



# Manifesto

*Anonymous*

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Manifesto accomplishes two things that books like James Frey's A Million Little Pieces could not – using experimental format to show one man's raw life. Opening up the blank casing, a very unapologetic page one sports nothing but black text that starts at the top of the page and small numbering printed on every bottom corner. There are no chapters and there is no chronology or even a plot. Words are broken up in lines or paragraphs and it continues as such for two hundred pages exactly without a break; not dumbed down, allowing the chance to experience truly innovative media.

The author himself accomplishes what thousands of writers spend lifetimes trying to depict honestly, some at the expense of their own sanity. He shows the nihilistic and existentialist thoughts suffered by America's most broken malcontents. This gritty reality may alienate some readers, but for many it tugs at heartstrings and makes us wonder why we pushed our own parallel feelings to the backburner for the sake of fitting into society. It makes us question if we are fooling anyone with those efforts. It makes us really think why, and this book smartly doesn't assume us incapable of making our own life assessment by offering morals or lessons meant to give us hope. The writing itself is completely bleak (a warning to the vulnerable), and the author basically tells us to find our own reason for living. Unlike most other literature, by the last sentence you are still wondering if he has ever found his.

## Manifesto Details

Date : Published 1980 by Dedrabbit International Artists Collectives

ISBN :

Author : Anonymous

Format : Paperback 200 pages

Genre : Fiction, Literature

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## From Reader Review Manifesto for online ebook

### Alex says

Get lost in another life.

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### A.gasior says

This book reminded me of On The Road by Jack Kerouac; a book I picked up in high school that I just couldn't bring myself to finish.

I enjoyed the stream of consciousness writing style because it reminded me of my own thought pattern, and it didn't require focus or concentration to follow. The vivid descriptions of seemingly insignificant items, such as a piece of trash on the side of the road, brought the author's world to life for me. I found his experience and world view completely relate-able, which kind of scared me.

About halfway through I realized this wasn't a story about growing up, coming of age, maturing; it wouldn't offer guidance or valuable lessons I could use to shape my own future. I realized that it didn't even offer hope. Rather, slowly unfolding on the pages were the troubled and scattered thoughts inside the mind of a drug addict; sometimes repetitive, sometimes contradictory to previous thoughts.

This is a story of a privileged kid which lots of potential overwhelmed and crippled by the perceived expectation to succeed. One could only presume that the self destructive path had concluded at some point, which resulted in the book. That in itself gives me a bit of hope.

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### Cardine says

If I wrote down a post it note for every random thought and action I made and any little thing I'd ever witnessed, and taken all those scraps and put them in a binding in somewhat of a chronological order, it would be this book.

This may be one of those books that is impossible to put down when you are in a slum in your life and feel the common ache, but one you can't make yourself pick up when you are feeling content with life.

It is disorganized and lacks a plot, but it's personal, identifiable, and it is a beautiful mess.

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### Jess says

(I'm copying this from my review I posted on my blogspot here)

I found *Manifesto* stuck between bright, colorful titles I was already familiar with in a Boston Newbury Comics. The whole marketing strategy here is brilliant: a completely blank cover, spine, no publishing info on the inside, just a blank white shell full of white pages with black text.

There are no chapters, it has no plot. Arguably, there are no characters, besides the anonymous narrator. The paragraphs don't even connect. Most of the ideas inside repeat themselves, over and over. Its pessimistic and then skyrockets back to being hopeful. There's no structure and, if I'm being honest, no point. Yet, after having just read it, I can say *Manifesto* is one of my favourite books.

The writing is painstakingly simple, which adds to the overall strength of the prose. It makes all the thoughts that much more blunt, when you think they couldn't possibly be any more so. Most of it is pessimistic and harsh; the narrator's outlook on life isn't always the greatest. But at times he will go from bitterly cursing people and their lives to reveling in the beauty of a simple scene over the span of two paragraphs. The conflicting emotions twist together throughout the story, painting a series of highs and lows for the author. Because it's not a linear story, it moves fast, jumping around, without any stopping points. This made it incredibly difficult to put down. I read it in three sittings, I mean it's only 200 pages long, it didn't take much. I loved the brutality, the grittiness, the vagabond lifestyle painted out. It left me feeling thoughtful and reserved, some passages made me tear up, some nod in agreement, and some laugh mirthlessly at the narrator's stupidity.

I can't help but love the underground quality of the book too. Run a Google search. What do you find? A handful of pages maybe? I've read every blog post I can find on this book, but in saying that, it's not that many. The book is shrouded in so much anonymity it's almost off the grid. I love that about it. I love that it feels special and personal to me, that I can't walk into Barnes & Nobles to ask for a copy. I love that if I list it as my favourite book, no one is going to know what I'm talking about. I love that it has to be spread to others from the people that love it, not by magazine book reviews or carefully planned advertisements. Call me a hipster if you want, because, well, I probably am.

It's not an adventure story, or a great example of character study. If you want a thriller to keep you up at night, a romance novel to pull the strings of your heart, or a beautiful fiction that makes the world feel real, well, it's none of those books, but it does all those things. I know a lot of people hate this book - its down-on-life tone, its rambling, its disjointedness. But I know it's also touched a lot of people that have leafed through its pages. If you ever see a copy somewhere, standing out against brighter titles, you should just shell out the few dollars for it and hope it changes your world.

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### **Dana Jerman says**

This book is American, anarchistic and important.

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### **Jon Cone says**

This book manages to both mesmerize and bore. It is essentially a catalog: a two-hundred page list of disappointments, confusions, rejections, contradictions, desires, and existential observations. The book moves between what saddens us to what merely annoys and distracts, yet it struggles even so to discover what is good in the world. The considerable power of this book is weakened by its own relentless

persistence: cut in half the book, which is more prose poem than novel, would have been a work of strange and pure genius.

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### **Jabari says**

This book came to me at a time of sadness and introspection, it is itself a sad but true introspection, a meditation on the terrifying lightness of being and the terrible choices that modern life offers. This life is yours, and may be impossible to "waste". What you do is what you do, whether you're acting selflessly or being obsessively self-absorbed, embracing society or rejecting it or coexisting in some tortured manner as this anonymous did. He resisted doing what society prescribes for people to do with their lives: go to school, get a degree, get a job, marry and have kids, buy a house, shop, work, vote, repeat, etc., then die. How to resist? How to live without compromise, free? This man's life reads like a long, tortured hunger strike. Is it resistance, or suicide? Is there a difference? I can't rate this book, but I can say it wasn't a waste of my precious time.

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### **Steve says**

Only two hundred pages, but it took about three months of picking it up, reading a page, putting it down, forgetting that I had it, finding it stuffed somewhere, reading large chunks at once, forgetting about it again, and rediscovering it to finally finish. Each paragraph is non-sequential (not entirely true, there were two or three times when a thought/event was carried over), and there is no real plot to connect everything. It is just a series of snapshots of someone's life; at times relatable, at others infuriating. That said, It manages to be a bit pretentious at times in how unpretentious it is written.

Check your head, give it a read.

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### **Tony Laplume says**

I gave up reading after thirty or so pages. Because it repeats the same basic thoughts every other paragraph.

Because it repeats the same basic thoughts. Over and over again.

It's the kind of project, apparently undertaken by a whole collective otherwise identified as derabbit something-something, that believes it represents the whole of the counterculture, but it ends up reading like an event less coherent version of William S. Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*. I read *Naked Lunch* months ago, famous for being one of the pillars of the Beat Generation. But it's not really all that great.

And *Manifesto* is worse. It'd take an extreme amount of patience to read all two hundred pages of its juvenile (although the author[s] believe it's transcendent) thought process, admittedly coming from a privileged

background eventually overtaken with rebellious thoughts. Although you won't catch such an admission within its pages. Okay, maybe somewhere in its pages, but that's not the dominant theme.

The dominant theme is repeated. Ad nauseum. School was a drag. Awesome. Although if you'd maybe learned anything you could produce a coherent thought?

I'm mostly disappointed because I bought this years ago and really hoped that it'd be something interesting. And it *is* interesting. Just not in a good way.

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### **Garrett Zecker says**

"I was the typical American asshole." (142)

Manifesto reminds me of the novel that I wrote when I was twenty-four years old. It is a rambling stream-of-consciousness self-indulgent novel about, yes, an American asshole. One element of this book that is different than the one that I wrote in my own self-indulgent, rambling book is that this character seems to lack a clear awareness of how lucky he really is. He has women in his life he seems to not even be aware of and hardly names. He has a reliable, loving family that seems to put up with his wandering but also keeps him in booze, airplane tickets, and college education. He swims through this life of financed debauchery complaining about everything. This character has everything I didn't have, but the way the book is written makes me hate him rather than empathize him.

The book is primarily written in what feels like endless "I want" statements, at almost a humorous misinterpretation of any number of MFA workshops begging for the character to want something. This unnamed character seems to want everything, completely unprepared for the internal changes needed to grasp self-awareness, humility, patience, and selflessness. Instead, the book is our narrator's verbal masturbation perhaps best illustrated in a portion where he wishes he was in a war because he's bored. Does he develop? Only as far as writing down his complaints and wanting to distribute them to the world.

I don't have much that I enjoyed about the book. I went in without any expectations, only knowing that I had seen it on the shelf of Newbury Comics and passed among the hands of many friends (precisely how I got my copy). I personally think it is a skip for most every reader, except perhaps the misguided early-twenties trust fund dropout set. I can understand why the author wishes to remain anonymous.

Here, I present my abridged version in the event that you'd rather read this instead:

"I hate books. I want things I can't have. I love books. I really hate books and school. I want a relationship but people hate me. I love books. I should read a book. I can just read on college quads if I want rather than attending college. I hate books. I want you to know books are pretentious. I think libraries are awful. I want books to be great. I want to be great but I'm not good at anything. I should buy a typewriter and write a book. I am an asshole. I think the world needs a book about how I hate books and I love books. I hate books. Read my book."

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### **Mercutio says**

Oh my god how many times can you say that you hate life?  
Turns out, a book's worth.

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### **Jack says**

Will you be my friend? Please be my friend.

I am not your friend.

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### **Josh Pendergrass says**

I was surprised that this secret book has a reviews page! The front cover, back cover, and spine are all blank. No title, no author, no summary, no anything. I found it sitting by the register at Bluestocking bookstore and I asked the young woman who was working there what it was. "ohh, we call that one the 'White Boy Manifesto'". Ok...I guess I had to read it!

The book is a portrait of Ennui. Think the misanthropy of Holden Caulfield x 100. The un-named narrator dropped out of Harvard. He has trouble finding meaning in anything, he abuses drugs and alcohol, he has difficulty connecting with people, he lives as a drifter, he hates school, he hates work, he hates society...and that's basically it. There are no chapters, there is no plot, no development. The lack of any sort of structure seems to mirror the lack of purpose that the narrator feels. Despite all of this, it is clear that he is intelligent, his observations are perceptive and insightful. There is an emotional toll that is paid by those who are unwilling or unable to accept the cultural narratives of modern society. Is there a place for people like this in the world? Do they contribute anything to our understanding of society and of ourselves?

I really enjoyed this book...my goodness, what does that say about me!?? I guess "White Boy Manifesto" is right!

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### **Evan says**

An interesting piece of work: not so much a novel as a series of terse personal-statement paragraphs, not in any real order or structure. The narrator is an upper-middle-class kid from the Midwest who got into a big-deal East Coast college or two (the text mentions Harvard and Middlebury) and dropped out, alienated and fed up, to wander the country, but it doesn't present the decision - or anything else - as redemptive or revelatory. The mood of alienation carries throughout, which makes it a bleaker read but, to me, a more interesting one than something like *Cometbus*, where the alternative lifestyle and the underclass are fetishized and romanticized to sometimes-nauseating levels. "Manifesto" presents both sides of the equation as equally, though differently, hollow and soul-sucking. It's closer to my own personal sentiment in a lot of ways. It reads a bit like Conor Oberst trying to be Hemingway - i.e., minus most of the emo.

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**Steev Hise says**

just started it, intrigued but not earth-shattering yet. it's like a modern "On The Road" or "Catcher In The Rye". Still waiting to see how it might depart from those antecedents in any real or innovative way.

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