

Marie Godderis
Mr. Greco
English IV Honors
19 November 2020

Uniquely Transparent

Each individual has an inside-out perspective of herself or himself. A sense of sameness or uniqueness. Those terms only make sense when one is not alone and in a certain time and space as a confined setting.

The outside-in perspective from the external observer can take those forms as well. Are uniqueness and sameness opposites?¹ Does uniqueness not require some degree of sameness?

We only exist when someone looks.

We² are

stuck

molded

into shape we don't want to be.



Mauro Perucchetti's 'Jelly Baby Family' Sculpture at Marble Arch³

¹ "How to Break Away from the Norm." Power of Mediocrity, 21 Jan. 2018, www.powerofmediocrity.com/blog/2018/01/21/how-to-break-away-from-the-norm/.

² Van Meter, Ryan. *If You Knew Then What I Know Now*, Sarabande Books, 2011. Usage of same second person narrative structure.

³ Perucchetti, Mauro. "Jelly Baby Family The Mauro Perucchetti Collection - Art." Halcyon Gallery, www.halcyongallery.com/art/jelly-baby-family1.

To others, we are seen as the same—variances of each other. What binds us together is our formality, shape, structure. But we are blind to our differences. We strive to push past the edge, out of this room.

You are not a figure.

Yes, we are figures.

You are not an object.

Yes, we are objects.

You are not the same.

*But who are we to believe that we are different?⁴ Who are we to believe that we are unique?
Are we blind to our differences, or are we blind to our similarities?*

Annotated Bibliography:

Hill, Linda, et al. “The Authenticity Paradox.” Harvard Business Review, 18 July 2017, hbr.org/2015/01/the-authenticity-paradox.

This article from the Harvard Business Review discusses people struggling to find a balance between transparency, authenticity, and their role in society. This article allowed me to gain insight on what it means to stay “true to oneself”, as it stated, “being authentic doesn’t mean that you can be held up to the light and people can see through you”. This statement sparked my curiosity to continue researching and digging deeper into my topic. Some other topics covered in the article were if being transparent was risky or unrealistic, or to what extent one should go away from the norm and the benefits that could come out of it. The photograph that goes alongside this article is from the “Jelly Baby Family” artwork, which I did more research on afterwards (cited below) and incorporated into my essay.

Perucchetti, Mauro. “Jelly Baby Family The Mauro Perucchetti Collection - Art.” Halcyon Gallery, www.halcyongallery.com/art/jelly-baby-family1.

From an outside perspective, Perucchetti’s artwork is five molded figures of the same shape, with their differences being their sizes and colors. After reading about the artist’s intentions of the artwork, I gained insight into his idea of exploring ambiguity in cloned figures. I felt that this artwork was a good fit with what I was trying to convey in my writing, and was inspired to incorporate similar ideas.

⁴ Hill, Linda, et al. “The Authenticity Paradox.” Harvard Business Review, 18 July 2017, hbr.org/2015/01/the-authenticity-paradox. What does it mean to be true to oneself and unique?

“How to Break Away from the Norm.” Power of Mediocrity, 21 Jan. 2018, www.powerofmediocrity.com/blog/2018/01/21/how-to-break-away-from-the-norm/. This writing piece is an opinion blog about going beyond the norm and one’s attitude when doing that. Although it is unknown whether the source is reputable, it guided me to pose more questions about my lyrical essay subject and the writing style I wanted to use.

Van Meter, Ryan. *If You Knew Then What I Know Now*, Sarabande Books, 2011.

Van Meter’s lyrical piece of writing recounts a story from his youth experience with gender and sexuality. Van Meter writes in the second person to tell the story to a younger version of himself, and directs the message of his writing as a learning experience and reflection from his younger self. Van Meter uses stylistic choices and devices to deliver the story as if it happens in real time. This further strengthens the message and leaves the reader wondering and wanting to know more. In my writing, I wanted to emulate a similar style, however, I made the subjects reflect upon who they are in a more subtle and abstract manner.

Intention Statement:

“Uniquely Transparent” is a lyrical essay that explores the theme of what it means to be unique on an abstract level and stray away from the norm. To explore this topic, I researched a variety of writing pieces, such as a lyrical essay, poem, artwork, and journalistic article. I was inspired by Ryan Van Meter’s essay, “If You Knew Then What I Know Now” as well as Susan Orlean’s essay. I tried to emulate a similar technique that Van Meter used in his work, as his text has elements of self reflection upon an experience from his past, directed to his younger self. In my writing, I wanted to direct part of it to the subjects, through writing lines like “you are not a figure” and “you are not an object”. In addition, “The American Man, Age Ten” by Susan Orlean incorporates investigative elements of the subject, which I strived to include in my work as well. During my research process, I posed several questions in order to strengthen the subjects’ incorporated in my writing. I chose to write this lyrical essay in both first and second person. The middle portion of the essay is in first person, using the word “we”, which refers to the group of individuals that the essay focuses on. Towards the end, the style shifts to second person, referring to “you”, which is directed from an outside perspective to the main subjects. I also incorporated an artwork to fit alongside my essay. When researching, I came across an artwork which I felt fit perfectly for the story I was trying to tell through my essay. Mauro Perucchetti, the artist of “Jelly Baby Family” sculpture, states that the structure is “an impersonation of cloned mankind and that he wanted to “capture the ambiguity that could be present in a cloned being.” I chose to incorporate this work of art and use it as a metaphor for mankind, and how the subjects of my lyrical essay feel as if they are cloned and bound to the image of being “just like everyone else”. During peer review, my readers found the use of white space and center alignment to be

powerful and creative. They also suggested that I develop and strengthen the idea throughout the essay, and make sure that the artwork enhances the lyrical essay. Taking this feedback into consideration, I adjusted the focus of my essay to make it more unified, rather than several different aspects combined together. Overall, through the use of poetic elements, narrative writing, research, and artistic elements incorporated, my lyrical essay gives readers insight into the theme of exploring uniqueness and ambiguity in figures that represent mankind as a whole.