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Tasks in order I received them:

Task 1: Manifesto Writing = 545

Task 2: Observational Writing = 491

Task 3: Practise-based Writing = 472

Task 1: Manifesto writing

1. I believe art should not have to have a meaning or message, art can just simply be art.
2. I believe anyone can interpret art however they like, but the art's true meaning or message, if any, is for the artist to decide.
3. An artist's flaws are just as important as their strengths.
4. Art should also be a refuge for people from politics and social issues, as well as being a means of communicating messages and ideas about those things.
5. Art and narrative are effective when used together and should be used to enhance each other.
6. The world is both a beautiful and horrible place, and art should be used to reflect that.
7. I believe art can be used to connect with God, and to explain religious beliefs in a more engaging and understandable way.
8. Art doesn't require meticulous planning to be good, sometimes it just comes about naturally.

Three Statements Explored:

Statement 5: Art and narrative are effective when used together.

The deep connection between art and literature results in both writers and artists being inspired by each other's works, the artist inspired by the text and the writer inspired by the image, an example of this is the book *In Sunlight Or In Shadow* (2016), a collection of short stories by various writers all based on the paintings of Edward Hopper, in which the creator of the book Lawrence Block writes "He (Hopper) shows us a moment in time, arrayed on a canvas; there's clearly a past and a future, but it's our task to find it for ourselves." (Block, 2016, p.8).

Just as a writer can interpret the moment captured in an image, an artist can visualise the worlds and narratives conveyed in text, an example being French artist Gustave Dore, who's most famous works are illustrations based on the epic poems *A Divine Comedy* and *Paradise Lost.* Dore took the fantastical and sometimes, in *A Divine Comedy*'s case, gruesome and disturbing scenes described in these poems and gave them form in his illustrations and paintings, mirroring how the

ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN OUT OF EDEN

And he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life . . . (Genesis 3: 24)

previously mentioned group of writers gave substance and a history to the scenes depicted in the paintings of Edward Hopper.

Statement 1: I believe art should not have to have a meaning or message, art can just simply be art.

Many pieces of art are created to convey a meaning or message. From the religious meaning of paintings such as Leonardo Da Vinci's The Last Supper, or Michelangelo's works in the Sistine Chapel, to the political cartoons found in newspapers and on the internet. However, I do not believe that art is obligated to have a meaning or convey a message, meaning can come from the passion and effort put into the creation of the art, and its resulting quality and beauty. Surrealist artist Zdzisław Beksiński rejected any attempts to force meaning onto his works, saying that those who do are 'missing the point' of his art. (Beksiński, 1998, p.55). Beksiński's art was engaging and unique, which is more often than not the goal of every artist.

Art can exist to simply be a display of creativity by the artist, for example comic book artists or concept artists try to create art that is

engaging and interesting to the viewer, offering a distraction to the worries and issues of the real world, but a constant pushing of meaning and message in art will become tiresome and suck the freedom and creativity out of art.

Statement 7: I believe art can be used to connect with God, and to explain religious beliefs in a more engaging and understandable way.

Although many famous works of art are religion based, I feel that the value religious art has is lost on many people. Through art, God, the Bible, and other religious concepts and stories can be made easier to understand as well as more appealing.

Paradise Lost, written by John Milton, despite being a literary work achieves what I am talking about as effective as any painting or drawing. As John Milton himself said, he wrote *Paradise Lost* to "Justify the ways of God to men." (Milton, 1667).

Abstract art is a good fit for trying to portray things that are beyond our understanding and are very confusing, but supposedly

exist around us. Abstract painter Paulo Medina, who focuses on religious art, summed this up by saying that his work "has meant for me the possibility of transcending and reaching certain spaces that are intangible, but lived daily." (Jones, 2015).

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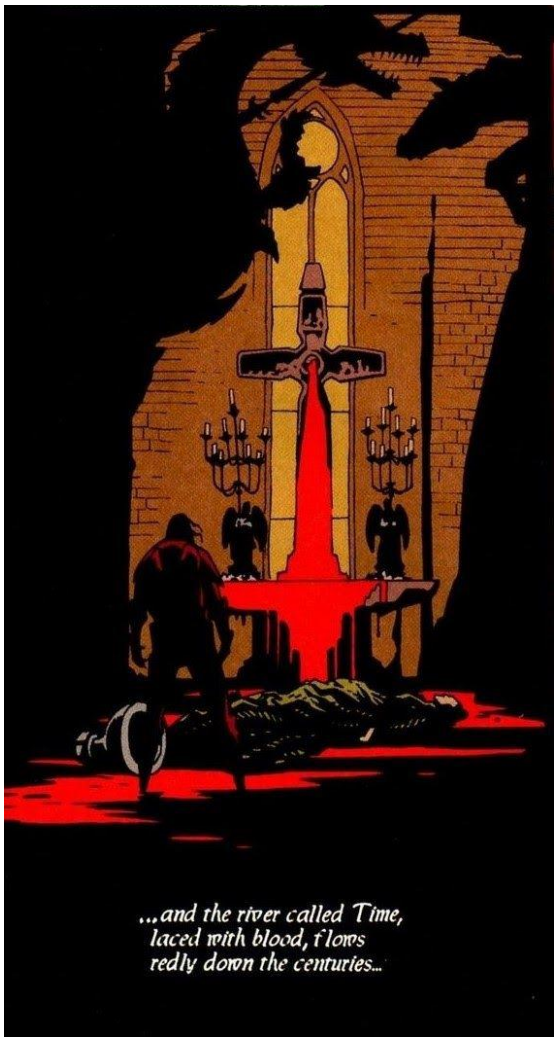
Task 2: Observational Writing

Mike Mignola is a comic book artist who is recognized for his ability to tell stories visually, and how he uses composition, colour, and symbolism, and most famously his signature use of shadows in almost every panel to enhance the stories he illustrates, more so than any other comic book artist.

One story he illustrated that stuck with me is the comic book adaption of the 1992 film Dracula, so I have chosen the following panel from the book to analyze:



I will focus on the use of colour in this panel first, the most prominent colours used being red and black. The large blocks of red blood seem bright against the surrounding muted browns and blacks. The colour red is “often associated with passion and love as well as danger and anger.” (Gremillion, 2019). The emotions elicited by red are stronger and more closely tied to passion than brown or black, and the emphasis on red was likely used by Mignola in this panel to emphasize the emotion in this scene, the rage Dracula feels towards God, and his love and grief for his wife, who at this point in the story Dracula has found has committed suicide.

Another less obvious piece of symbolism is the blood could be a play on the concept of the redeeming blood of Christ, “the act of dying that leads to redemption.” (Mahoney, 2019) but here used in the context of grief and loss, the death of Dracula’s wife, instead of redemption and love, the sacrifice of Jesus.

The black is simpler in its meaning and effect, as black is widely associated with grief, loneliness,and nothingness, among many other negative or somber associations, for example how people wear black to funerals. The use of large amounts of black and shadows is a

signature of Mike Mignola's gothic style, and fits the genre of the story well by making the overall aesthetic grim and bleak, like everything has a massive shadow cast over it that is slowly consuming the whole panel and Dracula in particular, as this panel depicts his fall into evil.

In regards to the composition of the illustration, the cross has particular prominence. The cross is arguably the most important symbol in Christianity, to Christians representing "the most momentous act in human history" (Newman, 2012, p.14). This importance is shown through its position at the centre of the panel, standing tall above Dracula and his wife, and could be a representation of God looking down on the scene. The composition of the panel adds significantly to the intense religious tones of the image.

The symbolism of the image can be understood by almost everyone, not just Christians, because of how the imagery of Jesus and the cross are so ingrained in the public consciousness, and through analyzing the image I now understand how the composition and colour used plays such a large part in pushing the symbolism of this image.

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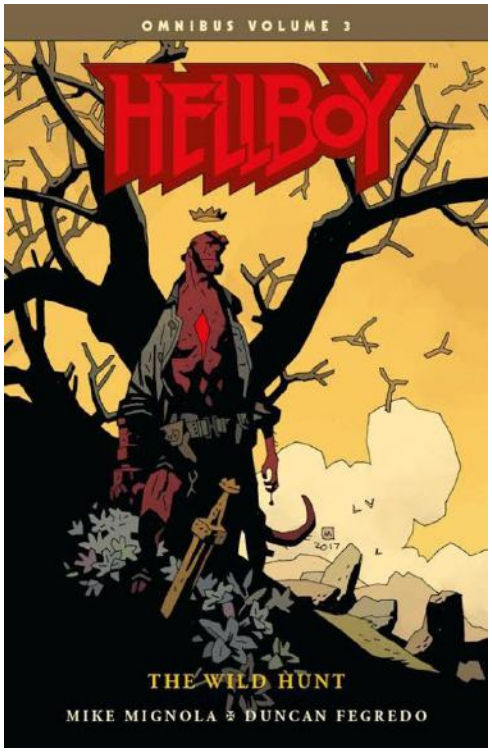
Task 3: Practise-Based Writing



My process of drawing always comes from either a place of passion for what it is that I am drawing, or from the simple desire of putting my imagination to paper. The majority of my drawings were inspired by a character or an event in a story that I particularly liked, and the things I draw from my imagination are always surreal or fantasy themed, or both.

Mike Mignola is an artist who also draws exclusively from his imagination or an existing fiction, so he has become my biggest influence for my creative process. Mignola finds fiction much more interesting to draw from than drawing from life, as he once said “Hell is much more fun to draw than New Jersey or someplace else.” (Adams, 2012). This philosophy shows in his work on his most famous comic book creation *Hellboy,* a series that combines

numerous myths, legends, and fantasy tropes, but barely any real-world inspirations. Like Mignola, I find very little inspiration in the world around me, as I find most real-life subjects, for lack of a better word, boring, instead finding inspiration in the pages of books like *The Lord Of The Rings* or countless other stories in various mediums, or in the mythologies created by various cultures.

Below are two of what I consider my best drawings, I was inspired to do both drawings by stories. And my passion for these stories and characters is what pushed me to put a lot of effort and care into making them the best quality possible.

Drawing from fiction and the imagination allows artists to create and experiment with different compositions and techniques without being restricted by the subject they are drawing, as was the case for my two drawings above. Like Mignola, I tried to take full advantage of this freedom to do something interesting with these characters and to experiment with different drawing techniques. For example, in the drawing of the two characters fighting, I experimented with drawing figures in different poses which is something I have always found particularly difficult, as well as practising how to create the effect of light playing off of objects, in this case the figure's armor. If I was drawing a still life I had set up in a way where light is playing off the objects in a noticeable way, I would just be copying what I was seeing instead of learning how to create the effect without reference, which is an essential skill when drawing without a specific reference.

An artist known as Carson-Drew-It takes advantage of drawing fictional subjects to embrace and develop his style. A look at his work over the years shows how his style has developed from light on detail of usually a single subject to much more detailed drawings containing more elements, but still retaining his cartoonish look.

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