

Ariel: Hi everyone, it's Ariel, or I guess I should say hello to all of my premium supporters. Thank you all for supporting the podcast, and I'm sorry that I haven't done more bonus content. I know I originally promised to do more bonus content, and I feel like I've really neglected those of you who support me in this way.

This is going to be a really unscripted episode. I'm just going to kind of, uh, ramble, which means to talk about one topic, but not in a particularly structured way. Um, if you used to support me on Patreon, then you will recognize the style. I used to do this little thing called Elevenes with Ariel, where I would do like a podcast Monday to Friday for just five or ten minutes. And that's kind of part of the problem, right? So when I stopped doing Patreon, some of you do still support me on Patreon. So if you're supporting there and here, thank you. You are amazing. But I stopped making new content on the Patreon. And it was basically because, well, as you know, I burned out a few years ago.

I had to kind of, um, reanalyze my relationship with the podcast. I had to rethink it and I realized that. Or I felt, I guess I should say, I was giving too much on the Patreon. But I've been reflecting a lot recently on this relationship between the artist and the audience and between me and the art, by which I particularly mean Easy Stories in English.

And it's very complicated. I actually just watched a phenomenal video on this topic, which is kind of why I'm making this podcast now, because I feel like my thoughts are coming together. So there's a YouTuber I really admire called CJ the X, who I support on Patreon and they do amazing content on Patreon.

They do interviews with, with other artists. They do like a book club, they do in depth, um, poetry and like book reports and stuff. They really give a lot on the Patreon and they've said in interviews, which I've seen because I support them on Patreon, that, yeah, they kind of treat it as, well, I'm not releasing YouTube videos super frequently.

They only release YouTube videos, maybe. Well, it varies, but they're not releasing them consistently. So they treat Patreon as their job, that's how they survive, is through people supporting on there, and then they get to spend the time on YouTube videos that they want to. And this is a really good way of doing it, I think.

Obviously it's different for me because Easy Stories in English is a podcast that I release on a regular schedule. Although recently I've kind of been playing with that a bit and just releasing more episodes than I normally would, which I think

is a good thing. Hopefully you'll agree. Um, there's this really complicated relationship between, or it's not really a relationship.

There's this kind of, uh, I don't know what to call it, a spectrum between art in the traditional sense and online content, and even just using the word content already kind of affects, uh, the perceptions of what we're talking about. If you're not familiar with it, it might be called something different in your language.

When we talk about online content, it can refer to YouTube videos, TikToks, Instagram posts, tweets. It's this kind of generic term that refers to all media online. And a lot of people who create online media don't like the term, right? A lot of us like to think of ourselves as artists. We say, no, we're not making content, we're making art.

And this is exactly, uh, what this video I just watched talked about. So this video I just watched is from a YouTube channel called Polyphonic, that's all about music. But again, this video is not on YouTube. It's on Nebula. Nebula is a streaming service. So, uh, kind of like Netflix, where you can see exclusive content from YouTubers and they get support from Nebula in making their videos.

So I subscribed to Nebula because I watch a lot of YouTube. And so this video was exclusive content.

But anyway, in this video, the creator of the YouTube channel Polyphonic was talking about how he was always trying to make art before, right, he was trying to make serious work, where he was not the focus, so he didn't show up on camera, but in this video he did, he sits in front of the camera and talks, and basically he talks about this kind of um, triangle of goals with creating online media.

There's creating media for profit, for money. That's the business, the commercial side. There's creating media for the artistic joy, for the sake of arts. And then there's creating media for the sake of education, which is often neglected. People think a lot about the dichotomy, the kind of battle between art and commercial, you know, between making art for the sake of art and making art for the sake of money.

But a lot of us also make art or online media to educate, to change people, to to educate them. To make the world better. And of course, this is one of the reasons I started Easy Stories in English. For me, it neatly fulfilled both those purposes of making art for the sake of art, because I get to write beautiful stories

that I love and that I hope will inspire people, but I also get to educate and share.

But this is not necessarily so great for making money and you know, I've been making content online for many, many years now, long before I started the podcast. I just did it as a hobby. I made YouTube videos as a hobby. Actually, I was looking back at my old YouTube channel where I've hidden all the videos because they're from me when I was like, 18.

And in the year 2011, the year I turned 18, I made 91 YouTube videos. That's an average of a YouTube video every four days. That is crazy to me. You know, like I was really taking it seriously and, um, okay. I've kind of gone off topic here, but I guess what I'm realizing is this struggle I had before I took my hiatus.

The reason I was struggling with the podcast, and I've talked about this before, is I was sharing too much of myself. I felt like I was pouring all of this personal information into the podcast that was kind of separate from the artistic side. It was separate from the, um, educational side, but on an intuitive level, I kind of knew that it was probably a good thing to do commercially, right? Because let's be real. Podcasts, it can be a bit different, but generally these days with online content, the platform encourages people to center themselves as a creator. You're not watching a YouTube video about film. You're watching this person's channel. They are the personality and you are coming here for them.

And yes, Easy Stories in English is there to teach you English and entertain you, but also you're kind of coming here for Ariel Goodbody. And I very much played into that. I leaned into that impulse. I put myself kind of at the front of the podcast. But this was always a difficult relationship. I didn't always feel comfortable doing this.

And I think after coming back from my hiatus, from my break, I figured out that the way to do it was to pull back a bit, to give a bit less, but also to kind of perform, right? Like to do it intentionally, share things in an intentional way. But it's so difficult because, I mean, the internet is still so new, and all of this media is still so new, so what it meant to make a podcast or a YouTube channel 10 years ago versus now is completely different, and this kind of, um, impulse for creators to be the center of the work and to have these parasocial relationships with their fans.

That is much stronger now than before. And that's what this video talked about. The one that I watched, you know, he said that, uh, originally he could do very well by decentering himself by making it about the work. But now his videos

are getting fewer and fewer views because in the past people subscribed to your channel and they've supported you individually.

But now, you're trying to get seen by the algorithm, so you're trying to be seen by a very wide audience, and you have to make your content to appeal to the algorithm.

Now, to be fair, I don't think podcasts are quite there yet. Podcasting is a much older medium. It uses in some ways more outdated technology, but I think this is a good thing because podcasts are really interoperable so you can listen to my podcast on Spotify, Apple podcasts. Um, What are the other ones?

Uh, Spreaker, you know, there were all of these different apps you can use to listen to podcasts. It's not a walled garden. It's not locked in by one company. And I think that's really good, but it's kind of slowly changing. And companies like Apple are trying to wall it off more and more and make certain features unique to their platform.

And then, you know, I'm, I can't really criticize it when I'm using things like Apple Podcasts and, uh, Supporting Cast and Patreon to kind of create my own, walled garden of content, right? It's, it's complicated. So, what's the point I'm trying to make? I guess that I watched this video and it made me reflect on what am I doing?

Am I trying to take myself out of the podcast? Because I felt like since I came back from my hiatus, I've kind of been very, very cautious about doing things like what I'm doing right now, I did not want to do when I first came back, because I remember doing elevenses with Ariel and having this like sickly feeling of like, Oh, I'm giving too much of myself away.

I don't like that. But then realistically, I think with the way that online content is now, people want that in a certain way? I don't know. I think I'm very lucky in that because I have this educational kind of purpose with my podcast, um, I don't have to do that nearly as much. At the same time, I recognize I'm very good at that.

I can be an engaging personality and fun. and talk in an exciting way. So I kind of just have these very, very mixed feelings. And I'll be honest, I think there have been several moments in the past where I've asked you, my audience, you know, what do you want? And I always get mixed answers, right? And I think maybe the kind of scary truth that I'm really realizing now is maybe none of us do know what we want, right?

Like, we say we want this kind of online content or media or art, but really we're being kind of pushed around by these algorithms and these platforms more than we realize. So, Ooh, that was a bit dark. Um, I guess what I'm feeling right now is I should do more for all of you for this, uh, bonus platform for easy stories in English premium.

And if you do have. specific ideas of what you would like, please do email me at ariel at easystoriesinenglish. com. Otherwise, I guess I'll do more stuff like this. You know, it is really nice to have a place where I can just do stuff off the cuff. Uh, the cuff is the part of a shirt at the bottom of the sleeve, the part that goes around your wrist, that is the cuff.

So when we talk about doing something off the cuff, it means unplanned. Like talking off the cuff, right? You're not planning or preparing your speech. So I guess I'll do more off the cuff stuff. I could also talk about kind of motivation and inspiration for learning languages and about art in general. Um, yeah, that's kind of where my instincts are leading.

In the past, I talked a lot about my personal life. I don't want to do that as much, to be honest. Um, I can talk about my personal life, but I think the way I talk about it has changed hugely. I mean, also we were going through COVID before, so, you know, it was easy to form these very personal relationships with an audience online.

Or seemingly personal relationships, but now I have a very rich social life in the physical world that I don't really want to combine with all of you. No offense. To be fair, it would probably be quite boring as well. So anyway, so I'll I'll talk about Ah, my thoughts, you know, I have a lot of thoughts I'm a very philosophical person. And there was something else. Oh, maybe the behind the scenes, you know, I did that post mortem thing before for like one episode, um, where I talked about, um, my reasoning and what I enjoyed about the episode, I think I'll do that more, I think that's fun to give you a kind of behind the scenes of each episode. I think I'm also going to stop pretending that I know what I'm doing because I have a real tendency to try and present myself very professionally while at the same time really not being that kind of person. You know, I'm not that like big hotshot professional person. That's not who I am. So, yeah. Anyway, thank you for listening to this.

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