



Picasso's Left Ear

Issue 4



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The Soul of an Artist

The soul of an artist is inevitably bound up with his work. In every sentence is entrenched, the emotion which rattled the author, and each reading when read with this in mind, can betray depths and layers which had been deftly hidden until that moment. Let us take for example a piece of poetry, when it lies in its formative state, being shaped and crafted by the poet, the poem is entirely in the possession of that poet. It is his to mould, and the only interpretation present in it, will be that which the writer intended for it. But once the pen has departed from the paper, and the piece is published for the public eye, the poet loses his right to sole possession. The work becomes a shared property, and though impregnated with the original ideas of the poet, is spun in its reading, and adopts with each passage, through time, and through audience, new meanings. Thus when one reads a poem, one must be aware of all that is tied up with that poem, all which is itself gripping to the base of the poetry, as to survive the upheavals of history, indeed in all works, there are ideas which cling under threat of extinction, and by lurking in words permeate through the ages. When one approaches a piece of such work then, concentrating as we said on poetry, one must frequent oneself with empathy, with the ability to connect to the work, and feel not only the emotion laid bare by the poet, but the central ideas, and impressed modern perceptions which inhabit it. One must be aware that when one reads the work of a true writer, one gains a glimpse at the soul of man, and that detested Hegelian phrase, *the spirit of the age*. One is not only exposed to the soul of the artist, one provokes it, for the artist inexorably leaves parts of himself in his works, and when we read or profess these works, we reinvigorate the image of the author, and the meaning of his work, in our minds. Thus the best of poets, will bind both themselves, and their ideologies to their works, and the best works, those that bear these thoughts and feelings through time and hardship, and yet manage to have them resonate and grow (in the accumulation of meaning through new contemporary perceptions) even as they are absorbed by the modern reader. Indeed as Wilde expressed in *The picture of Dorian Gray* sometimes what the artist fears most, is that too much of himself will be revealed in his labours (this being particularly true in terms of Eliot, who has not yet suffered the armour of symbolism to give way). In fact the best picture I can paint presently of what I entail here, is that of Wilde, which follows as so. When reading the delicate structure of Wilde's wit, feeling it pierce the side of inflated ideologies, and mock the masked nature of Society, one must imagine him sitting nearby. Immaculate in speech, words striking forth from his mouth like hot sparks flying from a furnace. One must remember that when one reads one *evokes a spirit*, and that Wilde is speaking to you from his prose, be it with a jocund wit, or with all the sorrow of De Profundis, the man is living through your study, and breaths as you feel the emotions he has trapped in words. Perhaps this short discourse is best summed by Keats from his poem *Ode*.

"Bards of passion and of mirth, Ye have left your souls on earth!

And the souls you left behind you, teach us, here, the way to find you"

What does this mean though in philosophical terms, as one who professes himself a novice of the ambiguities and mysteries of the philosophical pursuit it would be a duty of mine to clarify this. A concept with which I am greatly concerned, is that of how we shape the reality around us. It is my belief that we directly effect the nature of the conceptual, and that the conceptual directly effects reality. This defined in considerable brevity, means that ideas are influenced by how we shape them, but more importantly that these ideas, when they take root in the mind, have a direct and powerful influence on what we consider to be real and true, in both terms of reason (for reason too can be used to bend the truth) and emotion. Reality in my mind, is shaped and formed, it is not innate, it does not have any objective existence. Thus the influence of ideas, on our perception of the world around us is quite profound. That is what I am concerned with above, the way in which the reader approaches a work is integral to how that work exists. As you read and interpret it, think about it, you are infusing it with new fresh meaning, and are also instilling life into the older organs of the work, the original ideas put in place. The poem only lives in its transformation from generation to generation, and the reader must be aware of the layered nature present. Poetry, prose, plays and other instruments of literature with which I am familiar (as well as other forms of thought, though I will stick with what I know) are the breeding ground for ideas, the ideas which shape our active perception of things such as love, life, despair, and society. These notions, which dictate the fabric of our existence, our fundamental understanding of what it is to be human, to live, and to die, permeate, survive, and grow in the pages of books, and the other mediums we have created. Ergo a great book, is a passageway for ideas, it carries them through the centuries so that they may saturate the modern mind, and likewise a terrible book is a tomb for them. Indeed the cynic in me might then note the startling size of our graveyards, which happen to have sprung up all over the vile shelves of *popular psychology* and dare I say *chick-lit*. One might amusingly observe then, how fellows like Dr.Phil and ladies like Cecilia Aherne resemble grim reapers in stature.

By Peter Kiernan

Poetry

This page, reserved for the absurdities of poetry, permits no play of reason or logic.
The infallible are not welcome here, the absolute should stay away.
The poet is not born of logos, it is emotion which holds his sway.

Ode to Solitude

*"Happy the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air,
In his own ground.*

*Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.*

*Blest! who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,*

*Sound sleep by night; study and ease
Together mix'd; sweet recreation,
And innocence, which most does please,
With meditation.*

*Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;
Thus unlamented let me dye;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lye."*

By Alexander Pope

Listen

One note.

One song.

One word.

One story.

Slender tones soft, with

Strong sensual touches, and

Passionate, peaceful emotions.

O! Music from the soul, music from life,

Music from friendship, music from love.

Music to take,

Music to give,

Music to hold,

Music to love,

Hush,

Listen.....

By Shokri Raof

TV Review: “Dora The Explorer” As Gaeilge

I know what you’re thinking- I couldn’t find the remote, and I wasn’t bothered to stand up, walk the two entire metres to the telly, change the channel and walk back again. Honest. “Dora the Explorer” actually made for compulsive viewing. It was like being on drugs (not that I know what that’s like...no, really, I don’t)- I didn’t understand anything, about what was going on, why there was an annoying cartoon of a little Spanish girl on telly, or even why there was a talking monkey.

As far as I could understand, a little Spanish girl called Dora, who spoke perfect Irish, by the way, somehow befriended a magical monkey that could talk and a dog that couldn’t and entered a video game. So the three of them are looking for the red button to turn on the game and they look at the screen and ask where the button dearg is. I can see why people with heart conditions aren’t allowed watch this program: I nearly burst a blood vessel screaming at the telly for her to press the button! If I had had a shoe on I would have thrown it at the little Spanish girl asking me politely where the stupid red button was when it was there in front of her! Cue ten to twenty seconds of shouting while she and her dog both looked at me with evil smiles on their cartoon faces before Dora finally pressed the red button.

This show raises some important questions in my mind. Are children really so dim that they enjoy this vascular torture? Do the makers of this cartoon derive sick pleasure from the fact that many children are growing up with heart failure and a belief in talking monkeys? Was I as mentally deranged as the youngsters of today? Clearly not, for as a child I enjoyed watching “Frazier” whilst sipping champagne and listening to Bach, but I was a special case. Should this show be banned on ethical and moral grounds? The answer to this question is that it should- it tells little kids to look down on people in poor paying jobs when Dora is mean to the dog catcher guy, it promotes anarchy when the dogs are let out of prison, and incites racial hatred (the majority of people who watch “Dora the Explorer” aren’t big enough to kill little Spanish girls, but that is the general reaction to watching an episode of it- you want to kill the annoying Spanish girl who has to be told everything, or at least change channel). If a sixteen year old couldn’t find a logical reason for Dora entering a video game, how is an impressionable two year old?

Still, I have to recommend this program to you, because it may help in some ways. Firstly, it could improve your Irish; secondly, many people will no longer feel the need to do drugs anymore; and finally, you will be able to look down on those younger than you with contempt in the safe knowledge that there is no such thing as a talking monkey- or is there?



This guy is on ten episodes a day.

Life, The Universe and Everything

Writer’s block sucks. If you’re in an English test and the clock is ticking but your hand isn’t writing, it’s a horrible experience. If writer’s block were a movie, it’d be the latest High School Musical horror film. It’s the worst thing in the world, except for gone-off cheese. Or catching your finger in a door. Or stapling a sheet of paper to your forehead (not recommended). Or...

The list goes on. Maybe it’s not the worst thing in the world, but writer’s block is pretty annoying, especially if you happen to be a poorly paid contributor to Picasso’s Left Foot like me (I get paid in jelly beans), and you just can’t think of anything to write about. Right now all I can hear is the clock ticking on the wall. Stupid clock. Stupid writer’s block. A quote from the late Douglas Adams comes to mind: “I love deadlines. I love the whooshing sound they make as they fly by.” Somewhere outside a car whooshes by. Maybe it’s an old granny returning from evening mass. Maybe it’s a gangster on the run from the Gardai. Maybe. Probably not.

The smell of recently eaten pizza hangs in the air like an unwanted puppy. I’ve eaten so much that I am literally sweating pizza. Thursday night. Pizza night. I feel like I have just gone twelve rounds with the Mike Tyson of pizzas. Niall 1, anorexia 0. I can’t stop thinking about pizza. Twelve-inch diameter base, covered in thick, undulating cheese and tomato sauce. Damn. I’m now both full and hungry at the same time, and I have writers block.

On the wall is a picture I painted in junior infants that is in a frame for some strange reason. I think it’s meant to be a painting of sheep, or it could be white clouds in a green sky. Picasso would have been proud. Or maybe he would have asked me: “what were you taking?”. Paste.

I was never good at art. Even drawing a stick man is somewhat of a challenge. If I had one of those personal ads it would probably read: “Male, 16, GSOH, tallish, thinning hair, artistically retarded, WLTM similarly challenged person to get discount in an art course.” The heat came on there fifteen minutes ago. Feet up on the rad as I type this, I can feel the hot water inside dripping down. Hands are freezing though. Shouldn’t have had that Mr. Freeze. I get a mental flash of my stomach contents: a partially digested chicken roll, some of my Dad’s birthday cake (chocolate, if you’re interested), the mother of all pizzas, all green from the ice pop. Not including the chocolate bar. A real advertisement for healthy eating, that’s me. Mom keeps offering more cake. I’m tempted. God, I’m hungry. Still have writer’s block.

We’re getting a wooden floor in the back room and front room. I had to move every bit of furniture and pull up the carpet. Crappy carpet. Coincidentally, I found out that I’m allergic to crappy carpet, dust and physical exertion. Hell, typing is an effort. On top of all this, my nose is blocked on one side, which I didn’t think was possible. I’ve been chewing the same piece of plastic for half an hour now (the covers of my copies are falling apart, so I masticate them. Draw from this what symbolic reference you will- perhaps I’m eating them as a form of protest, or to mourn the death of romantic Ireland, or I could just be chewing them because they’re there, it’s up to you), and to be honest it tastes like plastic. My leg is numb from sitting at this stupid desk for half an hour staring at this stupid computer, and I still have writer’s block. Stupid writer’s block.

By Niall Brehon

Three Endangered Species that Are Not Endangered Enough (Besides Rosie O'Donnell)

It is often a denied fact: endangered species are not always a breed of fluffy kitten teetering on the course of extinction because of the relentless and nasty SUV capitalist economy. There is a reason why they are endangered: because they should be, damn-it! Here is a list of endangered species that in my belief are not endangered enough. I hope PETA do not come looking for my head.

Goliath Bird Eating Spider:

Often compared to the size of a dinner plate but that really is an underestimation. A foot across, it likes to creep up on birds and overwhelm them. As if a giant spider that can asphyxiate a moderate-sized flying animal was not bad enough, it fits into the category of 'hissing bastard spiders' (the correct scientific term), the creepiest shoulder-shivering inducing fiend to exist outside a horror novel. It is clear that Nature started imagining horrible things to screw us all which are manifested in this creature: the saliva of the arachnid can dissolve flesh to the bone AND it can shoot invisible hair that is proficient of slashing your eyes and hairs. Luckily the bite is not life threatening but can induce swelling and of course agonising pain. When you've looked down and witnessed a screaming and screeching Frisbee-sized spider with its fangs sunk in you, you're probably going to need to be flung out of an airplane and into a volcano before you'll ever feel mildly concerned again. Encountering these things would utterly use up your entire life supply of fear.

Ganges Shark:

A shark is a 24 hour tooth factory attached to an organic outboard motor. We can slay them because we evolved the ability first. It is capable of swallowing a toddler without even chewing but we never have really considered it a major threat- do not stick your foot in any mouth, stay away from the sea and you are golden. The problem is that the Ganges shark, as the names suggests, swims in a big freshwater river--just like regular, non-humanivorous fish. However there have been a lot of mangled and incomplete bodies washing up on the Ganges shore recently with most of the blame placed onto the Ganges shark. A level 5 vegan (who eats nothing that casts a shadow) argues that it may not be the pleasant Ganges shark, but the ferocious flesh seeking bull shark that also happens to inhabit the Ganges River. The Ganges shark presumably utilises its vast collection of teeth to filter pollution. This is not a murder trial, PETA. I am not going to be searching for the exact multi-molar monstrosity that converted someone into pork confetti last Tuesday. I am not going round cross-examining sardines asking "Have you seen this cartilaginous killing engine?" If you even look like you eat people and loiter around in a freshwater river where we wish to remain uneaten then welcome to annihilation, sharks.

The Giant Panda:

The Giant Panda (not to be confused with the red panda which looks like a fox) is nature's disgrace and raising it would be like raising a white elephant. The pusillanimous brute (far from being magnanimous) is constantly wavering between life and death; it is even incapable of having sex without the assistance of several dutiful Chinese zookeepers. When a species' sole responsibility is procreation and it still does not bother, then I, start to lose sympathy. Pandas will forever be preserved as long as they are adored by millions of people around the world. It's amicable nature and colour scheme only serves to heighten its irresistible appeal and charm. But many people are blind to the fact that it is still a couple of hundred pounds of Grizzly Bear! The panda is definitely carnivorous but has lost its appetite (another excellent reason for its elimination) thanks to the bamboo. The bamboo is their comfort depression food since they've become too sluggish and portly to rummage anything but firmly rooted plants. The pandas we see on documentaries are incessantly 'stoned' out of their minds (they embark on a magical journey every day). It has been known to assault and pursue strangers irregularly out of irritation or frustration. Let me ask the question, what if the pandas begin to attack us more often? What are we going to do then? The answer, my friends, is simple, extermination. Since the majority of the pandas are bred in captivity, there would be no repercussions (food chain etc kill one insignificant critter and the whole establishment collapses) if the panda is driven to extinction. Then again, all I need is a basket of puppies, a panda and a capable camera man to facilitate my wish.

By Eamonn Yeung