with the environment relative to harmfulness (i.e., as signifying what merits the subject's resistance).

Nevertheless, since one is unable to decisively delineate the degree of one's own vulnerabilities, or the vulnerabilities of other people, the standards will have to be negotiated. And we may appeal to the considerations above in negotiating these standards. But reserving criticism may be prudent in light of our limited knowledge of the different kinds and degrees
of human vulnerability, and in light of our motivation to avoid negative experiences – we
want to avoid conflict where conflict is unnecessary or inconsequential. Moreover, an
appreciation of the relevant individual-relative factors have a utility as a means of
empathising with the affected subject, even if we are unable to elucidate the precise kind and
degree of vulnerability that the factors in question generate.

5.4. Harmfulness as Analogous to a Secondary Quality

I have argued that harmfulness is not analogous to colour, in light of the ‘internal’ factors that
partly determine our emotional experiences of aspects of our environment. In contrast, in the
case of colour, talk of perspective can be taken quite literally because it denotes the viewing
circumstances. This means that an elucidation of colour will not serve to elucidate the
relational nature of harmfulness, or values in general. This brings into question whether we
can model harmfulness on a secondary quality at all.

In the following chapter I will propose that odour may be a better model for
harmfulness because of the relational nature of our experiences of odours. If this is correct,
then exploring the phenomenology of smell may serve to elucidate the nature of harmfulness,
and perhaps other values.
In view of our current conception of relational value, I am inclined to agree with Railton in his contention that value should not be modelled on colour (1998, 143). But, instead of developing his suggestion that taste may be a better candidate, I will explore the possibility of modelling the value of harm on odours. This is because taste is ambiguous, in the sense that it denotes a person's likes or dislikes. Further, we are not exposed to tastes as we are to odours; tastes do not notify the subject of the experience of what merits her resistance or attraction unless the subject chooses to taste it. Odours, on the other hand, are exposed to us, more or less regardless of our own volition, and they signify what merits our attraction or resistance. Furthermore, there seem to be more parallels between the factors that determine our experiences of odours and the factors that determine our experiences of harm, as opposed to taste vis-a-vis harm. For instance, what tastes bitter or sweet to me is not influenced by my personal history or my distance to the cause of this taste. But such factors do seem to play prominent parts in determining my experiences of odours.

Odours inform us through our olfactory system whether something merits resistance or attraction: It guides us in terms of what we should ingest and what we should avoid ingesting; we avoid people with bad odours, and we are attracted to those that smell good, and so on. However, odours may also be misleading. They may guide us towards objects that merit resistance, such as a poisonous cup of coffee; or they may make us resistant to objects that merit attraction, such as a foul smelling medicine. Furthermore, as has been made apparent, as long as one has the capacity to smell and one is breathing, exposure to odour is unavoidable, just as we cannot escape our experiences of harm.

While our experiences of colour tell us something about the world (i.e., the viewing circumstances and the properties of the object), odours, on the other hand, tell us something about the world's relation to ourselves. In general, it tells one something about what merits resistance or attraction in view of the particular individual-relative factors that partly determine one's experience of an odour. Odour therefore seems to be a good model for harmfulness, and, as such, can contribute to a better understanding of the nature of harmfulness – and perhaps values in general.

In the following, I will explore the possibility of modelling our experiences of harm on our experiences of odour, as a way of elucidating the nature of relational harm. However, I should stress that this idea is in need of further development. The phenomenology of smell is
an extensive field of study, which I have not had the time or space to properly explore.

6.1. Detecting/Evaluating Odours

There are two aspects of our experience of odours: a detective aspect, which requires the capacity to effectively identify and distinguish between odours; and an evaluative aspect, which is influenced by the individual-relative factors pertaining to our individual constitutions. Detecting odours is tantamount to detecting gas molecules in our environment, and it is therefore clear that odours exist independently of our experiences of them. Harmfulness, on the other hand, is not reducible to something like gas molecules in the environment, but it does exist independently of our experiences. This is because our emotional responses to circumstances may be misleading in terms of signifying what merits resistance or attraction. Consequently, it is not a prerequisite for something being harmful to me that I experience it as such: One may be physically or psychologically harmed in the absence of any experience of such harm. I may, for example, not experience the radon gas I am being exposed to everyday, but it is nevertheless harmful to me; I may not experience the harm resulting from the abusive nature of my relationship to someone else, and so on.

I should stress, however, that this independence from our actual experiences does not imply a realist understanding of harmfulness. Harmfulness is still determined by the individual-relative factors that pertain to the affected subject and the circumstances that give rise to her response. That is, harmfulness cannot be conceived of independently of the specific vulnerabilities of the affected subject, although it can exist relationally between the subject and the circumstances despite her immediate response being misleading.

So, while harmfulness is not analogous to gas molecules in our environment, it does exist quite independently of our experiences of it. In addition, we can be better or worse at detecting the harmful effects of aspects of our environment. A medical doctor will be more qualified at identifying what is physically harmful to human beings; a psychiatrist will be more qualified at detecting psychologically harmful aspects of my environment in relation to me; a radon mitigation professional will be better at detecting harmful radon gases, and so on.

Still, although we can trace our experiences back to their cause in both cases, the veridicality of our experiences of odours as calls to act (i.e., as signifying regions of resistance or attraction) will be assessed in terms of the evaluative aspect of such experiences. For example, my experience of the odour emitted by Munster cheese, as a call to avoid it, is
erroneous in light of how much I would like the cheese if I tasted it. But my experience of its odour as disgusting is notwithstanding in line with the statistically normal way to experience such gas-molecules, and I have not made a mistake in detecting its foul smell.

This therefore marks a disanalogous aspect of odours in relation to harm. Harmfulness is not reducible to something with the ontological status of gas-molecules, and can therefore not be detected in the same manner as these gas-molecules. Yet, the evaluative aspect of experiences of odours (i.e., as signifying what merits resistance or attraction) is analogous to our experiences of harmfulness. This is, as I will explain below, because the same kind of factors that determine our experiences of harm determine our evaluative experiences of odours. Our experiences of odour and harm are determined by individual-relative factors pertaining to a specific subject coupled with the actual circumstances. The analogy thus pertains to the evaluative, and action-guiding, aspect of our experiences of odours, as opposed to the detection of gas-molecules in our environment. After all, our experiences of odours as calls to act are not reducible to the proper detection of gas-molecules, just as our experiences of harmfulness are not reducible to the proper detection of any kind of external properties.

Nevertheless, although harmfulness is inherently relational, and can therefore not be reduced to evaluative properties (analogous to the gas-molecules that give rise to our experiences of odours), it, again, can still be assessed independently of our experiences of it. The capacity to effectively detect harms in relation to human beings, in general and individually, will be marked by an enhanced understanding of the human body and mind, the individual-relative factors that pertain to individual cases, and of the particular circumstances. Akin to how our evaluative experiences of odours call us to act in certain ways, generally under the domains of resistance or attraction, our experiences of harm guide our behaviour. But, as our experiences of odours may be misleading, in the sense that they can make us resistant to something that does not merit resistance, or be attracted to something that in fact merits our resistance, our emotional experiences of harmfulness may be misaligned with the facts. This is because our experiences may be based on misconceptions about ourselves or the circumstances, which can give rise to over- or under-sensitivity, or a failure to detect harm where it in fact exists.

Say, if I am mistaken in thinking my foot is broken, I may be over-sensitive to people stepping on my foot; if a radon-detector falsely informs me that there is radon in my house, I will be mistaken about the harmfulness of my living conditions, and so on. While our emotional systems help us detect harmfulness in our environment, the veridicality of such
experiences can be checked against the facts pertaining to the nature of the affected subject and the circumstances. The point is that this is akin to how the veridicality of our evaluative experiences of odours can be checked against the nature of the affected subject and the circumstances. Consequently, modelling harms on odours may be helpful in illuminating the nature of harmfulness as existing relationally.

6.2. Colour/Odour

Both colour and odour are response-dependent qualities. Human experiences of colours are conditioned on being equipped with a perceptual system capable of perceiving colours; and human experiences of odour are conditioned on a working olfactory system.

We detect colours, and, in turn, some people have better detective capacities in this regard than others. This is true in the case of odours as well. We detect gas-molecules in the environment, and these gas-molecules are associated with their requisite source. For instance, a sous-chef can supposedly identify the amount of salt added to a sauce through their olfactory system.

But our experiences of colour do not denote to the subject of the experience what merits attraction or resistance. Colours are not directly action-guiding: although we may favour some colours over others, they do not guide our actions in terms of regions of attraction and resistance, at least not to a significant degree. Rather, they tell us something about the world. And the information we collect about the colours of objects may be instrumental in guiding our actions, but, again, they do not guide our actions directly.

Let us say I think the colour of my friend's house is abhorrent. This evaluative response to the colour of my friend's house does not directly cause my resistance; I do not refrain from entering his house on account of disagreeing with his choice of colour. On the other hand, let us say my friend is a hoarder, and consequently his house is filled to the brim with everything he is incapable of throwing away. And, as a consequence of my friend's reluctance to throw anything away, his house has started to emit pungently repulsive odours. In contrast to the case of being repulsed by the colour of my friend's house, I will immediately be inclined to refrain from entering his house if it emits an array of revolting odours.

It appears that the detective function is dominant in the colour-case. Although we may favour some colours over others, the main function of colour-perception is identifying and discriminating between colours. This means that we are justified in excluding the experiences
of those who are incapable of detecting colours, or those that have a deficient capacity for such detection, from the class of relevant subjects. That is, we can confidently contend that some people are either incapable of, or less adept at, identifying and discriminating between colours. And, because this is the primary function of colour-perception, we can exclude these people's experiences of a given colour from its associated functions – these experiences do not reveal anything about the nature of the colour.

In contrast, the evaluative function of our experiences of odour seems to be the primary function of such experiences, at least for most people. The evaluative function of one's experiences of odour, in general terms, is to avoid that which is disagreeable, and to guide one towards that which is agreeable. The proper functioning of the evaluative aspect of such experiences is therefore not only marked by having the capacity to smell, but also by the individual-relative factors pertaining to the subject of the experience. This means that we cannot exclude the experiences of anyone solely on the basis of their inferior gas-molecule-detection capacities, because what merits resistance or attraction is partly determined by the individual-relative factors pertaining to the particular subject. The evaluative aspect of odours, in contrast to colours, reflect the relational nature of harm; and they thereby reflect the notion that we cannot exclude certain people's experiences of harm on the basis that they have defective emotional systems or are subject to statistically abnormal dispositions.

6.3. Odour/Harm

I will, in the following, outline some of the analogous aspects our experiences of odours vis-a-vis harm. These aspects include distance and the category of individual-relative factors I outlined in chapter 4. Again, I am here modelling harm on the evaluative aspect of our experiences of odours, not on the detective aspect which amounts to the detection of gas-molecules in one's environment.

6.3.1. Distance

Distance is an important factor that partly determines a subject's experience of harm. And this obviously has its parallel in the odour-case: the olfactory system identifies odours more effectively in proximity to the thing that causes the odour, and the attraction or resistance that ensues is felt more strongly in proximity to the cause.
6.3.2. Individual-Relative Factors

6.3.2.1. Facts About the Relevant Subject

Facts about an individual (e.g., height, gender, weight, etc.) will influence a subject's experience of an odour. Say, a heterosexual man's experience of the smell of perfumes intended for women will probably be different from a heterosexual woman's experience of it. Moreover, it seems plausible that similar considerations apply to gender. Someone's cultural identity will also influence her experience of certain odours, in terms of the particular experiences of odours that is entailed by their cultural identity.

It seems therefore that specific facts about an individual partly determine their experiences of odours, akin to the way such facts influence one's experience of harms.

6.3.2.2. The Motivational Base

The motivational base of the subject has a clear parallel in the odour-case: my preferences, desires, tastes, attitudes, concerns, and so on, will influence my experience of odours. My attitude toward smoking will affect my experience of the odour of tobacco smoke; my concern for the environment will affect my experience of the odour emanating from some kind of toxic waste, and so on.

This is similar to the way the motivational base of a football player influences his experience of the harm of breaking a leg, in contrast to the motivational base of an accountant. The football player's concerns and interests diverge from those of the accountant in way that is consequential for the potential harmfulness the circumstances in question pose to him.

6.3.2.3. Particular History

The subject's particular history will also be a contributing factor to her experiences of odour. This is because familiar odours are associated with memories that evoke emotional experiences. The smell of burning tobacco may evoke pleasant memories and thereby pleasant emotions in some, while it may have the opposite effect in others; the smells associated with
spring will, in many cases, bring forward pleasant emotional memories, but if this change in seasons is associated with a traumatic incident it will conjure unpleasant emotional memories, and so on.

By ‘emotional memories’ I mean those instances in which we have an emotional experience in response to an odour as a result of the odour being associated with a memory, or a collection of memories, which the subject is not necessarily capable of consciously bringing to mind. In such cases, the emotional experience of the past is prompted by the odour she is confronted with, but the memory of the actual circumstances of her experience does not necessarily come readily to mind.

Such emotional memories may impede the action-guiding function of the olfactory system's interaction with the environment. This is because, in virtue of being connected to emotional memories, one may interpret the smell in view of such memories, and not in accordance with the present circumstances and the relevant individual-relative factors. For instance, I may have pleasant emotional memories connected to the smell of burning tobacco, and consequently be inclined to smoke when I am confronted with this familiar odour. Yet, in terms of guiding one's actions toward what is beneficial for oneself, this call to act is incongruous with the facts of one's own vulnerabilities and the actual circumstances. Or I may have eaten a bad pickle once, and as a result I associate the smell of pickles with this negative memory, despite my actual love of pickles.

This phenomenon may also come into play in determining a subject's experience of harm. My emotional experiences connected to smoking may impede the action-guiding function of my emotional system in relation to this harm. Or, one may develop a disposition to being oversensitive to a certain kind of circumstances as a result of having such emotional memories. This is the case if one associates a certain kind of situation with a negative emotional memory. For instance, similar circumstances to those I am now confronted with (perhaps involving a more nefarious group of people) may have been significantly harmful to me in some way. Consequently, my emotional memory connected to these circumstances informs me that the present circumstances, in virtue of their similarities with the previous circumstances (either consciously borne to mind or not), are equally harmful to me, despite this not being the case. In such a case, the negative emotional memories that are associated with the present circumstances impede the action-guiding function of the subject's emotional interaction with her environment.

However, the particular history, and subsequent emotional memories, of the subject
may also be partly constitutive of the action-guiding functions of their emotional interaction with the environment, both in the case of harm and odour. This is the case if, for instance, the negative emotional memories are strong and enduring to the extent that they constitute long-standing trauma. Or if, say, as a result of pregnancy the smell of coffee makes one nauseous. In these cases, it seems that the call to act (i.e., in accordance with one's experience of the odour) should be heeded, in light of the specific vulnerabilities of the relevant subjects.

6.3.2.4. Facts about the Subject's Personal Relationships

Furthermore, facts about my relationships to the people around me will, in some cases, influence my experience of an odour. I may be less inclined to experience the smell of old sweat emanating from my friend as a call to avoid this person than I would if the smell exuded from a stranger; my experience of the distinctive smell of someone will be affected by what we have experienced together, and of my view of this person in general; my experience of a certain kind of perfume may change if I come to associate it with someone I know, and so on.

This is analogous to the way in which my experience of a harm may be influenced by the fact that the harm was done to someone I care about, as opposed to someone I do not know. For instance, my disposition to respond to the circumstances that include a child's death will be influenced by whether the child in question is my child or someone else's.

6.5. Mistaken Experiences

Another parallel to harm is derived from the notion that there is a sense in which our olfactory systems may be mistaken in provoking emotional experiences that prompt behaviour, in general terms, either in the form of resistance or attraction. In a manner akin to the way something that smells bad to me may obscure its delicious taste since I will refrain from tasting it, my negative emotional response to a set of circumstances may obscure its innocuous nature. The smell of Munster cheese, for instance, may incline me to steer clear of it. But, it may still be true that if I were to taste this cheese I would find it delicious. Similarly, I may believe I am allergic to gluten, so that I respond negatively to foods containing gluten, but in fact some other parameter has caused my discomfort relative to food-groups containing gluten. If I come to learn that I am not allergic, then I will recognise that my emotional
response to food containing gluten will have been in one sense erroneous: it indicated that food containing gluten merited resistance from my perspective, while there was in fact no good reason for this, since gluten was never harmful to me. And if I were to learn that Munster cheese is delicious despite its foul smell, there is a sense in which my olfactory system was mistaken in signifying that I should avoid it.

Moreover, analogous to the way that the smell of Munster cheese may cease to be disgusting to me upon tasting it, the negative emotional response I previously associated with food containing gluten may change, with time, upon my learning that I am not allergic to gluten. That is, as the smell of an object may indicate whether it should be avoided or approached, my initial emotional response to some set of circumstances may indicate its harmfulness to me. But I may have insufficient knowledge of my own nature or of the nature of the circumstances, so that my initial emotional response does not correspond to the actual harmfulness the circumstances pose to me, just as the smell of some object may disguise its deliciousness or its harmfulness in relation to myself.

As Jacobsen and D'Arms pointed out (in chapter 1), our emotional dispositions are to a certain extent amenable to critical reflection, and this seems to be the case for our emotional dispositions relative to odours as well. As we have seen, one's experience of an odour may change upon learning about oneself and about the nature of the odour. And if it does not actually change, such considerations may still influence one's experience of the odour. For instance, while changing your baby's diaper you may feel inclined to let the smell overpower you, in the sense that it is represented as meriting resistance, but this inclination can be silenced by way of an appreciation of the actual circumstances and your relation to them. In such a case, the odour may persist, but the subject's experience of the odour changes.

The experience of an odour, conceived as a call to act (generally, either in the form of attraction or resistance), may be erroneous in the sense that it may misrepresent an object as something that should be avoided while it in fact is something that should not be avoided, and vice versa. In such cases, facts about the subject and the object (which exudes an odour) will determine the veridicality of the subject's initial olfactory experience. If her experience represents the object as something that should be avoided, while, in view of the relevant facts about the subject and the object, the object is not something that should be avoided by the subject, her experience can be said to be false – it gives the subject a false understanding of herself and of the particular circumstances.

Therefore, akin to how the veridicality of a subject's experience of harmfulness can be
assessed by an appreciation of the individual-relative factors pertaining to her, and of the actual circumstances, the veridicality of our evaluative responses to experiences of odours (i.e., as calls to act) can be assessed in terms of the factors that determine the experience and the actual circumstances.

6.6. Two Kinds of Sensitivity

A possibly disanalogous aspect of odour vis-a-vis harm is the notion that one can have a sensitive olfactory system, one that identifies and discriminates between odours more effectively. In the case of colour, this proved to be a point at which the analogy with harm collapsed, since one cannot be overly sensitive to colour. Yet, it seems that sensitivity to odours is not that different from a sensitivity to harm. This is because someone can be overly sensitive to odours, or a particular odour, as a result of bad experiences (or the lack thereof), pregnancy, a stroke, medical conditions like hyperosmia (which causes an increased sensitivity to odours), and the like.

This kind of over-sensitivity is distinguishable from having a practiced talent for identifying the complexity and diversity of odours (i.e., the detective aspect), in that the former does not entail any kind of appreciation, and it does not necessarily reveal the nature of odours rather than merely intensifying them. This can be said of sensitivity to harm as well. This is because, although, on the one hand, one can be overly sensitive to harmfulness, one can also, on the other hand, be quite adept at identifying what qualifies as potentially harmful to oneself and to other people. In the case of harm, such a talent is at least marked by a good understanding of the nature of the affected subject and their relation to the circumstances.

Hyperosmia may thus be seen as analogous to an individual-relative factor, such as pathological fear, which gives rise to a statistically over-sensitive disposition in relation to certain kinds of circumstances, and, consequently, a relatively novel vulnerability. This is because an arachnophobic individual will have an increased sensitivity to certain aspects of her environment, namely spiders, in a manner similar to how a hyperosmic individual will have an increased sensitivity to odours. The subject who has acquired the habit of getting things her way, and who consequently is very sensitive to what she perceives as circumstances that are harmful to her, has her parallel in the person who is overly sensitive to odours without having legitimate reasons for being subject to such over-sensitivity.
6.7. Changes in the Way that Humans are Constituted

Let us imagine, as Blackburn did in relation to colour, a future world in which objects that evoked pleasant olfactory experiences now give rise to unpleasant experiences. Such changes would nonetheless be conceived on the individual level because our experiences of odours are, as it stands, already diverging. But, even if we could conceive of a world in which our subjective experiences of odours are inverted, such a possibility would not pose a problem for our conception of the evaluative aspect of our experiences of odour as a model for our experiences of harm. This is because such a change would either denote a change in the constitution of the subject of the olfactory experience, or in the constitution of the external world that emits odours. Moreover, if this is not the case, then we can meaningfully contend that the action-guiding function of the human olfactory system has been lost in such a world – that our experiences of odour no longer have an action-guiding function, in terms of guiding our actions towards that which is beneficial and away from that which is disagreeable (or that this function has been inverted).

The relational nature of our experiences of odour entails that a change in our olfactory experiences will denote a change in the nature of the subject of the experience, or in the world that gives rise to it. And, if it in fact does not, then the action-guiding function of our olfactory experiences has merely been lost or inverted.

6.7. Summary

Peter Railton, paraphrasing Shoemaker (1994), illuminates that “we use color terms to assemble information about the world around us for input into deliberation, not to steer choice more directly” (1998, 143). Because the personal disposition of the affected subject appears to be partly constitutive of the harm that some set of circumstances pose to her, it seems wrong to assume that assessments of harm give us information about the world around us in the same way as assessments of colour do.

I have distinguished between two aspects of our experiences of odours: an evaluative aspect, and a detective aspect. My contention is that the evaluative aspect of our experiences of odours is dominant. In general terms, the function of such experiences, I argue, is to guide the subject towards agreeable circumstances/objects, and away from disagreeable circumstances/objects. Consequently, an assessment of the veridicality of our (evaluative)
experiences of odours will need to take into account the individual-relative factors pertaining to the subject of the olfactory experience.

While talk of odours tell us something about the world around us, it more accurately tells us about this world's *relation* to us by signifying whether something should be avoided or approached. And despite the subjectivity of such experiences, there is a sense in which the olfactory system may be mistaken about the nature of an object and the nature of oneself, as with the Munster cheese above. Similarly, an emotional experience may falsely notify one of the harmfulness of some set of circumstances. Such a mistake is, as in the case of olfactory experiences, either characterised by a misconstruing of one's own nature or of the nature of the circumstances. And as you may refrain from indulging your inclination to emotionally respond to a set of circumstances statistically disproportionately, you may consciously refrain from responding statistically disproportionately to an odour.

Furthermore, if our experiences of odour were somehow to invert in the future, such a change would denote a change in the subjects of such inverted olfactory experiences, or in the world that prompts such experiences. Or it would simply mean that the action-guiding function of human olfactory experiences has been lost or inverted. This is, as in the case of harm, because the individual-relative factors pertaining to the subject of the olfactory experience partly determine what merits her resistance or attraction, and they therefore also partly determine her evaluative experience of a given odour.

So, human evaluative experiences of odours are partly determined by the individual-relative factors of the subject and by the nature of the object that emits the odour. As such, odour constitutes a good model for harm as existing relationally between the specific individual factors pertaining to a particular subject and the circumstances she is confronted with. Again, I should stress that this idea is in need of further development, in view of my limited knowledge of the phenomenology of smell. My point is merely that this may present a better model for harmfulness than colour, contrary to Gert's contention.

In the next chapter I will try to explicate the objectivity of relational harm, in line with Peter Railton. I will then consider whether the reasons that I contend are relevant to evaluative judgements of relational harmfulness are vulnerable to any of the worries presented in the preceding chapters.
7. OBJECTIVITY AND REASONS

7.1. Objectivity

I have argued, with reference to Peter Railton, that we cannot rigidify the value of harm by fixing on the actual responses of relevant subjects. Such rigidification is inappropriate as a means to account for the objectivity involved in assessments of harmfulness (1998, 141). Harms are not analogous to colour in this respect. Instead, I have suggested that odour may be a better secondary quality on which to model this value. But where does this leave us in terms of the objectivity, or veridicality, of our experiences of harm?

In the case of mistaken odours touched upon above, the mistake can be corrected through an appreciation of the relevant individual-relative factors pertaining to the affected subject and of the nature of the cause of the odour. Say, someone may find the smell of Munster cheese disgusting, but the discovery of its deliciousness will influence their experience of its smell. And one's emotional experience of an odour, as meriting either resistance or attraction, may change upon one gaining knowledge about the cause of the odour.

Railton offers an alternative account of the objectivity involved in assessments of intrinsic value, which can be applied to assessments of harmfulness. Namely, as independence from our actual attitudes (1998, 142-143). If torture is harmful to beings that experience the non-pleasurable pain associated with torture, then this is enough to say that torture is harmful, regardless of changing attitudes on the matter. Whether I believe a baby's incessant crying to be out of proportion to the torture techniques I inflict on her, this belief has no bearing on the harmfulness that such an act poses to the baby. The moral reprehensibility of such an act is not dependent on our attitudes toward it, nor is its harmfulness to the baby. Rather, as I have argued throughout this thesis, the harmfulness of torture is contingent upon the nature of the circumstances and the affected subject. If, on the other hand, future humans were somehow impervious to the non-pleasurable pain associated with torture, then torture intended to inflict such pain would no longer amount to a harm to humans, unless it were somehow physically or psychologically debilitating. The conception of the value of harm which we have arrived at is therefore a non-relative, yet relational account. It is non-relative in the sense that it does not depend on our attitudes toward harmfulness, yet it is relational in the sense that it exists in the relation between the circumstances and the subject.
Harmfulness is not a categorical property of the world. Neither is it analogous to colour-properties, in that our dispositions are not partly constitutive of these purported properties. Rather, our experiences of harm are analogous to our evaluative responses to odours, in that our experiences of odours signify what should be approached and what should be avoided – what merits resistance and what merits attraction. It seems therefore that evaluative judgements of the harmfulness of some set of circumstances in relation to particular subjects are truth-apt. So, what is wrong with wanton cruelty is not just that we do not like it, as Bertrand Russell's intuition rightly suggests. Our evaluative judgements are not merely reports of subjective approval/disapproval or expressions of attitudes. The subjectivity of harmfulness amounts to the influence of the relevant individual-relative factors in determining our vulnerabilities, and consequently what is potentially harmful to a particular subject (i.e., what merits a particular subject's resistance).

The perennial problem for anyone who wants to assess the harmfulness of a particular set of circumstances in relation to a particular subject is to determine the kind and degree of vulnerability that the relevant individual-relative factors give rise to, in particular circumstances in relation to particular subjects. But, as I have already pointed out, there does not seem to be a straightforward way of determining the degree of vulnerability of a given subject in relation to the particular circumstances, and especially in relation to oneself. Determining the standards for fittingness will therefore be a communicative endeavour. I have attempted to elucidate to some of the considerations that may bear on such assessments in chapter 5, section 5.3.

7.2. Reasons

To recap, I have rejected the uniqueness assumption: that a value is associated with a uniquely fitting response, regardless of the particular circumstances and the particular vulnerabilities of the individuals involved. I have also rejected the idea that we can catalogue different aspects of a particular subject's environment with their correlative fitting emotional experiences. In addition, I rejected the notion that evaluative properties are categorical properties of the world to which we respond. In light of these conclusions, there does not seem to be a category of reasons that demarcate the right kind of reasons for endorsing an emotional response. This is, again, because a particular response will have to be assessed in terms of the particular circumstances and their relation to the particular affected subject(s).
I have nevertheless argued that the relevant individual-relative factors that pertain to a particular subject may explain and justify their disposition and consequent response, in light of the vulnerabilities they give rise to. These factors (reasons) will obviously have to be considered with regard to the actual circumstances that caused the response in question. We therefore have two sets of reasons: external reasons, constituted by the circumstances; and internal reasons, constituted by the relevant individual-relative factors pertaining to the particular affected subject. But the question remains as to whether this conception of reasons for endorsement is vulnerable to any of the concerns raised with regard to reasons throughout this thesis.

7.2.1. The Conflation Problem

In chapter 2, I elucidated the “conflation problem” brought forth by Jacobsen and D'Arms: that response-dependent theories of value do not provide an avenue of differentiating the moral and prudential reasons for endorsing an emotional response from the reasons that have a bearing on the fittingness of the response. But on the relational account of value I have arrived at, this does not seem to present a problem. The reasons that determine the fittingness of an emotional response to harmful circumstances are represented by the facts pertaining to the circumstances, and the particular relevant individual-relative factors that give rise to a particular kind and degree of vulnerability. So, the right kind of reasons for endorsing an emotional response will vary depending on the vulnerabilities of the affected subject and the circumstances that give rise to their response.

In the case of harm, prudential reasons for endorsing a sentiment will bear on the fittingness of a subject's response. This is because harmfulness amounts to regions of resistance, and we have prudential reasons for avoiding certain circumstances in view of our concern for avoiding harm to ourselves. Likewise, there are prudential reasons for limiting the domain of regions of resistance, because we want to limit our experiences of harm to the extent that our experiences indicate what actually merits our resistance. Our emotional responses to harmful circumstances have a function: they notify us of potentially harmful aspects of our environment in terms of calls to action. However, certain responses may exaggerate or depreciate harmfulness, or they may fail to inform us of it, or postulate harmfulness where there is none. These errors have their source either in a misconception of one's own vulnerabilities, or in a misconception of the circumstances that cause one's
response. Both of these mistakes can be corrected by inquiring into relevant individual-relative factors pertaining to the affected subject, and by an appreciation of the actual circumstances.

In turn, our conception of harmfulness does not seem vulnerable to the objection that it conflates prudential and moral reasons with reasons of fittingness. This is because there are no such reasons, other than the factors that pertain to the particular circumstances and the disposition of the particular affected subject. Since there are no uniquely fitting responses correlative to specific aspects of the environment, the notion of reasons of fittingness is not helpful.

7.2.2. The Essential Contestability Thesis

Neither does the essential contestability thesis seem to pose a serious problem for our conception of harmfulness. As Jacobsen and D'Arms elucidated in the second chapter of this thesis, concepts are essentially contestable if “there is room for dispute over their application without linguistic impropriety, even in cases which one party to the dispute regards as clear or paradigmatic instances” (2005, 12). I have argued that the potential harmfulness that some set of circumstances pose in relation to a particular individual cannot be determined merely by considering the concept's rules of application. Rather, in line with Railton, we need to consider the nature of the affected subject and the nature of the circumstances that cause their response in order to determine the fittingness of the subject's response. Analogous to how subjectivity enters into the evaluative aspect of odours, our dispositions and consequent vulnerabilities influence what merits our attraction or resistance.

In light of our conception of value, it appears we have found the root of the suggestion that evaluative concepts, such as the harmful, are essentially contestable. On the relational account we have arrived at, it is possible that two disputants may apply the same evaluative concept (i.e., harmfulness) without linguistic impropriety. However, if we conceive of the harmful as what merits a subject's resistance, then one disputant may deem a given set of circumstances harmful while the other deems it innocuous. In such a case, both disputants may be correct if what they are referring to is the circumstances' potential to harm themselves (or another particular subject). Take the example of peanuts again. One subject may deem peanuts innocuous, while another subject may deem them very harmful, but this does not mean that they are talking about different things. Rather, it means that they are talking about
the harmfulness of peanuts in relation to their own degrees of vulnerability to the peanuts (or another particular subject's degree of vulnerability to peanuts). Similarly, a given person may find fireworks delightful, while another person may see fireworks as potentially harmful in view of their potential to cause her to re-experience traumatic events in her life. In these cases, again, the disputants may be talking past each other – they are applying the same concept without linguistic impropriety and they arrive at different conclusions. But these conclusions may nevertheless both be correct if we conceive of the harmful in relation to particular subjects. What the disputants fail to consider is that their claims as to the harmfulness of the circumstances are claims about the potential harm the circumstances pose to themselves (or to some other specific person or group of people).

7.2.3. The Role of Emotions

The idea that we can assess the harmfulness of a set of circumstances in relation to a given subject may seem to run counter to the idea of the response-dependence of values. That is, if harmfulness is assessable in terms of reasons, one may wonder what role is played by our emotional responses. A source of this concern may be the idea that a value being response-dependent entails that a subject's initial response partly determines the value of that which they respond to. While this may be true in many cases, it is obviously not true in all cases. As has been made apparent above, we may be mistaken in experiencing certain circumstances as regions of resistance, and thereby be mistaken in our evaluative judgement of these circumstances as harmful in relation to ourselves. But this does not mean that our emotions are irrelevant to assessments of harmfulness. This is because a subject's dispositions play an important role in determining what is harmful to her.

As we have seen, individual-relative factors generate dispositions which, in turn, partly determine what merits our resistance (i.e., what is potentially harmful to a given subject). A subject's emotions are therefore clearly not redundant in assessing the potential harmfulness of some set of circumstances in relation to a particular subject. For instance, my disposition to being afraid of horror movies partly explains the fittingness of my response of fear.

7.2.4. Subjectivity
But, as we have seen, a relational account of harmfulness runs the risk of becoming too subjective. We do not possess a complete understanding of the vulnerabilities of human beings, in general or individually. The standards of fittingness with regard to emotions will therefore have to be negotiated in view of the particular circumstances and the particular affected subject(s), and the function of our responses as notifying us of what merits our resistance. I have attempted to elucidate some of the considerations that may bear on the fittingness of a response in chapter 5.

In line with Deonna, I see the subject's emotional experience as a defeasible reason to believe that this experience is in line with the non-evaluative facts of the environment and her vulnerabilities. Moreover, my contention is that the statistical abnormality of a response may be an indication that the response in question runs counter to its function. However, I have also made clear that not all statistical normality enjoys such normative authority. Those statistically normal dispositions that have arisen from mere socialisation do not necessarily reflect underlying shared vulnerabilities, and consequently do not necessarily figure in a collective learning process – they do not necessarily alert us to what is harmful to humans. Moreover, if a trusted person tells one that one's response runs counter to the function of one's emotional system, this may also count as reason to reassess the fittingness of one's response. Dispositions that run counter to the statistical normality that we can either confidently understand as figuring in such a collective learning process, or dispositions that have been put into question by someone we trust, will therefore have to be assessed in light of the individual-relative factors that pertain to the affected subject and the actual circumstances. The justificatory force of an individual-relative factor (reason) may, I have suggested, be assessed in terms of its amenability to personal control. But this is not a decisive measure as we are able to change our disposition in response to, say, normalisation, without improving the accuracy, or fittingness, of such a disposition. The point is rather that the extent to which one is capable of amending an individual-relative factor which gives rise to a statistically over-sensitive disposition may reflect the degree of vulnerability that such a factor gives rise to. For instance, I may be able to amend my lack of sleep, but I may be unable to rid myself of my pathological fear of spiders.

In conclusion, we need to negotiate the standards of fittingness of emotions in view of the function of such emotional responses (in the domain of harmfulness) as indicating to the affected subject what merits her resistance. And we need to accommodate the fact that what merits a given subject's resistance may differ from the statistical norm or from what is
rational, as our dispositions often bear on what merits our resistance. Considerations as to the kind and degree of vulnerabilities that particular individual-relative factors give rise to will be important in the social sphere, in deciding on what we can and cannot do to each other. It therefore seems that we should look for viable strategies for alleviating disagreements concerning the legitimacy of individual-relative factors (reasons) that partly explain a subject's emotional response to a perceived harm.

7.6. Conclusion

In this thesis I have presented three understandings of the nature of response-dependent value, and what the idea of fittingness consists in. I have also, from chapter 4 onwards, attempted to construct a preliminary account of harmfulness, modelled on odours.

I have argued against Jacobsen and D'Arms' contention that a proper endorsement of a sentiment has to be undertaken by appeal to the right kind of reasons. This is because such a reliance on context-independent reasons seems to contain the implicit assumption that sentimental values are associated with uniquely fitting responses. This, in turn has realist implications because it seems to presuppose that the values in question, as it were, ‘belong’ to the objects of their ascription. Moreover, such an understanding of fittingness fails to take into account that the factors that validate our responses are not only those that belong to the object to which we respond, but also those that belong to the responder (e.g., her motivational base, particular history, etc.). Furthermore, their postulation of underlying sensibilities relative to sentimental values that reveal our fundamental evaluative perspectives does not seem to hold up in light of the fact that our sensibilities are dynamic. In addition, it appears distinguishing between obscuring factors, and factors that merely contribute to the development of our sensibilities will, in many cases, be very difficult, in light of the formative influence of obscuring factors. These considerations question the utility of appealing to such underlying sensibilities in order to reveal our fundamental perspectives on values such as ‘the funny’ (i.e., our ‘senses’ of humour).

I have also argued against Deonna's contention that we can exclude the emotional experience of certain individuals from assessments of harm on the basis of the irrationality of their disposition, such as those who are suffering from pathological fears or long-standing trauma. This is because what merits a subject's resistance will be partly determined by her dispositions. In addition, I argued that the idea of normal interaction between a particular
person's emotional system and the environment is implausible, in light of the arguments presented against the idea of underlying sensibilities in the preceding chapter. These considerations make the idea that we can correlate emotional experiences with particular aspects of our environment in a frame of reference implausible, and, in turn, it makes the assumption that particular aspects of one's environment is associated with individually determined, uniquely fitting responses untenable.

In chapter 4, I presented Gert's multiple-aspect account of harm, modelled on his multiple-aspect account of colour. I then pointed to some disanalogies between harm and colour. In contrast to colours, our experiences of which are (in large part) determined by factors ‘external’ to the subject, our experiences of harm are determined, to a significant extent, by reasons ‘internal’ to the subject. Moreover, I argued that we cannot identify harms with the experiences they give rise to in relevant subjects. As I see it, a more plausible account would hold that the potential harmfulness that some set of circumstances pose to a subject is determined by the nature of the subject and the nature of the circumstances.

Moreover, in chapter 5, I argued against the idea that statistical normality can demarcate the class of relevant subjects. This is because, as I argued in relation to Deonna's account of relational response-dependent value, even a subject's abnormal dispositions may influence what is potentially harmful to her. In addition, a mere appeal to statistical normality does not determine the fittingness of a response; it merely shows that the response is in line with the statistical norm of responding to similar circumstances. I have, further, argued that we should not model harmfulness on colour, in line with Peter Railton (1998). This is because fixing the value of harm on the responses of a particular kind of humans does not take into account the influence of our dispositions on what is potentially harmful to us, nor does it take into account the evolving nature of our dispositions and of the world to which we respond. Instead, I have argued that we should apply Deonna's account to our conception of harmfulness, in order to capture the relational nature of this value. That is, we should conceive of harmfulness to a person, in general terms, as aspects of her environment which merit her resistance. I have also attempted to elucidate some of the considerations that may bear on the fittingness of a subject's response, in light of this relational account of harmfulness.

In chapter 6, I proposed that odour may offer a better model for harmfulness, as it captures the relational nature of this value. The dominant function of colour-perception appears to be detection, while it seems the dominant function of our experiences of odour (at
least for most people) is its evaluative function. While colours, for the most part, tell us something about the external world, odours, for the most part, tell us something about relation to the external world. And while the factors that determine our experiences of colour are, in a sense, ‘external’ to the subject of the experience, the factors that determine our experiences of odour are, to large degree, ‘internal’. The factors that determine our experiences of odours are therefore quite similar to those that determine our experiences of harm. Moreover, in contrast to taste, we are exposed to odours, akin to how we are exposed to potential harms. Again, this is an idea which is in need of development. My point is merely that odours seem to offer a better model for the value of harm than colour and taste.

In chapter 7, I have argued that we can conceive of the objectivity of relational harm, because it enjoys an independence from our attitudes. Evaluative judgements of harmfulness are truth-apt, because the harm that some set of circumstances pose to a particular subject can be ascertained by inquiring into the relevant vulnerabilities of the affected subject and the nature of the circumstances in question. The fittingness of emotional responses to perceived harms can therefore be ascertained by reference to the relevant individual-relative factors (pertaining to the affected subject) and the non-evaluative facts of the circumstances that prompts the subject's response. I then considered whether the reasons I have illuminated, i.e., relevant individual-relative factors and the particular non-evaluative facts, are vulnerable to any of the objections raised in relation to other kinds of reasons that pertain to the fittingness of a response. The conflation problem does not seem to amount to a problem for our relational account of harmfulness, as the reasons that determine particular subject's response fitting will vary between different circumstances and different subjects. This renders the notion of reasons of fittingness unhelpful in assessments of fittingness. Nor does the essential contestability thesis seem to pose a problem for our account of relational harm. This is because two disputants may apply the same concept without linguistic impropriety, but fail to acknowledge the relevant non-evaluative individual-relative factors pertaining to the other person. That is, two people may correctly ascribe different kinds or degrees of harm to some set of circumstances in relation to themselves, and falsely believe that what they are describing is the harmfulness of the circumstances. These disputants will talk past each other, but this is because they fail to acknowledge the relational nature of harm.

However, the worry concerning the subjectivity of this account of relational harm seems apt. It seems there will be ample disagreement about which individual-relative factors give rise to genuine vulnerabilities. As I have argued, determining the fittingness of responses
will be a communicative endeavour, done in light of the particular circumstances the particular affected subject(s), and the function of our emotional experiences. We should therefore look for strategies that may help us determine the standards of fittingness. This will presumably alleviate disagreement, and help us decide upon what we can and cannot do to each other. Another problem concerns the fact that negotiations concerning the fittingness of responses will be skewed in favour of those with a higher capacity for articulating the reasons that explain their dispositions. I do not have anything particularly interesting to say in response to this worry. But we should keep in mind that the individual-relative factors can be utilised as a means of empathising with others, in light of the fact that these factors are, to a certain extent, ascertainable independently of the affected subject's experience.
Bibliography


