

Introduction to Philosophy

Art and Aesthetic Judgment: Aesthetics and the Good

As you read the material for the next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the readings:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently to these issues in the next class meeting.

Readings

- Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*
- Leo Tolstoy, "More from *What is Art?*"

Background

See the reading for a fine introduction to this material.

Questions

1. What are Leo Tolstoy's criticisms of the view that art must be defined as the beautiful? This position is contrary to the views of many of the philosophers we have read. Where do these thinkers diverge on this issue? Who has the strongest and most compelling argument? Why?
2. What is Tolstoy argument that linking art with the production of pleasure is an error? Is this a compelling argument?
3. According to Leo Tolstoy, what is the purpose of art? How is it a form of communication? How is it different from regular communication? Why is the artistic form of communication so important?
4. What are the features of good art that Tolstoy claims separate it from bad art?