
RESPONSE-DEPENDENCE ABOUT AESTHETIC VALUE

BY

MICHAEL WATKINS AND JAMES SHELLEY

Abstract: The dominant view about the nature of aesthetic value holds it to be response-dependent. We believe that the dominance of this view owes largely to some combination of the following prevalent beliefs:

1. The belief that challenges brought against response-dependent accounts in other areas of philosophy are less challenging when applied to response-dependent accounts of aesthetic value.
2. The belief that aesthetic value is instrumental and that response-dependence about aesthetic value alone accommodates this purported fact.
3. The belief that response-dependence about aesthetic value alone accommodates the widely acknowledged anthropocentricity of aesthetic value.
4. The belief that response-dependence about aesthetic value alone accommodates aesthetic normativity.

We argue that each of these beliefs is false, and that the dominance of response-dependent accounts of aesthetic value is therefore largely without foundation.

The dominant view about the nature of aesthetic value¹ holds it to be response-dependent: to have aesthetic value is to be disposed to bring about a particular response for a particular audience under suitable conditions.² It is generally thought that objects are by themselves incapable of bearing aesthetic value, and it is this thought that motivates response-dependent accounts. To accommodate this thought, response-dependent accounts do not appeal to human responses merely as a reference-fixing device. Such accounts do not merely ‘point’ towards aesthetic value. They are reductive. According to such accounts, to have aesthetic value just is to be such as to bring about a particular response.

Response-dependent accounts are on offer for various properties, most notably for colors, but perhaps only in aesthetics is response-dependence

so widely accepted. In the philosophy of colors, by contrast, although response-dependent accounts remain prominent, they are now but an option amongst a long list of options currently on offer.³ The emergence of alternative accounts of colors results from two forces: the first is the rather long list of challenges raised against response-dependence; the second is the recognition that many of the apparent advantages of response-dependence can be gained from alternative accounts. It is reasonable to wonder, then, why response-dependence about aesthetic value goes nearly unchallenged.⁴ Why are objects increasingly thought alone capable of bearing color yet not increasingly thought alone capable of bearing aesthetic value?

We expect that the dominance of response-dependence in aesthetics is largely explained by some combination of the following:

1. The belief that challenges brought against response-dependent accounts in other areas of philosophy are less challenging when applied to response-dependent accounts of aesthetic value.
2. The belief that aesthetic value is instrumental and that response-dependence about aesthetic value alone accommodates this purported fact.
3. The belief that response-dependence about aesthetic value alone accommodates the widely acknowledged anthropocentricity of aesthetic value.
4. The belief that response-dependence about aesthetic value alone accommodates aesthetic normativity.

In what follows we undertake to deny each of these beliefs. But our goal in denying them is not to prove that response-dependence about aesthetic value is false, although we will offer reasons to think that it is. Nor is it to develop a particular alternative to response-dependence about aesthetic value, although there is such an account that we favor. Our more modest goal is simply to urge that response-dependence about aesthetic value be considered as an option merely, one among a long list of options that ought currently to be on offer. Given that response-dependence about aesthetic value is nearly universally accepted, we take our more modest goal to be plenty ambitious.

1. Challenges against response-dependence

We begin by comparing response-dependent accounts of aesthetic value with response-dependent accounts of color. The response-dependent color theorist assumes that something like the following is true:

- (1) *x* is red if and only if *x* would bring about some appropriate response for appropriate observers under appropriate conditions.

As an account of colors, (1) is incomplete. This is especially obvious since, as it stands, the truth of (1) is compatible with both response-dependent accounts and non-response-dependent accounts. To claim that colors are response-dependent is not just to claim that (1) is true, but also to endorse an explanation for why it is true: objects are red because they would look red; it is not that they would look red because they are red. But (1) is incomplete also because we do not yet know what the appropriate response is, who the appropriate observers are, and what the appropriate conditions are.

The appropriate observers, we would think, will include most of us. The appropriate conditions will include slightly overcast daylight. And we might think that there's something about these observers and conditions that are statistically normal for folks like us in a world like ours. Of course, they will not be statistically normal everywhere, at least not across all possible worlds. Indeed, they are not normal for other species in our world. So unless we think that an object's color can change merely by taking it to another planet, any account of our colors – red, green, yellow, and so forth – needs to favor us and those conditions upon which we typically rely. So we should treat 'appropriate' in (1) rigidly, as picking out observers like us and conditions like these in all possible worlds.

Nick Zangwill disagrees. He has us imagine Martians with visual systems different than our own. When they see a ripe tomato, they do not have the experience that we have. But surely, Zangwill insists, we would not conclude that they are in error.⁵ Zangwill presents us with a false dilemma, however. We might agree that the Martians have experiences that are phenomenally different than ours though representationally the same. So we might agree with Zangwill that we should be tolerant, we should accept their descriptions as true, but as equivalent to the descriptions that we would give.⁶ Alternatively, we might conclude that the Martians are not representing the tomato as being red, but as being Martian-red, as being some color of which Martians, but not humans, are visually aware.⁷ Finally, we might conclude that the Martians see the tomato as green, say, and so they are mistaken.⁸ What we should not say, what Zangwill would have us say, is that the Martians veridically see the tomato as green, whereas we veridically see it as red. Zangwill's position entails that every object is every color. We think that all of the other options listed above are preferable to this.

When we turn our attention to aesthetic value, intuitions about the modal flexibility of 'appropriate conditions' and 'appropriate observers' apparently diverge. Were we radically different than we are, would what is aesthetically valuable be different? We think not. We agree that in the

imagined situation ‘aesthetic value’, as used by such folks, might not pick out what it presently does, but our intuition is that it would no longer pick out aesthetic value. We can equally well imagine a world in which ‘water’ picks out something other than H₂O. But in that world ‘water’ does not pick out water. On this issue, though, let’s simply agree to disagree. Let us remember, however, that we have options that parallel the options for the color theorist. We can agree, for instance, that some feature might play a role for some other creature similar to that played by aesthetic value for us, that this creature tracks that feature as we track aesthetic value, that their perceptions and beliefs are generally veridical with respect to that feature, that they value things having that feature much as we value things having aesthetic value, without conceding that that feature is aesthetic value.

Whether we treat ‘appropriate’ rigidly or flaccidly, (1) above, and so response-dependent accounts of color generally, face apparent counterexamples.⁹ We can imagine a shy chameleon, a chameleon that is green in the dark, but which immediately turns white whenever light sufficient for its being seen strikes its skin. It never looks green, and never would look green under daylight conditions to observers like us. Or consider Justin Brookes’ (1997) case of killer-yellow: an object is painted with a paint that reflects light in the yellow range, but which emits a particle that immediately kills any human observer who looks upon it prior to its causing a yellow experience. Intuitively, the chameleon is green in the dark although it wouldn’t look green to normal observers under normal conditions; the object is yellow although it wouldn’t look yellow to normal observers under normal conditions.

Take response-dependent theorists about aesthetic value to be committed to:

- (2) *x* has aesthetic value if and only if *x* would bring about the appropriate response for appropriate observers under appropriate conditions.

Apparent counterexamples to (2) can be constructed by modifying the cases of the shy chameleon and killer-yellow. An impish angel, imagine, once played a trick on Picasso. As Picasso stepped away from some particular painting, the angel slightly and temporarily altered the painting’s colors, but in a way that significantly affected the work’s aesthetic value. Picasso gave up on the work. The angel has not. Whenever anyone looks at the painting, the angel temporarily alters the painting’s colors. Picasso’s work remains with us to this day for its historical interests, although it is considered a minor work. In fact, as long as no one is looking at it, it is his greatest work, although it never appears such to appropriate observers under appropriate conditions.

Leonardo was in his prime, imagine, when he painted his last and greatest painting. The final touch, a thin blue brush stroke unifying the work's major elements, was painted with paint never before or since used. As the paint interacted with the canvas it emitted a ray of light immediately killing Leonardo who never saw the finished work. Fortunately, the work has been lost. It sits deep within a catacomb. Its deadly properties, along with its aesthetic value, remain intact. It is false that it would bring about whatever response works of aesthetic value are thought to bring about for appropriate observers under appropriate conditions, however. For an appropriate observer under appropriate conditions, the painting brings about immediate death.

Two types of responses might be offered to these types of cases. First, we might modify (2) by employing a *ceteris paribus* clause.¹⁰ The challenge for this response is to spell out the *ceteris paribus* clause non-circularly. The challenge is not merely technical. The worry is that, unless the *ceteris paribus* clause is eliminable, all things are equal just in case the object with aesthetic value would bring about the response associated with aesthetic value. The worry, then, is that the *ceteris paribus* clause saves the truth of (2) at the cost of making it circular. And it is hard to see how we might employ the *ceteris paribus* clause without circularity unless we treat aesthetic value as the categorical ground of a disposition, or unless we treat dispositions as inherent properties of objects that are not reducible to the relations that characterize them. If we are willing to treat aesthetic value as the categorical ground of a disposition, then we can treat (2) and similar statements as reference-fixing devices, as ways of 'pointing to' the relevant feature of objects having aesthetic value. The 'circularity' will no longer worry us since we would no longer be in the business of giving the identity conditions for aesthetic value; we would no longer be aiming at providing some kind of reductive analysis. We would, instead, be in the business of identifying aesthetic value by the causal powers that it contributes to whatever has it. But we would also have abandoned response-dependence and the corresponding thought that aesthetic value depends upon us. Our responses would then be an effect of an object's having aesthetic value; it would not be constitutive of an object's having aesthetic value. Second, we might insist that neither object in the two examples above has aesthetic value. But, at the very least, this response radically alters what we would have taken the supervenience base for aesthetic value to be. Were the angel to fall asleep on the job one day, Picasso's work would presumably bring about the appropriate response. Were Leonardo's painting to lose its ability to kill while remaining the same in every aesthetically relevant respect, its claim to aesthetic value would be unimpeachable. Think again about the case of the chameleon. It might be responded that the chameleon is not green in the dark since it would never look that way. But if the pigment of the chameleon in the dark is just like that of other chameleons

that are not shy, chameleons that look green in the light, then it is surely counterintuitive to conclude that it is white.

So we have reason to worry about the truth of (1) and a corresponding reason to worry about the truth of (2). But even if these worries can be assuaged, response-dependent accounts of color face additional challenges, and we suspect that response-dependent accounts of aesthetic value face similar challenges. As we noted earlier, even if (1) is true, as an account of colors it is incomplete. The same holds for (2): even if true, as an account of aesthetic value it is incomplete. For all that we have said thus far about appropriate observers and conditions, we have not yet said who and what they are. Nor have we said what the appropriate response is. Offering non-circular answers to these questions has proven challenging for response-dependent accounts of color, and the challenges are equally daunting for giving a response-dependent account of aesthetic value. Indeed, given the range of objects having aesthetic value – Picasso's *Guernica*, a performance of Bach's *Concerto in D Minor*, a performance of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* – the challenges would appear greater. Is there, for instance, a particular response that all or most apt judges have to all or most objects of aesthetic value in all or most conditions appropriate for viewing such objects except the response of having an experience with aesthetic value as part of its content? If not, then response-dependent accounts will be circular.

Perhaps the circularity apparent in response-dependent accounts of aesthetic value might be avoided, or perhaps we can earn the right to accept it. But where response-dependent accounts struggle to overcome these challenges we have reason to think that they are false, that the feature being accounted for is not response-dependent; it is reason to think that certain observers and certain conditions are appropriate just because those observers are well placed in those conditions to track the relevant feature. Response-dependent accounts of color have struggled to overcome these challenges, and that is one reason that color theorists have become increasingly interested in non-response-dependent accounts. We see no reason to think that overcoming these challenges will be easier for response-dependent accounts of aesthetic value.

2. *Instrumental value and response-dependence*

The prevailing view holds aesthetic value to be a species of instrumental value, the aesthetic value of an object being instrumental to the value of some experience (typically described as a pleasure) that the object is disposed to bring about.¹¹ But, the argument goes, if the aesthetic value of an object is instrumental to the value of some experience that the object is

disposed to bring about, then aesthetic value is response-dependent, the aesthetic value of an object being its disposition to bring about that valuable experience.

We grant the inference from the prevailing instrumentalism about aesthetic value to response-dependence about aesthetic value. But, for reasons that have not been appreciated, we think that the prevailing instrumentalism – and indeed any version of instrumentalism about aesthetic value – is open to doubt. For suppose it to hold of some particular object, a sonnet by Shakespeare, say. What makes the experience the sonnet is disposed to bring about the experience that it is? Obviously it is the experience that it is either:

- (a) because it is an experience of the sonnet, or;
- (b) because of something else (i.e. because it has the phenomenal character it has, or because it has the consequences it has, etc.).

Suppose (b) – the experience is the experience it is because of something other than its being of the sonnet. Then there is no reason why something other than the sonnet – a drug or a knock on the head, for example – cannot be disposed to bring about the same experience. But then the drug or the knock on the head has the value the sonnet has, which, to our minds at least, is absurd.

Now defenders of the prevailing instrumentalism are aware of this difficulty. It is to avoid it that they tend to insist on a generalized version of (a): they tend to insist that the experience that an artwork is disposed to promote is the experience it is because it is of the artwork.¹² But it's hard to see how this maneuver can save instrumentalism. For suppose that instead of asking what makes the experience the sonnet is disposed to bring about the *experience* that it is, we ask what gives the experience the sonnet is disposed to bring about the *value* that it has. Obviously the experience has the value it has either:

- (c) because it is an experience of the sonnet, or;
- (d) because of something else (i.e. because it has the phenomenal character it has, or because it has the consequences it has, etc.).

Suppose (c) – that the experience has the value it has because it is of the sonnet. Then the experience has the value it has because it is of the sonnet and the sonnet has the value it has because of the experience that is of it, which is circular. So suppose (d) – that the experience has the value it has because of something other than its being of the sonnet. Then there is no reason why some other experience, one brought about by something other than the sonnet – a drug or a knock on the head, for example – cannot have the same value. But then the drug or the knock on the head has the

same value as the sonnet, which is of course the same absurdity that defenders of the prevailing view seek to avoid by insisting that we individuate the relevant experiences according to their objects.¹³

So the prevailing instrumentalism, it seems, either succumbs to circularity or implies what its own adherents tend to recognize as at best implausible. Nor does there seem to be any reason to think that a better instrumentalist view is in the offing. For, first, there seems to be no reason to think that any instrumentalist view will escape a generalized version of the dilemma that apparently afflicts the prevailing view – that is, there seems to be no reason to think that any non-circular version of instrumentalism will not imply that for any artwork something wholly other from it could have its value. And, second, any instrumentalist view alternative to the prevailing view will hold aesthetic value to be instrumental to the value of something non-experiential, and there is no reason to think any such view consistent with the privileged role that experience plays in aesthetic judgment.

So we conclude that some finalist (i.e. intrinsic, non-instrumentalist) theory of aesthetic value must be right. We expect such a conclusion to be met with resistance. It is widely accepted that artworks, and aesthetic objects generally, are simply not the kinds of things that might bear final value. And so far as this view is accepted, it will seem that the prevailing instrumentalism must be true, even once it has become apparent that the experience called upon by the prevailing instrumentalism cannot do what it is called upon to do. But just what is the supposed basis for the view that artworks cannot bear final value? We don't know. Broadly speaking, the question whether aesthetic value might be a species of final value is not one that the instrumentalist takes up; rather the presumption that aesthetic value is not final is a fixed point from which the instrumentalist takes up whatever questions she does take up. If there is good reason to deny that aesthetic value is final, we are eager to see it articulated. Meanwhile, we can't see how the prevailing instrumentalism provides any support for response-dependence.

Of course this is not to say that we take finalism about aesthetic value and response-dependence about aesthetic value to be inconsistent. We see no reason why you can't affirm finalism while hanging on to response-dependence. It's just that we see no reason why you would want to.

3. *Anthropocentrism and response-dependence*

Aesthetic value is anthropocentric. This is one reason that aestheticians assume that aesthetic value must be response-dependent. But what is it for some property to be anthropocentric? Aesthetic value might be anthropocentric in at least two ways. First, aesthetic value might be of

interest only because there are creatures like us. Let's say of any feature that is anthropocentric in this way that it is weakly anthropocentric. Second, aesthetic value might be inaccessible to any purely objective, non-anthropocentric description. Any such feature we will describe as strongly anthropocentric.

To better appreciate the distinction we have in mind, let us assume that colors are weakly anthropocentric: colors are of interest to us (and would be of interest to any other possible creature) only because there are creatures with visual systems like ours. Employing only the vocabulary of physics, red objects would seem to have nothing in common. And so it is tempting to conclude that all they have in common is the disposition to look red. Indeed, that is what was generally concluded prior to J. J. C. Smart's 'On Some Criticisms of a Physicalist Theory of Colours' (1975).¹⁴ There Smart argues that the anthropocentric nature of color concepts is consistent with physicalism about colors. According to Smart, colors are disjunctive physical properties of objects. Redness is, for Smart, whatever it is that causally explains something's looking red to normal perceivers under normal conditions. Since we have good empirical evidence that there is no non-disjunctive physical property responsible for all such experiences, since we have evidence that different physical properties causally explain the red appearance of different objects under the same conditions to the same observers, Smart concludes that redness is a disjunctive property constituted by and only by all of the relevant physical properties causally responsible for objects appearing red to normal observers under normal conditions. The relevant disjunctive property is weakly anthropocentric. It is of interest only because there are creatures with visual systems like ours. Creatures with different visual systems would not perceive those properties, and any scientist unaware of such creatures would have no interest in those properties. The relevant disjunctive property is not, however, response-dependent. An object either has the relevant disjunctive property or it does not. And this is true regardless of whether there are human observers, or what those observers are like, or how they might change over time.

It might be thought that aesthetic properties are more deeply anthropocentric than this, however. Indeed, it might be thought that colors are more deeply anthropocentric than this as well. Perhaps it is not possible to reduce colors to physical properties, even to wildly disjunctive physical properties. One reason it might not be possible is that the appeal to human observers might be a ladder that cannot be kicked away. Perhaps there is no non-anthropocentric way to characterize the relevant disjunctive property.¹⁵ Or perhaps it is thought that color experience is revelatory in that color experience reveals to us the nature of colors. Since color experience does not reveal to us that colors are disjunctive physical properties, it follows that colors are not disjunctive physical properties.¹⁶ Or perhaps we

have reason to worry that disjunctive properties are not causally efficacious, and so cannot be causally responsible for color experience.¹⁷ For any of these reasons, or perhaps for some further reason, it might be concluded that colors are not reducible to physical properties and so can be characterized only by appeal to human observers. The characterization of colors, it might be thought, is essentially anthropocentric. Even if this is true, and we remain neutral in this article as to whether it is, it does not follow that colors are response-dependent properties. The mere fact that aesthetic value is anthropocentric, even strongly anthropocentric, the mere fact that it is inaccessible to any purely objective point of view, does not entail that it is response-dependent. To admit that a feature is not accessible to an objective point of view is to admit only that it is epistemically subjective. That a feature can only be accessed from a subjective point of view, that it can only be known by observation, is consistent with its being metaphysically objective.

We expect that the rejoinder will go as follows. If aesthetic value is not response-dependent, and if it is not reducible to some physical property, then it would seem to be *sui generis*. And to claim that aesthetic value is *sui generis*, it might be charged, is to claim that it is mysterious and non-natural.

As it stands, to accuse of mystery-mongering anyone who treats aesthetic value as *sui generis* is itself mystery-mongering. The non-reductive realist will allow that aesthetic value supervenes on the physical and so is, at least in this sense, a physical property. Of course, this alone is insufficient. The supervenience relationship does not tell us how a supervening property is related to its subvening base. Supervenience doesn't explain. It needs explaining. Response-dependent accounts offer an explanation. And to claim that aesthetic value is *sui generis*, it might be thought, is to foreclose on any possibility of an explanation.

Again it is helpful to look at the color literature where exactly this challenge is taken up, although we might also look to the philosophy of mind or to ethics.¹⁸ We do not have the time to canvass the options available, but here is a brief sketch of one option influenced by Stephen Yablo (1992) and Sydney Shoemaker (1998, 2007).¹⁹ The properties of concrete particulars are individuated by appeal to the causal powers that they contribute. The property of being red, for instance, contributes to anything having it the power to bring about a characteristic experience for normal perceivers under normal conditions. Of course, anything that looks red will have some physical property causally responsible for its looking red, although it will not be the same physical property for every red object. But the causal powers had by every red object will overlap. Every red object will share a set of causal powers, and that set will be a proper subset of the causal powers contributed by every physical property that realizes redness.

Compare. The property of being pyramidal and the property of being cubical contribute different causal powers. How else could we tell their instantiations apart? But every cubical object and every pyramidal object share a property: the property of having a polygonal side. Nothing that is cubical and nothing that is pyramidal can fail to have a polygonal side, and the polygonal sidedness of a cube or a pyramid can contribute nothing not contributed by being cubical or pyramidal. Instead, the property of having a polygonal side contributes a proper subset of the causal powers contributed by that object's being cubical or pyramidal or. . . . The suggestion, then, is that we can explain how colors, as well as aesthetic values, supervene on their physical realizers by appeal to the causal powers each contributes, that this is justified by the fact that the properties of concrete particulars are generally individuated by their causal powers, and this relationship is no more mysterious than the relationship between many paradigmatic primary properties.

4. *Normativity and response-dependence*

It will perhaps be objected that we have given too much attention to the supposed analogy between color and aesthetic value and too little to their obvious disanalogy: that aesthetic value is value while color is not. If response-dependence has been on the wane in the philosophy of colors but has held its ground in aesthetics perhaps this is because we require response-dependence to explain the special kind of normativity possessed by aesthetic-value concepts.

But what kind of normativity is the special kind possessed by aesthetic-value concepts? Color-concepts may be said to possess ordinary perceptual normativity, which is presumably a kind of epistemic normativity: if a pencil is yellow, then you ought to see that it is yellow if you look at it. But aesthetic-value concepts possess a distinctive kind of perceptual normativity that extends beyond ordinary perceptual normativity: if a painting is beautiful, then you ought to see that it is beautiful if you look at it and *you ought to look at it*. The point may be generalized, perhaps, by saying that an object's having aesthetic value is a reason to perceive it and to perceive it as having the aesthetic value that it has.

This much we do not merely grant but readily affirm. Are we then committed to response-dependence about aesthetic value? It may seem so. Consider the following case. Kate has more refined taste in painting than Simon and both Kate and Simon know this. Kate discovers some painting to be beautiful by looking at it. Simon discovers the same painting to be beautiful by being told that it is by Kate. Simon, we take it, still has reason to experience the painting for himself. But it seems that his reason cannot be primarily epistemic, and this would be so even if Simon could know the

painting to be beautiful only by looking at it himself. After all, there are presumably very many things about the painting which Simon might come to know only by looking at it but which he has no particular reason to know. Simply to say that he ought to look at the painting to know that it is beautiful leaves untouched the question why this is something worth knowing. We therefore take Simon's reason to be primarily aesthetic. He wishes to experience the painting's beauty for himself because the painting is beautiful, not merely to know that its beauty is there for the experiencing. But what does an aesthetic reason amount to? The defender of response-dependence may think she has the only plausible answer: an aesthetic reason is a species of hedonic reason. Simon has reason to experience the beauty of the painting because experiencing it will give Simon pleasure and Simon cares about pleasure.

But before inquiring whether this is the *only* plausible answer, perhaps we ought to inquire whether it is *a* plausible answer.

The first thing to note is that it presupposes an instrumentalist version of response-dependence about aesthetic value. It presupposes that aesthetic value (beauty, in this case) depends on a response (pleasure, in this case) by being instrumental to it. But, as we argued in Section 2, any non-circular instrumentalist version implies what all sides seem to agree is false: that for any artwork something wholly other from it, such as a drug or a knock on the head, could have just its value.

A second thing to note is that while it may be true that the painting would give Simon pleasure were he able to experience its beauty, it is possible that Simon will not be able: Simon's tastes, we recall, are not as refined as Kate's. Suppose that he is not able. Suppose further that he already takes very great pleasure in any number of paintings that aren't beautiful or otherwise aesthetically valuable. If a caring for beauty just is a caring for pleasure, why should he forsake his current pleasures and go to the trouble of developing his sensibilities simply so that he can take others? The advocate of response-dependence is forced to reply that pleasures taken in what is actually beautiful, as opposed to pleasures taken in what merely seems so to undeveloped tastes, are super pleasures – pleasures so far surpassing their rivals as to justify forsaking their rivals and undergoing whatever trouble is required to make their taking possible. But we think that this reply is, at best, without foundation.²⁰ We acknowledge the intuition that a pleasure taken in the beautiful is a better pleasure. Indeed we agree that a pleasure taken in the beautiful is a better pleasure. But it is a better pleasure not because it is, say, a pleasure having better phenomenal character, but because it is a pleasure taken in something better.

But if a caring for beauty is not a caring for pleasure, what sort of caring can it be? We believe that a caring for beauty just is a caring for beauty. We take caring for beauty (and caring for aesthetic value generally) to be

basic, on a level with caring for truth and caring for goodness and caring for pleasure. It might be objected that a caring for beauty is not a caring for the *experience* of beauty: that Simon's simply caring for beauty cannot give him a reason to experience the painting's beauty. But we take beauty (and aesthetic value generally) to be normative for experience in something like the way that truth is normative for belief and that moral goodness is normative for action. And so we think that you can no more care about beauty without caring about experiencing it than you can care about truth without caring about believing it or care about moral goodness without caring about enacting it.

5. Conclusion

We find no compelling reason to endorse a response-dependent account of aesthetic value, and we find ample motivation for developing alternative accounts. We have argued that the beliefs that motivate the widespread acceptance of response-dependent accounts of aesthetic value are false. With these motivations put aside, we can take more seriously the challenges to response-dependent accounts of aesthetic value, and we can give alternative accounts the attention that they deserve.

Department of Philosophy
Auburn University

NOTES

¹ Contrary to the accepted view, we believe artistic value merely to be a kind of aesthetic value. Hence we intend anything we say about response-dependent accounts of aesthetic value to apply equally to response-dependent accounts of artistic value. For arguments skeptical of non-aesthetic artistic value, see Shelley (2003, 2007) and Dominic McIver Lopes (2011).

² We take each of the following to affirm response-dependence about aesthetic (or artistic) value: Monroe Beardsley (1982), George Dickie (1988), Malcolm Budd (1985, 1995), Alan Goldman (1990, 1995, 2004), Kendall Walton (1993), Jerrold Levinson (1996a, 1996b, 2002), Robert Stecker (1997a, 1997b, 2004), Richard Miller (1998), and James Anderson (2000).

³ See Byrne and Hilbert, 1997 for a survey of these positions.

⁴ Zangwill (2001) is an exception.

⁵ Zangwill, 2001, pp. 186–195.

⁶ See Sydney Shoemaker (2003) for a defense of this position.

⁷ See Michael Watkins (2002, ch. 7) for a defense of this position.

⁸ See Byrne and Hilbert, 1997 for a defense of this position.

⁹ C. B. Martin first introduced this type of case three decades ago, but it has only recently appeared in print. See Martin, 1994 for discussion.

¹⁰ See Martin, 1994 for an argument that this cannot be done, and Lewis, 1997 for criticism of Martin.

¹¹ This species of instrumentalism – which generally goes by the term ‘aesthetic-value empiricism’ – has its most developed instances in Budd, 1995; Goldman, 1995; Levinson, 1996a; and Stecker, 1997a. Budd, it should be noted, denies that his account is instrumentalist (Budd, 1995, p. 5). Against this Stecker argues, convincingly to our minds, that Budd’s account is instrumentalist on any standard use of ‘instrumental.’ See Stecker, 1997a, pp. 254–256.

¹² See Budd, 1985, pp. 123–124; Davies, 1994, pp. 315–316; and Levinson, 1996a, pp. 22–23. Stecker appears to be the lone instrumentalist willing to acknowledge that instrumentalism implies that for any object something wholly other from it (such as a drug) could have just its value. See Stecker, 1997a.

¹³ For a detailed presentation and defense of the argument of this section, see Shelley, 2010. For an independent argument against instrumentalism about aesthetic value, see Shelley, 2011.

¹⁴ See Byrne and Hilbert, 1997 for a recent defense of anthropocentric realism about colors.

¹⁵ See Byrne and Hilbert, 1997 for a recent anthropocentric physicalist account of colors.

¹⁶ Johnston (1992) and Campbell (1997) defend this intuition.

¹⁷ See Watkins, 2005 for a discussion of such worries.

¹⁸ See, for example, Yablo, 1992, 1995; Campbell, 1997; Brookes, 1997; Watkins, 2002, 2005; and Byrne and Hilbert, 1997, 2007.

¹⁹ Such an account is developed by Watkins (2002).

²⁰ For sustained argument against the notion of the pleasure in the beautiful as super pleasure, see Shelley, 2011.

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