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How Can Art Make You a More Complete Human Being?

This Man & Arts class has been extremely confusing at times. I'm a computer science major who hasn't done much "art" in over 10 years. Insightfully viewing a painting, listening to music, or critically analyzing a film aside from the scientific plausibilities just wasn't something I would do. It seemed to be a waste of time and that I should just relax and enjoy them for their face value. Why would I spent my time thinking about why an artist used bright yellow curved strokes, or why lighting was decreased 40% during a certain scene in a movie.

Well, it turns out that I couldn't have been more ignorant about art appreciation and more importantly its impact on myself as human. This class has absolutely helped to change me into a more open-minded person and a better overall human being. It's easy to say that statement, however it's a little bit more difficult to explain what it actually feels like to be so blind or wrong about something for such a long time. In Plato's Allegory of the Cave, he explains how if a human is born in a cave and chained up from birth to stare at a wall, that is the only reality they will know and all their thoughts will revolve around that wall and those chains. However, he explains that if somehow one person broke free and escaped from the cave they would be exposed so dramatically to a world they never knew existed. If they went back and told those other people how good it was outside the cave, they would ignore him in fear of the unknown or pure disbelief. After taking this class, I feel like the person who broke free of the chains and began to see a different life entirely.

I think changing your paradigm and being as open minded as possible thought out life will make you "a more complete human being", but I also think it will lead to a better life for you in general. I've been able to view things from a different perspective. This is also easy to say but not so easy to explain because changing your mindset is not just something you can do in an

instant. The brain doesn't work like that, you need repetition and new experience to develop a list of things you value and more often then not you base all of your thoughts off of those few things you value. If you can open your mind and consistently try to not view, but value things differently, that is when you will truly become a more complete human being.

Looking for and <u>questioning</u> all of the small details and attempting to get inside the head of another person is a skill I've largely improved during my time in this class. Thinking differently has inspired me to read books that I normally wouldn't even consider a couple months ago. As a computer science student I've been very logical in my approach to most everything in my life the past 10 years. I learned that it's actually better to take a step back from all the data and analytics and take an objective open-minded view at everything in life. Once you're there you can let your mind take control and help you to make decisions or interpret things in way you likely wouldn't have if you just stayed in your normal cycle of living. I believe taking this class while in Thailand and being a westerner had even more of an impact on me than if i took this class at home. With such a new landscape and language, ect, opening myself to something new and making myself better and more complete as a human was not only interesting and fun, but it almost seemed effortless.

This class and art in general has helped me critique my own consciousness. I often take a step back when thinking anything and to view myself thinking what I am. This allows me to laugh at how serious, lazy, weird, etc, that I am currently being and to have a more complete mindset about my life and to respect and dive into the thought, intentions, and feelings of other humans. That is why art has made me a better person and I'm truly grateful for the knowledge and nudging in the right direction that this class and art has provided me.

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