

What is Nine Plus Ten?

Dawg, what is art? What is something that's meaningful? Is it a banana duct-taped to a wall? Is it someone hugging a table while tweaking? Is it an oil painting that took thousands of hours of obsession, creativity, talent, and student loan to complete? Is it a canvas of black said to be the harbinger of some greater meaning left for the audience to distinguish? These are not just questions of our taste—they are questions of truth. Many encourage the belief that all art is subjective, that all forms of ideas and personal establishments need to be welcomed into our ever-diversifying world and to question the value of something is to gatekeep, offend, and imply some outdated notion of standard. However if everything can be considered as art, then nothing is art. If we favor populist clamor and woke embracement, what becomes of the mind of the masses? If we are to view all as art, we are only opening the gates of our soul to deception—to become numb to what is beautiful and corrupt, moral and immoral. In this case, Elitism becomes a shield to protect our minds against the corrupt influence of all media—to provide a necessary structure that filters ideas in order that our minds may not be corrupted by the overflow of information.

We have confused equality of value with equality of judgment—everyone may be worthy of dignity, but not everyone is nor should be equipped to define art. Yes, art can be defined. There is a difference between good art and bad art, between meaningful expression and performative nonsense, between moral art which elevates the soul and immoral art which desecrates it. However, our culture is obsessed with democratizing every facet of life, to embrace all things and plaster meaning onto the things undeserving of meaning. The

distinctions to what is valid and worthy of appreciation is not only ignored but vilified, that to have a mind of discernment is to be unaccepting and inhuman as it is argued that our diversity is what makes us human. What does such a mindset bring? Chaos—an intellectual free-for-all of soulless content mixed with the soulful. Virtue becomes cringeworthy and outdated, depth becomes pretentious, and meaning dies a slow and painful death. We are left with irony without sincerity, shock without substance, aesthetic without ethics. The result of such a mindset only brings the retardation of the mind, a degradation of critical thought, a clog which hinders our perception and individualism.

But the influence of media doesn't just play into the degradation of our mind—it is about moral consequences, fundamental influence on a spiritual level. When all media is declared equal, when pornography is indistinguishable from performance art, when a dog meme is as valid as Holy Scripture, when it is ok to ignore physical genitals and apply a self-made identity, what becomes of our world? What becomes of us as human beings? If we live with what is vile or meaningless through a prolonged period, we too will become grotesque and twisted versions of our former purer self—our attention spans shriveled, critical thought morphed into instant acceptance, beauty mocked, virtue rebranded as oppression—immoral influence. The hindering of our mental retardation isn't just to limit what we consume to what possesses quality and is artful, but to what is virtuous. An art piece that depicts a grotesque scene can be made with great quality and could be considered “artful.” It could speak with clarity, contain layers, crafted with intention, and aimed beyond mere momentary sensation, but it could be promoting what is sinful in the name of “expression” —pushing us convince ourselves that what is vile is beautiful. Expression is not justification, and they aren't earned

through the virtue of mere existence. Not all that can be said should be said, and not all that is said should be celebrated. If we only are to shelter from what lacks quality, what good will it bring if we are still vulnerable to unethical influence?

Now, if not all forms of ideas be accepted, how are we to discern what is good? Who will separate the wheat from the chaff, the eternal from the ephemeral? If we really want a filter for information, then the concept of the “elite” is unavoidable. Just as governing officials are established to ensure order and physical protection, we also need an “elite” to shelter us mentally. We need critics who still believe in excellence, curators who are unafraid to reject that which is ugly and soulless, discern what is virtuous and what isn’t. But don’t we as humans have different “tastes?” Something that could profoundly impact one person in an honorable fashion could be meaningless to someone else, what one considers to be the promotion of mental wellbeing seen as the twist of natural design, what is freeing to one may be enslaving to another. If we are to base the “elite” in humanity alone there would only be conflict as the heart and judgment of even the most refined of us are biased. To purify the mind of mankind from its retardation is to chase after a perfect vision, yet none of us are perfect enough to either see that vision or work in unison to that vision. What is perfect is divine and holy, and that discernment can only be shared with those who choose to submit to the holy standard of the Lord. Media that degrades our minds and arts that corrupt take, but the Lord gives and overflows. Only those who pursue His vision are the uncorrupted, the ones who are the infinitely closest to what is originally meant to be human, what is perfected. Those who do not bow to trends, not truth—serve the gods of relevance and shock, not reverence and meaning. In doing so, they participate in the retardation of the human mind,

regardless if they consume arts that are made with quality or media that lack meaning—it is inhuman of them to chase what is imperfect.

Thus we arrive at the conclusion that we do need some form of elitism as a shield against the retardation of our minds. Retardation isn't just about the influence meaningless, but also the sinful. Though the notion to see that we need to rely on something elite to curate our consumption of ideas is in the right direction, it is naïve of us to think that we as humans can be that elite. The idea that our diversity is what makes us human is true to a sense, but that is true in the fact that diversity is the principle for humanity in its current state, not what humanity is meant to be. To truly be protected from retardation is to chase after what is perfect and divine, and only through God can that be obtained. If we are to not try to be perfect, we are willingly trapping ourselves in a state of imperfection. The very act of not attempting to pursue the radiance of truth and focus on things that are self-imposed to be “meaningful” is retarded.