Why I Create

I remember when I was around 10, there was this show that I really loved. It had amazing storytelling and worldbuilding, and the characters were so well written. The male characters at least. My big problem with this show was that the female side character was written horribly. Her entire personality revolved around having a crush, and she constantly needed to be saved by the other male characters.

When I was younger, I realized that most of my favorite characters were men. Not because I disliked female characters, but because I was more attached to the better written, more fleshed out characters. That's when I realized the reason why there seemed to be pretty much no interesting female characters is because people don't bother to write them well. They see the woman as the damsel in distress, or the love interest.

Looking back, even when I was little, I've always wanted to bring change in some sort of way. I remember a big critique I had when I was little was the way that women were portrayed in most media. There was always some sort of damsel in distress archetype, where the man would always save the woman and be better than her at everything, or have something to teach her. All the while, the woman would be confused, helpless, and vapid.

Media doesn't know how to write women. Admittedly, neither did I. Rather than striving for a well written, equally gifted but flawed character, I created Mary Sue Characters. I remember one of my first comics was called "Sam and Max." Sam was the female character, who Max had a crush on. Sam was perfect at traditionally 'male' hobbies, such as skateboarding, soccer, and video games, while Max was the opposite. He was bad at everything and he looked up to Sam. Sam would beat up grown men at the age of 10, participate in the olympics, and win video game competitions. I remember wanting to change the narrative. I wanted to write a story and create a character that let the world know that girls can do anything boys can do, and they don't always need to be saved. But in attempting to do so, I did the exact thing I wanted to fight against: I wrote a female character horribly.

Octavia Butler's definition of 'Positive Obsession' describes something very similar to what I experienced when I was little. Obsession, to put it simply, is a persistent thought, idea, or feeling that dominates one's mind and cannot be easily pushed away. Positive obsession is an act of determination, the need to complete a goal. Obsession normally has a negative connotation, but turning it positive turns it into perseverance. I guess I have a need to portray women for who they are- complex, gifted, and equally as flawed human beings, just as men are.

As I grew up, matured, and developed more media literacy, I realized that a well-written character has many flaws along with strengths. It's okay for a character to be weak, fail, or be bad at something. A character's struggle makes them more relatable and interesting. Around that same time, I started creating my own story. I incorporated all my knowledge of good character writing into my story.

I find that I become my most creative when there is something that is actively bothering me. I draw more and can put so much more emotion into the piece when I'm upset. When I'm passionately annoyed by something, I slam my fingers down on the keyboard and can type out an entire document in a flash. I believe that creativity is one of the best, if not the best coping mechanisms out there. To put it simply, I write about things that make me angry.

I've always been interested in dark, dystopian movies and anime. In my own stories and creations, I always make sure to include some sort of comparison or similarity to injustices happening in the real world. My current story that I'm working on, 'Defected,' is a dystopian story that takes place in the future. It's a world where fossil fuels have run out (which wouldn't be surprising if it happened in real life). Knowing they're a finite source that dwindles quickly, people resorted to using nuclear power. However, due to the detrimental amount of radiation that humans are exposed to, a select amount of them are born with genetic mutations from the radiation that alter their DNA. This mutation can include extra or misshapen limbs, eyes, mouths, and teeth. The thing is, this mutation is purely superficial. It's not contagious, and it doesn't take away from their humanity at all. The government paints them to be subhumans and dangerous. They've made it illegal for these people to live. Of course, there's no such thing as a radiation involved genetic mutation in real life… not that I know of at least. But, there's been multiple instances in the world where people were dehumanized, hurt, and even killed because they're viewed as different. In my story, I include representation of difficult topics, like genocide, eugenics, bigotry, and abuse.

I have very strong political beliefs and I often express them, either up front or in my storytelling. In George Orwell's essay, 'Why I Write,' he states that in order for his works to have meaning, he must have a political purpose in his stories. "Looking back, through my work, I see that it was invariably, where I lacked a political purpose that I wrote lifeless books and was betrayed into purple passages, decorative adjectives, and humbug generally." His greatest works were always heavily involved in politics. While I don't necessarily agree that a piece of writing has to be political, I do think that it makes the piece far more meaningful and effective.

To answer the question: Why do I create? I make art, tell stories, and animate to make statements on, and draw parallels to current events as well as trying to break through the barriers of modern day media.