Liberal Arts and Democracy

To be considered a grecian citizen in the ancient world, a person was required by society to be proficient in what we call the liberal arts. It was expected of an educated man to be able to speak publicly and in senate rooms; to entice their audiences with well structured thoughts and more attractive presentations. To appeal to the masses with the grace of words, body and action was the goal of any who wished to hold a place of social status in the world of their time. Later was included the arts of education any study that made the mind more articulate and worldly entered the repertoire for the perfect man. Essentially, people were encouraged to reach the mental stage of formal operation, a level of thinking roughly ⅓ of Americans are at today.

In a ship at sea in the olden days, the captain was always turned to for the final decision. He was considered the wisest man on board. The educated men on board were the ones who navigated, measured out food rations or trained them to fire cannons. The ancients of the world held men of greater education in high respect because to be educated is to have honed the mind to learn. In knowing how to learn, and having practice in expanding one’s mind, an individual is far more capable of making well thought-out, sound, educated decisions. In a democracy, where the voice of every person is to be heard, it is better to have a thousand strong, morally healthy and intelligent minds working together

rather than to have one or two educated people making the decisions that would affect everyone, just because they were able to sway the masses with false words and good acting for a seat of higher power.

In a democracy, five basic principles are required. A book of laws, by which all people, citizens, military and government, must abide. A freedom of press, so that opinions may be shared without censorship. Active members of a political party, so that the democracy can truly have the voice of all of the people. Human rights, so that each person would be treated as a person and respected, heard without prejudice. Enlightened, intelligent citizens, so that every debate and law made can be made for the better, with the great minds of an educated people. In maths and sciences, certain laws must be abided by as well. One cannot defy gravity, or divide by zero, or measure a negative distance from place to place. There are rules and laws that the arts and the natural world must run by, we must adhere to the greater forces in our lives and work our way around them. In a democracy, we are given the freedom to contribute to the makings of the laws that shape our lives; a kind of freedom dancers feel on stage, or a musician feels when they hear themselves play, an artist feels with a completed piece of work. We must all obey the rules of our worlds, but in both the arts and democracy, we have leave to make some rules our own.