

The Aesthetic Dimension of Value

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Abstract

The Auburn view of aesthetic value understands aesthetic value to be among the basic kinds of value. In distinguishing the Auburn view from reductive theories, James Shelley claims that value specifies aesthetic value via the determinable-determinate relation. First, I argue that aesthetic value is not a determinate of the value determinable by showing that the current Auburn view fails to satisfy standard features of determination. Second, I propose a friendly amendment to the Auburn view. I argue that Auburn theorists should claim that aesthetic value is a determination dimension, rather than a determinate, of the value determinable. Taking aesthetic value to be a dimension satisfies standard features of determination and explains the failures of the current Auburn view to satisfy those features. Doing so also preserves the structural features that made Shelley's initial claim appealing, thereby capturing the essential aspects of the Auburn view.

Keywords: aesthetic value, Auburn view, determinable-determinate relation, determination dimensions, dimensions of value, James Shelley

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Truth, and goodness, and beauty, are but different faces of the same All.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

I Introduction

Aestheticians are split between two approaches to answering the *aesthetic value question*:

AVQ What makes aesthetic value aesthetic value?

Reductive theories reduce the **AVQ** to a logically independent aesthetic question and value question:

AQ What makes aesthetic value aesthetic?

VQ What makes aesthetic value value?¹

This analysis is the result of understanding the relation between value and aesthetic value to be the genus-species relation (Shelley 2023, 98). On this approach, aesthetic value is not a basic kind of value; rather, it is an aesthetic species of some antecedent kind of value.²

Non-reductive theories, such as the ‘Auburn view’, so dubbed by Van der Berg (2020), deny that the relation between value and aesthetic value is the genus-species relation. Instead, Auburn theorists claim that aesthetic value is one of the basic kinds of value (Shelley 2010, 716; 2011, 220; 2019, 11; Watkins and Shelley 2012, 349–350; Gorodeisky 2021b, 277–78; 2023, 86). Accordingly, Shelley claims that the relation between value and aesthetic value is not the genus-species relation, but the determinable-determinate relation:

Determinate Aesthetic Value (DAV)

Aesthetic value is a determinate of the value determinable. (Shelley 2023, 98)

On this picture, aesthetic value does not stand to value as red triangle stands to triangle. Rather, the relation is more like how red stands to colour, as oval stands to shape, and as

¹ For example, aesthetic hedonism (e.g., Matthen 2017), the network theory (Lopes 2018, although the matter is complicated by the fact that Lopes gives an account of the reason-giving force of value, rather than value itself), and aesthetic liberalism (Peacocke 2021) fall under this category.

² Or, in the case of Peacocke (2021), aesthetic value can be a species of any kind of value.

specific mass properties relate to the more general property of having mass. Furthermore, the **AVQ** can't be reduced to an independent **AQ** and **VQ**; the questions inextricably hang together, in that what makes something aesthetic is also what makes it valuable, just as what makes something red is also what makes it coloured (Shelley 2021, 216; 2022, 43; 2023, 98).

I argue that **DAV** is false; aesthetic value is not a determinate of the value determinable. However, I don't take a stand on whether the reductive approach or the Auburn view is better suited for answering the aesthetic value question. Instead, my goal is to show that even if **DAV** is false, the Auburn theorist can still maintain that aesthetic value is a basic kind of value.³ In the first half of this paper, I show that aesthetic value fails to satisfy standard features of determination, so we should reject **DAV** (§2). In the second half, I argue that Auburn theorists should instead claim that aesthetic value is a determination dimension of value and show that this alternative retains the essential aspects of their view (§3).

2 Doubts About Determinates

If **DAV** is true, we should expect aesthetic value to satisfy standard features of determination.⁴ One feature, **Multiple Determinates**, has consequences for how we theorize about other kinds of value:

Multiple Determinates For every determinate P of a determinable Q , there is a determinate R of Q that is distinct from, but at the same level of specificity as P . (Wilson 2023, 18)

Just as there are multiple determinates of colour, a determination-based theory of value should admit of the possibility of value being determined by kinds of value other than

³ The Auburn view can be characterized by other commitments beyond the claim that aesthetic value is a basic value: for example, the claim that aesthetic judgment, reasons, and rationality aren't reducible to or species of theoretical or practical judgments, reasons, and rationality (see Gorodeisky and Marcus 2018 and Gorodeisky 2022), or that the normativity of aesthetic value involves value meriting pleasure (see Gorodeisky 2021a and 2021b). However, whether **DAV** is true is of immediate consequence only to the question of the categorical status of aesthetic value, so that's the aspect of the Auburn view I'll be focusing on.

⁴ While the formulations of standard features of determination in this section are taken from Wilson (2023), similar lists can be found in Johnson (1921, ch. XI), Ehring (1996, 470–71), Armstrong (1997, 48–49), and Funkhouser (2006, 548–49; 2014, 33–34).

aesthetic value. Insofar as the Auburn view takes aesthetic value to be a basic value, the other basic values are natural candidates for the other determinates of value. I'll use moral and epistemic value as my other basic values, but one should feel free to substitute their favourites.⁵

The challenge for **DAV** arises in trying to capture the features of determination that characterize how determinates relate to each other. Consider:

Determinate Incompatibility If x has determinate P of determinable Q at time t , then x cannot have at t , any other determinates R or Q at the same level of specificity as P . (18)

DAV doesn't satisfy **Determinate Incompatibility**. An object's being aesthetically valuable doesn't preclude its also being morally or epistemically valuable, unlike how an object's having one mass precludes it from having another mass at the same time.

In response, the Auburn theorist might claim that the different kinds of value are associated with different value-bearers, which prevents them from being simultaneously instantiated. Suppose that the bearer of goodness is only the will, that the bearers of epistemic value are only doxastic states, and that the bearers of aesthetic value are only objects.⁶ Then, something being good necessitates that it's a will, rather than a doxastic state or an object, so it can't also bear epistemic or aesthetic value.

But this response fails to capture the same phenomenon exhibited by cases of **Determinate Incompatibility**. Funkhouser notes that while *prime* (mathematically) and *green* (chromatically) are incompatible insofar as *green* and *prime* are instantiated by different kinds of objects, the incompatibility between *green* and *prime* is not an instance of **Determinate Incompatibility**. Rather, **Determinate Incompatibility** is a special case of

⁵ Auburn theorists make the analogy between aesthetic value or beauty with respect to a wide range of candidate basic values (or value-makers): goodness (Shelley 2010, 716; Watkins and Shelley 2012, 349–50), pleasure (Shelley 2010; 2011, 220; 2019, 11; Watkins and Shelley 2012), truth (Shelley 2010; 2011; Watkins and Shelley 2012; Gorodeisky 2023, 86), virtue (Shelley 2011; Gorodeisky 2021b, 278), and well-being or flourishing (Gorodeisky 2021b; 2023).

⁶ One might arrive at this supposition from Kant's (1785) claim that only the will can be good without limitation, from the widespread view in epistemology that epistemic normativity governs only doxastic states (e.g., Foley 1987; Feldman 2000b; Hedden 2015), and from Shelley's (2010) preferred object-theoretic alternative to aesthetic value empiricism.

incompatibility where determinates directly ‘exclude, oppose, compete with, or are contrary to one another’ (2023, 118).⁷ While the values are incompatible on this supposition, they don’t directly compete; instead, their bearers compete.

Furthermore, it’s not even true that, for every kind of basic value, there are no overlapping bearers of value. People can be beautiful and virtuous. Consequentialists are not confused when they compare states of affairs and outcomes as bearers of multiple kinds of value. It’s generally appealing to think that, following Tucker (2016), ‘an axiology should determine the intrinsic value of lives, outcomes, and possible worlds’, and that this task isn’t distributed selectively across the different kinds of value, such that one kind of value accrues to lives, another to outcomes, and another to possible worlds (335). Therefore, appealing to different value-bearers doesn’t seem like a fruitful avenue for satisfying **Determinate Incompatibility**.

Instead of appealing to each kind of value having a different bearer, we might instead appeal to each kind of value having different makers. Value-making properties are those (typically non-evaluative) properties in virtue of which an object is valuable (for example, *being accurate* could make doxastic states epistemically valuable).⁸ Now, consider another analogy with colour. A simple putative counterexample to **Determinate Incompatibility** is a shirt that is red on one side, and blue on the other. We then observe that an object has its colour in virtue of the colour of its parts. In that case, we can recapture the notion of red and blue being incompatible through our mereology of colour. We say that an object can be blue or red only if the object can be divided into two parts, one of which is blue and not red, and one of which is red and not blue. Perhaps we can adopt a similar strategy with values: an object can exhibit two different determinates of value only if the object can be divided into two parts, and each part of the object contains only one of the object’s value-making properties.

This strategy, however, fails to recognize that the relationship between the colour of an object and the colour of its parts doesn’t resemble the relationship between value and value-making properties. First, notice that we can paraphrase our statements about the shirt being red and blue as statements instead about the parts of the shirt. Such paraphrases

⁷ See Elder (1996, 153) on atomic number and nationality; see also Wilson (2023, n. 7).

⁸ See Feldman (2000a, 328) and Tucker (2016, 335–336).

in the value case are unsatisfying. When I claim that a painting is aesthetically valuable, I can't be interpreted as merely ascribing value to its aesthetic value-making properties instead of the painting: in fact, axiologists, including Shelley, resist calling value-making properties valuable (Shelley 2010, 716; Zimmerman 2001, 156). The asymmetry can be explained by a common understanding of what it is to be intrinsically valuable:

X has intrinsic *K*-value *iff*:

1. *X* instantiates a value-making property of *K*-value; or,
2. *X* has a part that instantiates a value-making property of *K*-value.

(Tucker 2016, 336)

While parts of objects are coloured and confer colour to their composite objects, value-making properties are not valuable and yet still confer value to the objects that instantiate them. If *being an instance of pleasure* is the value-maker for moral value, as held by hedonic utilitarians, then a state of affairs will have intrinsic moral value insofar as it has parts that instantiate *being an instance of pleasure*. Likewise, whenever an object or its parts instantiate value-making properties for two different kinds of value, the object will bear both of those values, independently of any possible division into parts. Therefore, the appeal to different value-makers doesn't provide an avenue for satisfying **Determinate Incompatibility**.

We might instead try to explain away **Determinate Incompatibility**. Wodak (2020) suggests that **Determinate Incompatibility** only results from our incorporating 'totality' facts:

... a ball can be red or blue, but it cannot be *fully* red or *fully* blue. (What does "fully" contribute beyond specifying that the ball is red, *and that's it*?)
Once we add in totality facts in the normative case, the problem disappears. If it is aesthetically good for Singer to gracefully swoop up the drowning child *and that's it*, then it cannot also be morally good for him to do so. (67)

This response faces two issues. First, it's not clear that **Determinate Incompatibility** is always explained by our having introduced extra totality facts of the form '*x* is *D* and not anything else'. Consider the mass determinable: if an object has a mass of two grams,

then that seemingly directly excludes it also having a mass of ten kilograms. Likewise for shape: if a shape is a triangle, then it's not obvious that we need totality facts exclude its being an octagon. There's no supposition that, without our having incorporated totality facts, an object might, at the same time, instantiate two different mass properties, or be a triangle and an octagon. Totality is not a matter of any extra facts that hang above the determinate facts; rather, totality is a feature of determinate facts, which is just what **Determinate Incompatibility** captures.

Second, it's not clear why Wodak takes 'fully red' to mean 'red, and that's it', rather than 'red all over'. Insofar as 'fully', in contrast with 'partially', seems to indicate how much of the object's surface is red, 'red all over' seems to be the much more natural reading; it's also the most common reading in the metaphysics of colour.⁹ But if totality facts take the form of 'red all over', then it's not clear that they account for exclusion; I'll discuss theories of colour exclusion below, but many colour realists accept that an object can be multiple distinct colours, all over, at the same time. Therefore, without further argument, Wodak's response doesn't seem to explain away **Determinate Incompatibility**.

DAV also has difficulty satisfying

Determinate Similarity/Comparability If P and R are different same-level determinates of a determinable Q , then P and R are similar, and more-over comparable, in respect of Q . (Wilson 2023, 17)

Orange and yellow are more similar in respect of colour to each other than either is to purple. Is aesthetic value more similar in respect of value to epistemic value or to moral value? Taking seriously the idea that the normative status of each is basic or irreducible, it seems impossible to come up with a sensible similarity metric for the different kinds of value. To be this kind of strong pluralist who believes that the different kinds of value exist on different bases, rather than existing on a common underlying metric of value that might be used to ground comparisons, is to also accept value incommensurability (Tucker 2016, 343).¹⁰ However, there is a silver lining in that it seems like we can compare

⁹ See Graham 1999 and Gierlinger and Westphal 2020 for general discussions of color incompatibility claims.

¹⁰ We should be careful not to conflate the operative sense of comparability in **Determinate Similarity/Comparability** with how some axiologists use the term. For example, while Chang (2002) argues that

specific instantiations of value. For example, the value of Paganini's '24 Caprices for Solo Violin' is more similar to the value of Ernst and Schubert's 'Der Erlkönig' than either is to the value of a new policy increasing funding to public education. I'll later explain how these comparisons are possible, along with how to explain the possibility of something exhibiting multiple kinds of value at once.

Of course, these features are merely standard features, and philosophers have levied objections against the universality of each. A sceptic might simply note these failures and claim that enough other features are satisfied to warrant continuing onward.¹¹ I think we should hesitate before resorting to such complacency for two reasons. The first is that a theoretically satisfying rejection of standard features of determination is typically accompanied by some way to recapture a limited version of the feature, or an explanation within a larger theory. Consider three theories of colour, all of which deny colour incompatibility, at least implicitly: relationalism (Cohen 2009), anthropocentric reductionism (Hilbert 1987; Byrne and Hilbert 1997; 2003), and non-reductive physicalism (Watkins 2002; 2005; Kalderon 2007). These explanations of how **Determinate Incompatibility** fails with colour don't easily translate to explaining the compatibility of values.¹² Of course, I haven't argued decisively that **Determinate Incompatibility** couldn't be explained away in the value case, but I've canvassed several options and found none of them adequate. The onus is on anyone claiming **DAV** to provide a theoretical justification for their failure to satisfy standard features.

Second, even if a theoretical justification can be given, we shouldn't accept **DAV** if an

value incommensurability doesn't entail value incomparability, Chang's preferred sense of comparability (the possibility of comparing choice-worthiness of options) isn't relevant here. The comparisons needed to satisfy **Determinate Similarity/Comparability** involve a measure of comparison directly between moral, epistemic, and aesthetic value, not whether we can compare the choice-worthiness of options that exhibit various values.

¹¹ In discussions on whether thick values are determinates of thin values, Tappolet (2004) adopts this strategy. Harcourt and Thomas (2013) shift to claiming that the relation is merely analogous to the determinable-determinate relation.

¹² 'Morally valuable' and 'aesthetically valuable' aren't relativized as the relationalist claims 'blue to me in *C*' and 'red to you in *D*' are. They aren't defined with respect to different species as the anthropocentric reductionist accepts 'human colours' and 'alien colours' are. And they aren't easily understood as inheriting a proper subset of the causal powers of a shared determinate value, as Watkins (2002; 2005) takes overlapping determinable colours to be, especially if one accepts a view on which normative properties are causally inefficacious (as non-naturalists do).

alternative claim can capture the essential elements of the Auburn view without failing to satisfy any standard features of determination. Developing this alternative is now the task: with the initial doubts on the table, I turn to Funkhouser’s model of determination to lay the foundations for a better option.

3 The Aesthetic (Determination) Dimension of Value

One diagnosis for the failures of **DAV** to satisfy standard features of determination is that the failures are the product of a too-simple model of determination. I think this is basically correct, and once we refine our model of determination, we’ll see that aesthetic value, and basic values in general, are better suited for the role of determination dimensions, rather than the role of determinate.

According to Funkhouser’s model of determination, B is a determinate of A *iff*:

1. A and B have the same determination dimensions,
2. A and B have the same absolute non-determinable necessities, and
3. the range of determination dimension values for B is a proper subset of the range of determination dimension values for A . (2014, 39)¹³

Determination dimensions are the features along which a kind can vary and be specified (for example, hue, saturation and brightness for the colour determinable). Non-determinable necessities are structural features of determination that all instances of a kind must have, but don’t figure in specifying dimensional features of the kind (for example, while triangles have three side-length determination dimensions, triangles have non-determinable necessities of being three-sided, closed, plane figures) (36).

Auburn theorists should claim

Aesthetic Dimension Aesthetic value is a determination dimension of the value determinable.¹⁴

¹³ ‘Value’ in this condition is non-normative. For example, ‘two meters’ could be a value along a side-length dimension for the triangle determinable.

¹⁴ **Aesthetic Dimension** should be distinguished from the claim that aesthetic value is a dimension of

instead of **DAV**, and they should make corresponding claims for the other basic values. **Aesthetic Dimension** is a satisfactory alternative only if it satisfies standard features of determination and if it captures the essential aspects of the Auburn view that led Shelley to initially claim **DAV**. It succeeds on both fronts.

First, while determinates compete and exclude each other, determination dimensions (hereafter, ‘dimensions’) do not. Since there is no analogue to **Determinate Incompatibility** for dimensions, objects can exhibit many basic kinds of value properties. However, there is now a worry in the opposite direction. When we took basic values to be determinates, they needed to be incompatible. But now that we’re taking basic values to be dimensions, it seems that they need to co-occur whenever we have a determinate value property, per the first condition of Funkhouser’s model of determination. While every colour has some value along each dimension of hue, saturation, and brightness, this is implausible in the value case. Sometimes, objects are only aesthetically valuable, without being morally valuable—or even worse, while being morally *disvaluable*.

Addressing this worry requires first noting that talk of determinables is often done in shorthand; following Wodak (2020), when we say that a ball is red, and that red determines colour, we aren’t also claiming that the ball is colour (60). Likewise, when I write that value is a determinable, I mean that the property of *being evaluatively valenced* is a determinable, with dimensions like *being aesthetically valenced*, including *being aesthetically (dis)valuable to a oth* degree within the dimension of aesthetic value.¹⁵ Accordingly, we can still locate an object in Funkhouser’s model even if the object lacks a kind of value or is disvaluable.

The co-occurrence of values is part of a more general pattern of how dimensions relate to each other. Johnson writes:

A colour may vary according to its hue, brightness, and saturation; so that the precise determination of a colour requires us to define three variables which

value qua multidimensional concept. Hedden and Muñoz (2024) give an account of value pluralism in terms of the multidimensionality of value, but dimensions of multidimensional concepts aren’t conceptually the same as determination dimensions of determinables, even if they seem to share putative candidates.

¹⁵ See Funkhouser (2014, 41–42) for a justification of determination dimensions with zero- and no-values. Furthermore, given that quantitative properties are often (but not universally—see Wolff 2020) modelled as single-dimensioned determinables, and that some quantitative properties are negative, it would be strange to include the positive and negative quantities while excluding zero.

are more or less independent of one another in their capacity for co-variation; but in one important sense they are not independent of one another, since they could not be manifested in separation. (1921, 183)

If something has some value along a dimension of a determinable, then necessarily, it has some value along each dimension of the determinable: in this sense, dimensions are co-dependent. It's non-accidental that every colour has a hue, saturation, and brightness. But having a specific value along any dimension doesn't entail having any specific other value along any other dimension: in this sense, the dimensions are independent of each other. Having a particular hue does not entail having any specific other saturation or brightness (although it does entail having some value of saturation or brightness).

We see the same patterns with values. If something has aesthetic value, we know that it's evaluable: it's the kind of thing that bears value—say, an abstract state of affairs, a concrete fact, or any proposition-like entity—and while it might not have any other interesting value properties, it has them nonetheless.¹⁶ In this sense, the dimensions of value are co-dependent. But having a particular aesthetic value doesn't entail having a particular moral or epistemic value. In this sense, the dimensions of value are independent. The co- (or in-) dependence of values tracks the same patterns of dependency exhibited by dimensions of other determinables.

Next, claiming that basic values are dimensions also explains the problems with **Determinate Similarity/Comparability**. On the one hand, it seemed like there could be no basis for comparisons of similarity between the basic values; again, what's the underlying metric for judging whether aesthetic value is more like epistemic value or moral value? On the other hand, it seemed intuitive that the value of Paganini's '24 Caprices for Solo Violin' is more like the value of Ernst and Schubert's 'Der Erlkönig' than either is like the value of a policy for funding public education. Both facts are explained by the fact that dimensions serve as the underlying metric along which comparisons between determinates are made (Funkhouser 2006, 561).¹⁷

¹⁶ See Tucker 2024 for the debate between *abstractionists* and *factualists*. See Finlay's argument that the bearers of value are proposition-like entities (2014, ch. 2).

¹⁷ While Funkhouser initially claims that comparisons between determinates are best understood along dimensions, he also claims that his model 'explains why we cannot issue absolute similarity judgments regarding complex determinates. Such judgments must always be relative to a determination dimension'

Sometimes, however, the aesthetic value of two objects can differ qualitatively, rather than merely differing quantitatively. *Guernica* is striking, while *Kind of Blue* is cool. I'll canvass three options for explaining qualitative differences between aesthetically valuable objects. First, it might be that when we talk about aesthetic value, we refer to a cluster of dimensions of value, rather than a single dimension. I don't favour this view, and I don't expect Auburn theorists to favour it either. Second, it might be that there is a single dimension of aesthetic value, and there are also subdimensions that contribute to it. *Shape* has side-length dimensions, but insofar as *length* itself is a determinable with a single dimension of magnitude, we have complex nested structures of dimensions with subdimensions. Contributory values are a familiar phenomenon, especially in discussions of thick values, and subdimensions are a natural way to systematize their qualitative and quantitative contributions to value dimensions (Chang 2002, 6). Third, it might be that we're mistaken in trying to directly locate such qualitative differences within the property of value: instead, we might claim that *Guernica*'s strikingness and *Kind of Blue*'s coolness are different value-making features.¹⁸ Both latter options prompt further inquiry in underdeveloped areas: the second, on the mechanics of subdimensions of value, and the third, on an account of thick normative properties as value-makers.¹⁹ I find both promising, but I won't make any definitive verdict here.

We can now articulate another challenge for **DAV** relating to **Determinate Similarity/Comparability**. Given that dimensions have garnered uptake independent of their use here, any theory of value that takes kinds of values to be determinates must account for what the dimensions of value are. Cannon (2020) considers the idea of taking normative 'flavour' to be a dimension, with values like *moral*, *epistemic*, and *aesthetic*. Without something like flavour as a dimension, it seems difficult to capture how moral, epistemic, and

(n. 32). I don't think Funkhouser needs this claim; while I'm sure that similarity judgments must always be in part based on comparisons along single dimensions, recent work on multidimensional aggregation is promising for the task of similarity judgments between complex determinates. See Kroedel and Huber 2012 and D'Ambrosio and Hedden 2024.

¹⁸ Or, that strikingness and coolness are correlated with value-makers. See Hedden and Muñoz's discussion of a related issue (2024, 297).

¹⁹ While there has been extensive philosophical debate over the nature of thick concepts, the literature on thick facts and properties is miniscule by comparison. Eklund 2017 and Morton 2019, as well as the literature on aesthetic properties, are notable exceptions.

aesthetic value could occupy a common property space.²⁰ But recall one of the difficulties for **DAV**: it seems like we have no common metric for determining whether aesthetic value is more like moral value or epistemic value. This reappears as a problem for the structure of the flavour dimension: along the dimension of flavour, is *aesthetic* closer to *moral* or *epistemic*? Again, it's not clear to me that this can be answered. If dimensions are supposed to explain similarity between determinates, dimensions themselves need to be internally structured with a similarity or closeness metric. Hue, side-length, and aesthetic value have this; normative flavour does not. Taking the basic kinds of value to be dimensions absolves the Auburn view of the burden of finding other suitable dimensions.²¹

I now turn to showing how **Aesthetic Dimension** captures the essential aspects of the Auburn view. Consider two components of **DAV**:

1. Value is a determinable with respect to aesthetic value.
2. Aesthetic value plays a role in the determination of value.

On a simple model of determination, where the only roles for aesthetic value to play are that of determinate or determinable, **DAV** follows, but at the cost of failing to satisfy standard features of determinates. Now that we've refined our model of determination and introduced the role of dimensions, we can accept both component claims without worry.

The Auburn view also claims that the normative status of aesthetic value is basic; it enjoys its own *sui generis* normativity. We can capture this idea by introducing a non-determinable necessity into our model of determination: necessarily, any determinate value property enjoys normative force corresponding to its values along its dimensions.²² The details of what this entails may vary across kinds of value and depend on normative

²⁰ Wodak (2020) tentatively suggests taking evaluative valences as dimensions; if this suggestion amounts to having dimensions of *being aesthetically valenced* and *being morally valenced*, then his suggestion is coextensive with **Aesthetic Dimension**.

²¹ Cannon (2020) considers the possibility that thick values are dimensions of value and argues that such accounts fail. But Cannon was criticizing the dimension model as a model for what it is for a thick value to be evaluative, which doesn't apply to my proposal that the Auburn view use it as a model for what it is for aesthetic value to be basic.

²² While 'value-first' talk is prominent in aesthetics, there are some exceptions (e.g., Kriegel 2023). Insofar as Shelley and Gorodeisky write on the normativity of aesthetic value, I follow their stance, although as a general account of value, non-determinable necessities could be used to specify any relation between values and reasons.

theory for each kind of value, so we must be somewhat schematic. But the general idea is that every determinate property that shares the same value along the moral dimension should also carry the same moral force, and those properties that have greater or lesser values along the moral dimension will have greater or lesser moral force, and so on for the aesthetic, epistemic, and any other dimensions. For the Auburn view, the normativity of aesthetic value consists in reasons to aesthetically perceive, or in meriting aesthetic pleasure (Gorodeisky 2021a; b; 2022; Gorodeisky and Marcus 2018; Shelley 2023, 99), so the strength of those reasons or merits will be what correspond to values along the aesthetic dimension.

The next two aspects of the Auburn view are related. First, any model of value should explain why *being aesthetically valuable* is a more specific property than *being valuable*. This aspect is common to reductive theories of aesthetic value and the Auburn view with **DAV**. Both rely on kind-specification relations (genus-species and determinable-determinate, respectively) that secure specificity. So, values along dimensions also need to secure specificity. Second, when Shelley writes ‘The Dada Hari mosque, for instance, is not beautiful because valuable, but valuable because beautiful...’ he claims that an object’s aesthetic value is metaphysically prior to its value *simpliciter*, rather than vice versa (Shelley 2023, 98–99). Accordingly, an object’s values along dimensions should also be metaphysically prior to the object’s value *simpliciter*.

On both counts, **Aesthetic Dimension** succeeds again. Metaphysical priority holds for values along dimensions for the same reasons that it held for **DAV**: it’s commonly assumed that determinates are metaphysically prior to determinables. On Funkhouser’s model of determination, to have a determinate is just to fall within a specified range of values along dimensions, so values along dimensions are also metaphysically prior to determinables.²³ A similar story also explains how to secure specificity. Both genus-species and determinable-determinate relations secure specificity through asymmetric necessitation:

Asymmetric Necessitation *P* asymmetrically necessitates *Q* iff for any *x*, if *x* is *P*, then *x* is *Q*, but for some *y*, *y* might have *Q* without having *P*.
(Wilson 2023, 19)

²³ Wilson (2012) contests the common assumption that determinates are metaphysically prior to determinables. But if she’s right, then **DAV** is in equal trouble for capturing metaphysical priority, so the falsity of the assumption doesn’t bear on relative merits of **Aesthetic Dimension** as an amendment to **DAV**.

Values along dimensions asymmetrically necessitate the value determinable for the same reasons that determinates do. An object's having a specific value along the aesthetic dimension entails its having the value determinable, but some objects could be evaluatively valenced while not having that same aesthetic value.

Let us return to how the Auburn view differs from reductive theories in answering the aesthetic value question:

AVQ What makes aesthetic value aesthetic value?

Reductive theories take the relation between value and aesthetic value to be the genus-species relation. A common analysis of the genus-species relation is that to be a species is just to be the conjunction of a genus and *differentia*, where the genus and the *differentia* are logically independent (Armstrong 1997, 54–55). The conjunctive nature of the genus-species relation licenses reductive theorists to reduce the aesthetic value question to the aesthetic question and the value question (Shelley 2023, 98). The Auburn view denies that the aesthetic value question can be reduced. Originally, given **DAV**, this was explained by another feature of determination:

Non-Conjunctive Specification If P determines Q , then P is not identical with any conjunctive property conjoining Q with any property or properties independent of Q . (Wilson 2023, 17)

Non-Conjunctive Specification requires that determinates cannot be defined by conjoining a determinable with independent *differentia*, as we do with genera and species. But even after we switch to **Aesthetic Dimension**, a version of **Non-Conjunctive Specification** still holds. Aesthetic value is still not the conjunction of value with independent aesthetic *differentia*; rather, it continues to play a role within the internal structure of the determination of value.

One might worry that given **Aesthetic Dimension**, the Auburn view has lost something important. Auburn theorists might claim that aesthetic value needn't rely on any other kind of value to constitute the value of an object. But this is in tension with the fact that dimensions jointly construct the property space for a determinable. To address this worry, we should disambiguate two questions. The first is whether aesthetic value

alone constitutes the *whole* determinable value of an object. I claim that it does not; knowing the whole determinable value of an object requires knowing how it fares along every dimension of value, given the co-dependence of dimensions. If I ask for the whole determinable value of an object, and I'm only told the object's aesthetic value, I don't yet have a complete answer. This is compatible with the fact that often, we're only inquiring after one dimension of value at a time, and that context often supplies what kind of value is most relevant in a situation.

The second question is whether aesthetic value depends on any other kind of value for its own status as a basic kind of value. To this, I also say that it does not; for aesthetic value to be a basic kind of value is just for it to be a dimension of value, which is independent of what other dimensions of value there happen to be.²⁴ Moreover, given what I've said about how to incorporate the normativity of value into our model with absolute non-determinable necessities, the normativity of aesthetic value is given by its essential nature as a dimension of value, and not derived from any of the other dimensions.

Lastly, **Aesthetic Dimension** gives us new ways to ask old questions. Consider the debates over interaction between aesthetic and moral values. Do values along dimensions interact with each other? In some cases, such as *colour*, values along hue, saturation, and brightness dimensions don't seem to interact. In others, such as *triangle*, it's not as clear: the triangle inequality restricts which combinations of side lengths are possible. With *scent*, olfactory space might be too high-dimensional for us to easily determine any interactions (or lack thereof).²⁵ Nothing internal to **Aesthetic Dimension** precludes or entails that in some cases, aesthetic value might be at least normatively relevant to other values, or vice versa.²⁶ All **Aesthetic Dimension** commits us to, with respect to interaction, is the same claim that Auburn theorists already accept: that aesthetic value is not essentially a species of any other kind of value.

²⁴ While I've used moral and epistemic value as my other examples of basic values, one needn't accept either to accept **Aesthetic Dimension**. If one was so inclined, one could take aesthetic value to be the only dimension of value, thereby accepting an aesthetic monism about value.

²⁵ See Madany Mamlouk and Martinetz 2004 and Bushdid et al. 2014.

²⁶ See Stear 2022 for discussion of the different kinds of value-interaction questions and normative relevance.

4 Conclusion

I've proposed and defended a friendly amendment to the Auburn view. Auburn theorists should claim that aesthetic value is a determination dimension, rather than a determinate, of the value determinable. Naturally, I'm friendly to the Auburn view, and there's much more to be done in developing and defending it further. I've also claimed that much of what I've said should be mobilized for theorizing about basic values beyond the aesthetic. I leave further defence of this claim for elsewhere.

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