Michael Leunig Essay, Research Paper

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Question: Write an essay in which you discuss how Michael Leunig challenges us to examine our life in the modern world. Make sure you refer closely to the visual techniques he uses to convey his ideas

Answer: Michael Leunig is a very successful cartoonist whose cartoons ponder the minds of even the greatest philosopher. He is one of very few cartoonists who have managed to convey such thought and feeling into a thing that is generally considered to be a light hearted approach towards communication.

Michael Leunig is highly gifted: he’s not just an artist or cartoonist, but also a clever poet and uniquely insightful social commentator. He is able to communicate profound critique of social and other issues in a way that I have seen no other cartoonist do. Even the slime of political issues takes on a sublime perspective through the uncanny vision of Leunig. I can only guess from my appreciation of his work, that he has immense life experience in the realms of human relationships, introspection, spirituality and more. He has been reported as stating that through his work, he attempts to give voice to the voiceless.

Leunig also does many cartoons that are quite dream-like, and there are recurring characters in many of his works. Mr. Curly and ducks appear to be among his favourites. His cartoons appear regularly in the a few papers including the Herald and a few more. There is a regular following of his work, and sometimes, there is lively dialogue in the Letters to the Editor praising or arguing for and against his work as it often tends to be controversial as it challenges us to think about ourselves and our lives.

The question is asking how Michael Leunig challenges us to re-examine what we are doing in the modern day world. He does this in such a way that sometimes it offends people. These people are usually people who are happy with what they believe and don?t want to broaden their horizons or more specifically let someone else do it for them. However, this is exactly what Leunig?s work does. It makes you speculate and think about what you consider to be the norm, to simply be ?life? and it takes someone like Leunig to prove everyone wrong.

Leunig tends to use very simplistic methods when he is drawing his cartoons and tends not to focus at all on the persons clothes or background but more on such things as personal stance and facial expressions. This simplistic way of drawing has a great impact on the way the drawings are taken in. It is almost like he has drawn them from the perspective of a child and, with this, it is showing the innocence and purity in his art work. It is this simplistic look which makes it all so detailed. He uses these simplistic drawings to a major advantage because he makes them the focus of the whole caption. Your eyes are drawn straight away to the important parts. It is through these few facial features (eg. Eyes and mouth) that he can depict a whole story and that to me is amazing.

The thing that amazes people most about Leunig?s work is how insightful it is and how it manages to make everyone just sit there, looking straight at it, filled with thought. Every single cartoon can touch you on a very personal level and open you up to a whole new way of thinking. He does not have to lay everything there in front of you like a mathematical equation; he simply gives you a new way to tackle a subject and lets you do the rest.

The use of symbols and symbolistic objects are used in excess in all of Leunig?s works. This is a visual technique in which Michael Leunig harnesses extremely well. These symbols are examples of the visual metaphors that are the basis of Leunig?s work. They show a great deal of depth and meaning. Often small natural objects such as flowers appear in the frames, a gentle reminder of the purity and harmony of nature. Flowers are also used to represent the beauty and simplicity of nature. Leunig has a great passion for the natural world and believes we should be going back towards that way of life. This presents a spiritual challenge for the cartoon viewer. It challenges them to connect with nature and find true beauty, and therefore find a meaning in life.

It is clear that Michael Leunig shall be respected for the rest of time as one of the worlds greatest cartoonists and it is because of his insightful nature and his ability to think beyond the lateral way that sets him apart from most others. He uses his way of thinking in such a way that challenges us to examine our life I the modern day world.

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