

Creative Statement- Manifesto Writing

Art is something that I believe is free, free to express what you want, free to create anything, to use what you like and be free in that there need not be any special messages or issues tackled, you can create something for the sake of it being beautiful or pretty and that's fine. There is difficulty finding anything to support this view as it's so broad and personal, however most seem to recognize art isn't something you can talk about in absolutes, in finding a book on the topic the authors discussion on freedom of expression, authority and artistic intent, reaches a similar view in its conclusion, where the author states this:

Artistic freedom can mean different things depending on the context in which it is invoked ... Our very concept of what an artwork is—the intentional expression of the artist, for its own sake—depends on this second-order endorsement by the artist of what he or she has made.

(Gover, 2018, pp.161)

Even though the author also states their own opinion, part of their conclusion still arrives at the fact that artistic freedom is somewhat subjective and lucid, it changes depending on context and what our very definition of art is.

Perhaps the most important value I hold toward art is that it should be fun, the creator should have fun and be happy and if possible, bring happiness to others. Happiness is hard to define but there are clear ways that it can be promoted such as helping the disenfranchised, an example being a project by a children's hospice called "Our Living Wall", described as "communal art wall at the heart of a children's

hospice” (Schwaebisch,2017 , p.A-27), the idea is touching, being a place where the children and family create a piece of the wall, with pieces coming and going, a celebration of life but also something that brings joy to children who face hardship with the article stating: “Initial findings suggest OLW had a positive impact, enabling children to have fun, build positive relationships and develop a sense of self and belonging.” (Schwaebisch,2017 , p.A-27)

This project shows that the act of creating art and the final product has the potential to bring happiness even in places of immense hardship, which I believe is very important.

An important ideal I hold is that people should support each other in creative fields, art can be difficult, you might lack knowledge or experience, or it could lead to you suffering emotionally, but having close bonds with other artists, or being around artists who are willing to give advice and support will make things easier. Having someone or multiple people to grow alongside will push all of you to try harder, you will create an environment that will make you want to be creative and your creative ideas will bounce off each other.

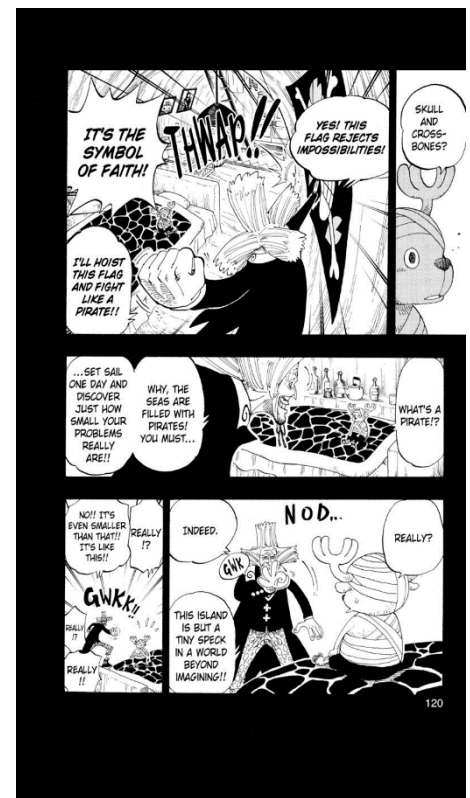
The exploration of Semiotics within Drum Island

Narrative mediums like film and comics don't just rely on textual or linguistic language to tell us things, but also visual symbols and signs. Meaning can be extrapolated from them, linked to other things to establish greater thematic or narrative significance.

Here I look at how the author of One Piece; Eiichiro Oda not only uses symbols in his story but explores the very idea of them and subverts their original meanings to create something new.

Drum-Island tells the story of country ravaged by metaphorical sickness, it's a country of snow, doctors and the home of Chopper, a talking reindeer. It's within Choppers backstory that the idea of symbols is investigated, these symbols being the "Jolly Roger" and "Cherry Blossoms".

The "Jolly Roger" and pirate flags in general are a symbol of terror, death and limited time, evident by the human skull which semiotics has labelled as dangerous in many other areas, such as in the chemistry and medical field with it being associated with poison. But in One Piece, it is the banner that our heroes fly, and to Chopper's mentor and only friend Dr. Hiriluk; "This flag rejects impossibilities" "it's the symbol of faith". (Oda, 2000, chapter 142, pp.11-12)



(Oda, 2000, Chapter 142, pp.12)

A story is told to Chopper, of how an incurable man once saw cherry blossoms on his voyages, and his incurable disease was cured, due to this he flies the pirate flag to reject these impossibilities, which corresponds to our heroes the “strawhat pirates” who all pursue nigh impossible dreams of their own flying their own flag which is a recurring symbol, it links perfectly to the story’s themes.

What Oda does is he uses the idea of symbols, Chopper ‘s connoting of the “Jolly Roger” a flag that “rejects impossibilities”, is his way to cure Hiriluk of the incurable illness that has suddenly struck him, but the medicine he produces for Hiriluk comes from a book with a mushroom with skull and crossbones beside it, Chopper is unaware that this denotes poison and confusing the skull for the “Jolly Roger” this leads to tragedy. This is Oda’s way of showing us the power that symbols hold, and that proper education in them is important.



(Oda, 2000, Chapter 144, pp.15)

The way we perceive and understand symbols is just as relevant today in how symbols like the swastika are misconstrued. In a BBC article about the symbolic nature of the swastika and it’s origins it’s author states: “But I think it’s interesting for people to learn that the swastika was not always the symbol of fascism.” (BBC, 2014) This comment on how the symbol has changed even if people are unaware of the original symbol, as it has many progenitors such as the Japanese Manji.

Oda establishes the importance of symbols, how important it is to get them right, to understand what they mean. Then using the “Cherry Blossom”, the symbol that cured Hiriluk, and the one used to cure the Country of Drum, as the Doctor makes cherry blossoms fall on a cold frigid island, doing the impossible, Which links both symbols ultimately, and what’s interesting is the subversion Oda uses between his use of cherry blossoms, symbolizing inherited Will, a major theme of the story against their commonly known signifier of “mono no aware”, a Japanese philosophy of the beauty of impermanent life. He creates a new meaning for readers, showing symbols can change.

Practice Based Writing

Being an artist, I draw in all sorts of ways, illustration may be the course I’m studying in but if I had to pick a practice that suits me and one, I pursue and wish to get better at it would be graphic novels and manga.

“My Staff and I often go to a very noisy Japanese restaurant where a lot of people take their children. There are TVs at each table. If you go there on Sunday nights at 7:30, you’ll see the children staring at the TV screens with their mouths wide open, looking silly. They’re watching One Piece. When I see that, I never want to let them down.”

(Oda, 2001, Foreword)

This quote by mangaka and author of One Piece Eiichiro Oda, is one of the most inspiring things I've ever heard, it made reading his manga feel more than just a piece of media, and it made me think about how much manga and other media mean to me. You can write and illustrate a story that touches people deeply, just as manga has inspired me, I would like to do the same to inspire others and make people happy with my work and I feel that graphic novels or manga are the perfect avenue. Manga panels are such a diverse way to communicate things as the shape and size helps pages flow or convey different types of visual information, lots of long panels may indicate a decent of sorts while large spreads could be paired with the most important or action-packed scenes so they're more memorable or hit harder.

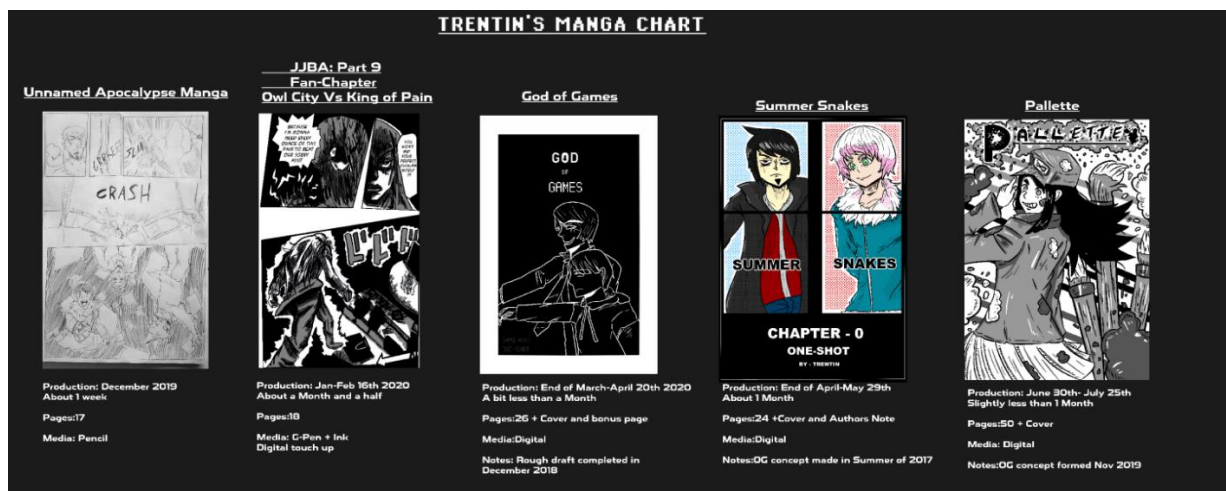
Much of why I wish to pursue manga is because I love it, there's a lot of sentimentality but I also believe it's a brilliant medium for storytelling, a mix of written words but also sequential images which could be a very useful tool for people with reading difficulties or things like dyslexia, this article touches on the use of graphic novels in the classroom and is in line with my own ideas.

"Graphic novels offer multiple cues to comprehension because of the pairing between illustrations and text. Ms. Alfving, a ninth-grade English teacher at my school, said her students acknowledged that the illustrations helped them figure out difficult words in the text of *The Odyssey*."

(Smith, 2018, p. 7)

From the creators of manga to it's potential uses academically or with children, I think comics and manga may be an overlooked and downtrodden form of media that has immense potential for good as well as education.

Another of my favourite manga authors in his book “Manga: in Theory and Practice, states that; “If this book can somehow play a part in the future prosperity of manga, nothing would make me happier” (Araki, (2011) pp.10, he and many other manga authors seem filled with love for their profession, they love consuming it as much as they love creating and here Araki expresses his wishes that he continues this cycle of the “future prosperity of manga”, with me being someone he’s directly influenced with his book. After being influenced by many manga authors I have gone to make my own, even participating in competitions, making manuscripts of up to 50 pages, this shows that I’ve become a part of this cycle and I’m proud to call it my practice.



(The manga I have produced, mostly this year)

Here is a link to my latest manga which deals with some of the things I talked about in my manifesto, it also links in with my final points about manga being my practice:

<https://imgur.com/a/ipKfe2S#>

(1658 Words – Not Including Bibliography) -After Corrections

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