

Picasso, Cats & Politics

Recently, it occurred to me that when we say certain painters are great, we're generally only parroting what others have told us. I, personally, don't happen to care for Picasso, Gauguin or Van Gogh. Their subjects held no interest for me. But even if they did, does that make any of their canvases worth millions of dollars on the open market?

Tell an art critic that you prefer Norman Rockwell's magazine covers to Degas, and he'd have you horsewhipped in the public square as a self-admitted Philistine. But why is a painting of water lilies superior to an amusing depiction of a small town barber or a boy and his dog?

Why is a painting of young ballet dancers a work of art and a memorable magazine illustration is mere kitsch?

It's true that in the other fields of artistic endeavor, the so-called experts might insist that "Moby Dick," "Walden" and "Heart of Darkness," are better than I happen to think they are or, for that matter, that atonal music is anything but noise, still most of us feel ourselves qualified to disagree if we've read the books or suffered through a John Cage concert. But when the art experts, most of whom are in a position to turn a profit if enough people accept their pronouncements as gospel, tell us that Andy Warhol or Roy Lichtenstein were geniuses, we're expected to swallow the swill and ask for seconds.

If I ran things, I'd counter art appreciation classes with those devoted to art depreciation. The purpose wouldn't be to sink the resale market for Gauguin's Polynesian maidens or Van Gogh's sunflowers, but to encourage people to think for themselves.

Whether it's called Social Security or ObamaCare, politicians love Ponzi schemes for the very same reason that con men do.

That is to say, all the problems occur down the road. With any luck at all, the inevitable flaws won't show themselves until the politicians are retired or better yet, dead.

In the case of Social Security, when it first began, most people didn't live to be 65. As a result, there were over 30 working people paying in to the system to support one retiree. But between the fact that people began living longer and thus retiring in greater numbers, and millions of people lying their way onto the disability rolls, it now requires about two-and-a-half workers to support me.

The difference between Social Security and ObamaCare is that it's not taking most people 30 or 40 years to recognize it as a disaster. Only those who see it as a free ride are in favor of it. That's why opinion polls only show 55-60% of Americans opposing the program when everyone but members of Congress and those who have been granted waivers should oppose the feds devouring a sixth of the economy at a single gobble.

But it is always that way with con games. The only difference between what the federal government does and what a con man does is that he stands the risk of jail time. But, really, did any of those people scammed by Bernie Madoff not suspect that they were indulging in a high stakes pyramid scheme? I mean, I am anything but a financial maven, but how savvy do you have to be to sniff out something rotten in Denmark – or in this case, New York City – when some putz is promising you a 20 or 30% return on your investment?

Finally, let's start telling the whole truth about cats. I agree they can be cute and entertaining, but they get away with almost as much skullduggery as Democrats. Their owners always pretend that when their pets drop half a dead mouse at their feet, it's a love offering.

If that's what they choose to believe, that's their business. But if that's the case, how is that their little feline

friends never offer to share their Meow Mix or tuna fish?

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