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## **Understanding Understanding Art**

**Catherine Z. Elgin**

Elsewhere I have argued that art embodies and advances understanding. If this is so, then works of art and other things temporarily functioning as works of art fall within the province of epistemology. Here, I will take this for granted. It might seem to follow immediately that aesthetics is a branch of epistemology -- namely the branch that concerns itself with the ways art embodies and advances understanding. Things are not so straightforward. For aesthetics to be a *branch* of epistemology rather than simply being displaced, supplanted, or swallowed up by epistemology, there must be something *distinctive* about the ways art advances understanding. If there is, then aesthetics could concern itself with that.

To see whether this is so requires a quick explication of understanding. An understanding, as I use the term, is a systematic, interconnected network of commitments in reflective equilibrium that is grounded in fact, is duly responsive to evidence, and enables non-trivial inference, argument, and perhaps action pertaining to the phenomena it bears on (see Elgin 2017). This is what Jonathan Kvanvig calls 'objectual understanding' (Kvanvig 2003). It is understanding of a topic rather than just understanding that or why something is so. We understand, in the first instance, the Industrial Revolution, or the team's defensive strategy, or the New York subway system, or whatever. For an epistemic agent to understand a topic is for her to reflectively endorse such a network. In so doing, she may have propositional understanding of why something is so -- why, for example, the uptown local is in certain circumstances faster than the uptown express. Here I will not attempt to defend, or even to spell out my theory of

understanding in detail. For our purposes, the important point is that this characterization does not privilege the literal, the justified, or the true. Symbols that are not true, even symbols that are not truth-apt, figure in understanding. This leaves room for the arts to make important contributions to understanding.

Nevertheless, art does seem epistemically odd. The symbols that constitute a work of art typically are either not true or are not truth-apt. So it might seem that what makes aesthetics distinctive is that it is the branch of epistemology that concerns itself with the cognitive contributions of symbols that do not purport to be true. The problem with this solution is that science too is riddled with symbols that are not, and do not purport to be true. Idealizations, models, and thought experiments, even if propositional in form, are not true. Material models, such as tinker toy models of proteins or the Phillips-Newlyn machine, are not truth-apt. So if indifference to truth values is the mark of the aesthetic, we should consign the sciences to the aesthetic realm. I'm not sure this would be a bad thing, but it is unlikely to happen.

If indifference to truth values is the only interesting aspect of the ways the arts advance understanding, it is plausible that aesthetics is out of a job. For then, it seems, there is nothing epistemically distinctive about art. I will urge, however, that aesthetics is indeed a branch of epistemology because there is something distinctive about the ways works of art and objects temporarily functioning as works of art advance understanding. But it is not due to their indifference to truth. Works of art are subject to *interpretive indeterminacy*. They are open to alternative, mutually incompatible, but individually acceptable interpretations. To be sure, there are constraints on acceptable interpretation. *Les Misérables* cannot be correctly interpreted as a story about a boy and his dog. But the constraints are insufficient to insure uniqueness. There is typically more than one acceptable interpretation of a work of art. Each acceptable interpretation

discloses something that the others obscure. Moreover, any particular interpretation and any understanding or insight gleaned from a convincing interpretation is permanently open to challenge. Indefinitely many aspects of the work may be significant. The challenge typically is that the interpretation in dispute does not give a feature its due. Aesthetics then is the branch of epistemology that explains how interpretively indeterminate symbols advance understanding.

Why should we think that works of art are interpretively indeterminate? One reason might be that the interpretation of particular works of art seems to be constantly in dispute. People keep writing dissertations on how *The Nightwatch* or *Hamlet* or *Take the A Train* ought to be interpreted. The topic has evidently not yet been exhausted. But I think we can go deeper than this sociological argument.

*Interpretive indeterminacy*, I suggest, is a product of a variety of features of works of art, their functions, their implications and their implicatures. I'll begin by sketching some of them. I draw heavily on Goodman's symptoms of the aesthetics, and more broadly his discussion of art. Goodman says that the symptoms of the aesthetic highlight features that 'tend to focus attention on the symbol rather than, or at least along with, what it refers to' (1978, 69). They do so, I suggest, because where they are operative, we are encouraged to be uncertain just what symbol or combination of symbols a work consists of, what it refers to, and which of its features function symbolically. That they promote uncertainty might seem like an epistemic weakness; actually, I will urge, it is an epistemic strength.

Symbols that are *syntactically dense* are symbols for which 'the finest differences in certain respects constitute a difference between symbols' (1978, 67-68). A rectangle in a Mondrian painting would be a different symbol if its dimensions were ever so slightly different.

That being so, at the threshold of perceptual acuity, viewers may legitimately take the figure to have ever so slightly different dimensions and therefore to be different symbols.

Symbols that are *semantically dense* belong to systems where 'symbols are provided for things distinguished by the finest differences in certain respects' (1978, 68). A pictorial system allows for its symbols to represent infinitely fine-grained distinctions. In a series of paintings, Manet represents Rouen Cathedral as it looks under a multiplicity of atmospheric and lighting conditions. It is easy to imagine additional paintings -- in effect, to fill in the gaps in the series -- that convey ever more nuanced differences in the way the cathedral would look under different lights. Every difference in the representation of light and atmosphere makes a difference to what exactly is depicted. Thus, viewers may legitimately differ over exactly what atmosphere a given Rouen Cathedral picture represents.

Syntactic and semantic density are characteristics of symbol systems, not of individual symbols. To construe a particular symbol as syntactically or semantically dense is to interpret it as belonging to a system that allows for infinitely fine distinctions among symbols. So to construe it as dense is to interpret it against a range of almost indiscernible alternatives. A symbol's standing as a dense symbol is derivative from its belonging to a system with a particular symbolic structure.

A work is *relatively replete* if comparatively many aspects of an object play a symbolic role (1978, 68). Relative repleteness is a characteristic of individual symbols, not the systems they belong to. Goodman illustrates this feature by comparing a Hokusai drawing and an EKG printout, imagining that both consist of the same line on the same paper. The EKG is austere. The only features that function symbolically are the shape of the curve and the frequency with which the pattern repeats. All other features are representationally inert. In the drawing,

however, a vast variety of features are potentially significant: the size, shape and texture of the paper, the thickness of the lines at each point, the direction of the flow, the color of the line and the background (and subtle differences in the color at different points on the page), even the weave of the paper. None can be summarily dismissed.

Moreover, just how the EKG plot functions is agreed upon and established in advance. Cardiologists know which factors to focus on and which ones to ignore. They agree about how precise an EKG is. Wobbles in the curve, beyond the agreed upon threshold, are likely to be dismissed as noise. There might, of course, be disagreement about whether a slight irregularity in the curve is significant. But such disagreements are apt to be infrequent and short-lived. They are likely to be quickly resolved, by seeing whether other qualified interpreters of EKGs see the irregularity (intersubjective agreement), repeating the test (replicability), retesting using a different EKG machine (test/retest agreement), and seeing whether the result correlates with any other evidence of cardiac irregularity. (Does it show up, or become more or less pronounced on a stress test, for example). With disagreements about the Hokusai, no such procedures are effective. One critic discerns a subtle change in the color of the line, and another fails to see it. One says that the irregularity in the weave of the paper has a semantic function and another disagrees. One finds in the work a feature that has (or has not) been seen elsewhere in Hokusai's drawings; the other doubts its significance. One takes the fading of the line to be a metaphor for approaching death; another denies it. Such disputes may be endless. There are no further checks to run, no other tests to run, no correlations that will decide the issue.

Dense and replete symbols are subject to controversy over interpretation. Different audiences may interpret a symbol differently -- find different aspects of it significant, and/or differ over what they signify. When Roger Fry says that *Le Comptoir* highlights the way

Cézanne creates mass out of color, we attend to the way the configurations of paint give a sense of solidity to the peaches, making them seem to be substantial three-dimensional material objects. When Clement Greenberg disagrees, and insists that the the painting emphasizes the flatness of the picture plane, we look at the painting differently. Rather than noticing how the picture gives a sense of a bowl of fruit extending back into a three-dimensional space, we notice how the picture seems to insist on its being two-dimensional, not three. Each interpretation emphasizes features that the other skirts. Both are plausible -- indeed, insightful -- interpretations that afford competing ways of looking at the painting. Together they raise the question: Should we read the work as conveying spatial depth, or as subverting pretensions to represent spatial depth? They challenge us to decide whether to take the pretension of three-dimensionality seriously. The susceptibility to competing interpretations shows why works of art reward repeated attention. That susceptibility also discloses the value of looking at the work from a variety of points of view. Works of art are typically polysemous. There is more to things than meets any particular eye.

*Metaphor* is a device whereby a symbol, whether or not it literally refers, does so figuratively. It enables us to fill the gaps that our systems of literal representation inevitably leave. Set theory teaches that except for objectionably self-referential cases, every collection of objects constitutes an extension. We devise literal labels for the extensions we have a lasting interest in. We have words for cabbages and kings; pictures of shoes and ships; icons for apps and rest stops on the highways. But the vast majority of extensions are semantically unmarked. We have no need -- certainly no lasting need -- to pick out the likeness that their members share. Sometimes, however, we want to recognize membership in a semantically unmarked extension. We want, perhaps, to identify the particular sort of sleazy dishonesty that characterizes a sneaky,

opportunistic colleague. Then we resort to metaphor and call him a weasel. He is not literally a weasel, of course. But he displays the sort of self-serving, manipulative sneakiness characteristic of weasels (or of our stereotype of weasels). By using the term 'weasel' metaphorically, we highlight the features in question and underscore his similarity to the subset of other sneaky human beings (also metaphorical weasels) that share them.

Metaphors are ubiquitous. They are common in everyday language, in science, and in politics as well as in art. They afford a basis for extending our representational range. Defying definition in terms of or reduction to literal labels, they are keyed to context. Just what features are highlighted in calling someone a weasel depends critically on circumstances. The term might be used metaphorically to characterize someone's appearance or his lithe athleticism and/or his moral character. Even the most flat-footed metaphors display some measure of interpretive indeterminacy. Often context determines what a given metaphor means. In the arts, however, the indeterminacy may be permanent. The lily in an annunciation picture may be a metaphor for Mary's purity or, being an Easter lily, a metaphorical harbinger of the resurrection. Then again, it might just be a lily. Disagreements can arise over whether a given feature is metaphorical; and if it is, what it is a metaphor for.

Some works of art not only evoke but also *express* emotions. To evoke an emotion is to bring it about that the audience feels that emotion. This is a causal matter. A work, whatever its content, might evoke admiration or envy simply by being extraordinarily well done. Even a theorem, which expresses no emotion whatsoever, can evoke admiration or envy, appreciation or contempt. To express an emotion is to highlight a particular property of the work -- one that is correctly described metaphorically by an emotion term.<sup>1</sup> A love song might express hope,

1 Expression by works of art is not restricted to emotions. A musical work can express color; a painting can express harmony, and so on. The critical point is that expression is

longing, joy, despair or any combination of these emotions. Because emotions are hard to individuate, because metaphors tend to be polysemic, and because works of art apt to be dense and replete, interpreters can reasonably disagree about what emotion a work expresses. On one reading, the juxtaposition of precious materials and drooping flowers in a Dutch still life expresses Calvinist ambivalence about worldly success. On another, it expresses an appreciation of the richness of life in the face of inevitable decline.

These features raise questions: what the symbol is; what it refers to; how it refers to its referent (literally? metaphorically? directly? indirectly?); what it affords access to; how it affords access; what it blocks or impedes; what justifies or is signified by blocking or impeding what it does. Then there is the question, how to decide.

The availability of interpretively indeterminate symbols creates opportunities for epistemic access. *Reorientation* occurs when a symbol provides a non-standard view of a subject, leading the audience to see it in a different light. In *Moby Dick*, the character, Queequeg, is rumored to be a cannibal; the other sailors fear and shun him on that account. But he is totally unobjectionable. He neither behaves like a savage nor displays any dietary peculiarities. Through Queequeg, Melville underscores the unreliability of racial and cultural stereotypes.

Standardly, perhaps influenced by Aristotle's *Poetics*, we read *Oedipus Rex* as a story about a great man brought down by a tragic flaw. Martha Graham's *Night Journey*, focusing on Jocasta in the moments before her suicide, reminds us that the tragedy was as much Jocasta's as it was Oedipus's. Knowing the oracle's prediction, she left her infant son exposed on a hillside to

metaphorical exemplification of an aesthetic symbol functioning as such. (See Goodman, 1968). I focus on expression of emotions, because it is a familiar case. The features I highlight are shared by the expression of non-emotional properties.



die. She later unknowingly married that son, setting off the chain of events that led to the plague on Thebes and the discovery of their impious union. Graham's dance makes the case that the Aristotelian perspective is too limited. We reorient ourselves to the play when we recognize that Jocasta was at least as culpable and at least as much a victim of fate as Oedipus. As a result, three interpretations of the play become available: Aristotle's great man brought down by a tragic flaw; Graham's worthy woman brought down by thinking she could escape fate; a folie à deux, where together they were at least partly responsible for their tragic fate. The availability of the several interpretations may prompt a more general skepticism of great man or single agent accounts of responsibility more generally.

*Reconfiguration* occurs when a symbol restructures the domain in terms of novel or non-standard kinds. Items that under a standard system would be seen as alike are represented as different; items that would be construed as different are seen to be relevantly alike. Goya's *Disasters of War* make no distinction between friend and foe. One is as likely to be a victim of atrocities perpetrated by one's own army as of atrocities perpetrated by the enemy. The real enemy, Goya suggests, is war itself. In *Paradise Lost*, Satan declares, 'Evil, be thou my good', setting up a Nietzschean transvaluation of values. What do we see when moral values are inverted? Such reconfigurations not only call into question specific standard ways of looking at things, they also sensitize us to the way our opinions are shaped by those standard ways. Once we appreciate that there are options that highlight different features of the phenomena, we may be less inclined to simply default to the usual readings of things.

A *telling omission* occurs when something seemingly significant is simply left out. Feminist and post-colonial criticism highlights such omissions, arguing that to appreciate what and how a work of art functions it pays to attend to what it overlooks. Telling omissions need

not be intentional. That it never even occurred to the artist to include *x* may itself be what is significant. Nor is telling omission are restricted to wholesale exclusion. That members of certain groups are portrayed stereotypically can constitute a telling omission of their individuality. We should not, however, think that a telling omission is always a flaw in a work. In Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, the king and queen (the subjects ostensibly being portrayed by the artist in the scene) are visible in the mirror at the back of the room. Many of Picasso's variations on the painting include the mirror but omit the King and Queen. This is plausibly interpreted as an indication of Picasso's anti-royalism. Not all omissions are telling. In every work some things have to be omitted, occluded, or overshadowed. It would be ridiculous to find fault with *War and Peace* on the grounds that it did not present every soldier in Napoleon's army with the level of detail it showered on Prince Andre. But, as *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* shows, even the most marginal characters in one work are worthy of a starring role in another. Telling omissions sensitize us to the idea that what a work omits or merely sketches can be an important indicator of how it functions. And whether a particular omission is telling may be interpretively indeterminate. Under one interpretation an omission is telling; under another it is not. Reconfiguration, reorientation and telling omission restructure the domain and our access to it. We see it as composed of different entities and kinds than we normally would.

*Optionality of perspective or grain* is also important. Given that there are alternatives, what can we learn from the fact that this perspective or grain was chosen? What do we gain from seeing things from this point of view, or with this level of precision? What do we fail to see? What must we fail to see? These are questions about the pragmatics of the symbol. Every perspective occludes some things in order to exhibit others. What can we learn from the choices the artist makes about what to occlude -- about what is too trivial to matter, or what is so obvious

that it goes without saying (or showing)? Different interpretations are apt to give different answers to these questions. *Las Meninas* portrays the artist seen from the front. Vermeer's *Art of Painting* portrays the artist seen from the back. What is expressed by the choice of orientation? Should we consider both pictures to contain self-portraits of the artists who painted them? The Velázquez clearly is; but what about the Vermeer? This raises the further question: why do we privilege the face-on view? That is, what is so weird about a self-portrait showing only the artist's back?

Any decision with respect to these things is subject to challenge. Reasons can be given and defended, but the defense will not amount to a knock-down argument. Etched in Maya Lin's *Viet Nam Memorial*, a work of public art on the Mall in Washington DC, are the names of the 58,272 US military personnel who were killed or declared missing in action during the Viet Nam war. The names are all the same size and are in the same font. Rank is not included. Not all war memorials are like this. In the war memorials in Canterbury Cathedral, for example, font size is correlated with rank. The names of colonels are larger than the names of majors; the names of majors, larger than the names of captains, and so on. Rank is not only included, it is emphasized. Lin's memorial thus might be interpreted as exemplifying the American ideal that all are created equal. Every one deserves to be remembered. Each is represented as being as important as any other. One might disagree. Perhaps no such commitment to equality is exemplified by Lin's memorial. Reasons on each side can be adduced, but the disagreement may be interminable.

It might seem that interpretive indeterminacy is an epistemic defect rather than an epistemic strength. If we cannot decide whether, e.g., Cézanne's *Le Comptoir* highlights the way mass is composed out of color, as Fry maintained, or the flatness of the picture plane, as

Greenberg insisted, and we see no reason to think that we ever will have conclusive reasons to decide the issue, what are the epistemic gains?

Here are some of them. By grappling with alternative interpretations we come to appreciate that there is more to things than meets the eye. Another interpretation may yield new insights into the work and what it conveys. This is a direct consequence of density and repleteness. This may foster increased awareness. The conviction that there is more here than I am now seeing leads me to ask, 'What more?' and 'How else might I see it?' It may also sensitize us to trade-offs. To interpret *Le Comptoir* as a commentary on the flatness of the picture plane is implicitly to decide that the composition of mass out of color is insignificant. For to accommodate the construction of mass requires endorsing a three-dimensional reading. But the lesson is not just about how better to look at art or a particular work of art. It also pertains to what we glean about the world through the vehicle of the work of art. If we see the world through the lens of *Othello*, it makes a difference whether we think of the play as about manipulation, or jealousy, or the failure to believe women who tell the truth. Which lens do we see it through?

Our recognition of our inability to decide among alternative interpretations of a work of art may lead to Socratic ignorance. We realize that we do not know what we thought we knew. We become aware of bewildering complexities that we had previously, perhaps complacently, overlooked, not only in the work but also in the world. Socratic ignorance is an epistemic asset, not a defect. Only by knowing that we do not know do we have an incentive to investigate. When the basis for our epistemic state is a clash between incompatible but seemingly adequate interpretations, we have a focus for investigation.

Once someone become sensitized to the idea that there is more here than meets the eye, and that what more there is may be discernible through reinterpretation of what does meet the eye, this can carry over to other aspects of perceptual experience. What do I overlook by attending to everyday perceptual experience in the way that I unthinkingly do? What might I see if I looked at things differently? What am I assuming when I take it for granted that my current perceptual/ conceptual categories are adequate? Which of my omissions are telling? What might I access if I conceptualized the phenomena in terms of non-standard categories? Different interpretations yield different insights that are potentially projectible onto everyday experience. Different orientations, category schemes, grains, and emphases make different factors salient. Moreover they also obscure different things. In any perspectival drawing, some things are occluded by others. The small mouse close to the picture plane occludes the large barn in the distance. Details of objects represented as close to the picture plane are provided, objects at a distance are sketched. What is occluded is blocked from view; what is sketched is represented incompletely and imprecisely. So if we attend to occlusion, we are in a position to ask what the artist is implicating by occluding what she does. This sensitizes us to the way choices of orientation, grain, category scheme, etc. affect what we discern, what we happen to overlook, and what those choices force us to overlook. We might ask whether we are culpably ignorant of events on the other side of the world if we ignore them just because, like the distant barn in the picture book, they do not loom large in our experience.

Nothing is fixed and final. The most well grounded interpretation of a work may be challenged. New insights may arise that call into question what was previously conceded. When a work of art cuts across received categories and marks out previously unrecognized similarities and differences, we see the value of doing this and gain resources for doing it. This sensitizes us

to the existence and importance of unappreciated likenesses and differences, symmetries and asymmetries. It also sensitizes us to the epistemic value of seeking them out. The crucial point is that these features are genuinely there to be found. We are not fantasizing when we find hitherto unrecognized symmetries that cut across standard divides. Appreciating the parallel between Dorothea Brooke's and Dr. Lydgate's unhappy marriages in *Middlemarch* may prompt us to wonder why we are prone to think badly of Dr. Lydgate and not of Dorothea Brooke. Are we just hypocrites, or is there a subtle difference between the two cases?

Works of art are dense, replete, and complex, and because of this any interpretation is subject to challenge. This provides an incentive for reflexive awareness of one's own responses. Why am I reading this work this way? What am I assuming? What am I ignoring? This holds for emotional responses as well as perceptual and doxastic responses. Why do I take the work to express regret rather than remorse? Why do I feel dread rather than terror as the horror film unfolds? This sets up a feedback loop. The viewer interprets the work, queries her own interpretation and its basis, looks back at the work to find features that support or challenge her current interpretation, asks the question again, etc.. It not only has the potential to improve her interpretation, it is also a vehicle for focused self-reflection. She comes to know herself better as a result of her inquiry. By figuring out exactly why she thinks/feels that the Guernica figure expresses grief rather than sorrow, she refines her own emotional sensibilities. She learns to feel the difference in her own responses. This self-knowledge is likely to be further enhanced if she has access to alternative interpretations of the work. Then, rather than asking herself 'What justifies me in believing that  $p$ ?' she can ask herself 'What justifies me in believing that  $p$  rather than  $q$ ?' That is, she can assess her interpretation against relevant alternatives.

In other works, I have emphasized the importance of exemplification, the referential relation of a sample to whatever it is a sample of. It might seem odd, therefore, that I did not include it among the symptoms of the aesthetic that I began with. The reason is that I do not consider exemplification a symptom of the aesthetic. I do not deny its immense importance for art. My reason for excluding it from the symptoms of the aesthetic is that exemplification is equally important for science (see Elgin 2017). Still, there are at least two ways in which exemplification in the arts differs from standard exemplification in the sciences. Exemplification is selective. An exemplar can highlight some of its features only by marginalizing or downplaying others. So the question arises, which features does a given exemplar exemplify? In commercial exemplars, the answer is set in advance. The paint sample is expressly designed to exemplify a specific color of paint. In the sciences the candidates for exemplification are largely, but not completely, set in advance. A litmus paper tests for acidity; the color it turns exemplifies the level of acidity in a solution. The operative assumption is that only acidity will be exemplified in a litmus test. Still, a scientific test can surprise in a way that the paint sample, if well designed, will not. The solution may turn out to be far more acidic, hence the paper turn out to be far pinker, than we anticipated. Moreover, the scientific symbol is attenuated. The only dimension along which the litmus paper exemplifies is the range of colors from blue to pink. And it a common assumption, shared all scientific investigators doing litmus tests, that this is the only dimension along which the litmus paper functions.

In the arts, symbols exemplify within a dense and replete field of alternatives. Any and many of the features of the symbol may exemplify, and may exemplify any feature they instantiate. A painting can exemplify the colors and shapes, contours and configurations it contains. It can an also exemplify any social, political, religious, and/or philosophical properties

and relations it instantiates. It can exemplify its orientation and grain, highlighting what they make discernible and what they make indiscernible. A work can exemplify via its omissions, occlusions, emphases, juxtapositions. Brandeis University has three chapels situated around a small reflecting pool. Although the university is affiliated with Judaism, the three chapels -- one for each major religion practiced by the students who first attended the school -- are similar in size, and apart from the religion-specific articles like crucifixes and menorahs found inside, similar in design. Moreover, and this is the important point, although they are quite close to one another, the chapels are so situated that the shadow cast by any one of them never falls on another. The absence of a shadow -- the least of things -- exemplifies a refusal to dominate, which in turn exemplifies the idea that all religions are equally worthy of respect. Density and repleteness then are characteristic of exemplificational symbols as well as of denotational symbols in the arts. And because in the arts exemplars function in dense and replete systems, there may be unending controversy about what exactly a given symbol exemplifies.

Interpretive indeterminacy is a sign of inexhaustibility. There is in principle always more to be seen. What a viewer or listener has discerned so far may be called into question by someone else, or by herself in a later encounter with the work. Further lookings and listenings are potentially rewarding because there is in principle always more to be found. I have been arguing that works of art advance understanding and that aesthetics is the branch of epistemology that explains how they do so. If this is right, then aesthetic values are epistemic values.

Beauty is not then the end of art. As we well know, many excellent works of art neither are nor purport to be beautiful. Goya's black paintings, Grünewald's Isenheim altarpiece, Mahler's ninth symphony are dark and disturbing works. Nor is there any point in attempting to construe such works as exhibiting their own peculiar sort of beauty, in order to fit the



stereotype. Beauty, ugliness, originality, banality, simplicity, complexity, grandeur, and triviality need not be reduced to a single aesthetic category to be aesthetically valuable. A work of art is good just in case it embodies and/or advances understanding.

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