

Mary Kate Outten

Mr. Greco

English III

27 September 2023

### Canvas of Unity: Expressing Emotions and Individualism in Art

In “I’m Not ‘Mrs. America.’ That’s the Point,” producer and actor Cate Blanchett argues that a sense of shared meaning in the world is indispensable. She explains the significance of understanding each other and communicating in a society; interaction is the glue that keeps us together and coherent. While the pandemic created a sense of loss and isolation for many people, art helps us to make sense of the world during unprecedented times. Blanchett believes that even in these uncertain times, different types of art such as galleries, theaters, and cinemas, can help to bring together physically and emotionally divided and perplexed people. Ultimately, she advocates the idea that art can help us engage with each other and come to terms with a more serene and peaceful existence.

Jackson Pollock’s abstract expressionist works both reflect and diverge from this type of thinking; because he resonates with emotional expressions, just like how Cate Blanchett sees the importance of being in touch with your emotions. I think he also challenges it because abstract expressionists like Pollock emphasized individualism, whereas Blanchett sees the need to come together as a whole. Cate Blanchet and Jackson Pollock correlate with each other in some of their reasoning on unity and emotions but differ in their viewpoints on individualism.



*Blue Poles, 1952 Jackson Pollock*

<https://bluepoles.nga.gov.au/artwork/blue-poles/>

Pollock's "Blue Poles" (1952) is a drip-style painting that leaves this feeling of confusion; what is this painting saying? There isn't a lot of balance in this painting, because there is an abundant amount of paint present everywhere. Even through all the chaos of this drip-painting technique, the "blue poles" create this sense of stability. There is also a lot of movement throughout the artwork. The fluid movement of all the streaks of paint helps to illustrate the complexity of life. This goes hand in hand with the rhythm that is showcased in this because the rhythmic elements demonstrate a sense of vitality in this painting. Pollock also utilizes vibrant colors and hues to create chaos and dynamism in his paintings. There isn't a lot of space in this drip-art painting, and I believe this has a profound meaning. Pollock struggled greatly with suicidal thoughts and depression, so this chaotic drip art painting served as a diversion from his true emotions. This painting to me sort of creates a type of deep emotion and harmony that can be often in abstract expressionist paintings, which is shown through the disordered blue lines. Likewise, Blanchett believes during strenuous times people have deep emotions and they can come together to communicate that. She explains how we have a lot of "conflicting emotions and desires." When we embrace our emotions, we can help amend disintegrating relationships and hardships in our lives; we can use art to connect our differing perspectives and feelings. Blanchett discusses how political instability can generate compelling emotions that can be hard to ignore; the depression and chaotic thoughts that Pollock was experiencing can relate to this. This artwork represents a sense of chaos, just like how Blanchett realizes art can be utilized to combat life's challenges and turbulent emotions.



*The Number One, 1949 Jackson Pollock*

<https://www.moca.org/collection/work/number-1>

Blanchett and Pollock also show their connection in their relationship, as they align on a common theme of unity through artwork. The “Number One” created in 1949 by Pollock helps to represent this. For instance, the drip paint technique that Pollock utilizes again in this painting demonstrates his expression and feelings artistically. Like Blanchett, whose role as a producer and actor requires her to show a lot of self-expression in her work, Pollock. In this painting there is no space; paint covers the entire canvas, and the paint almost intertwines and overlaps over each other. I think this can relate to what Cate Blanchett believes because she believes that we need to come together as a society; there shouldn’t be “space” between us or divide, but instead, we can all share our perspectives and ideas. I think the value of this art is also important to consider. The Number 1 utilizes darker colors and shades, just like how Cate Blanchett believes that in times of darkness and political volatility, we can come together to be more unified as a whole. This relates to unity in this way because the patterns seen in Jackson’s work can help to symbolize the unity that Blanchett advocates for. Pollock successfully emphasizes all the colors; your eyes don’t go to one place, so they show this unity even in disarray and disorder. This relates to Cate Blanchett because even in times of havoc and disorder like the pandemic, we can still find unity in our lives as well. Pollock considers the overall composition to maintain a sense of balance and unification and uses the technique of drip painting to create a feeling of continuity and visual cohesion.



*The Deep*, 1952 Jackson Pollock

<https://www.artchive.com/artwork/the-deep-jackson-pollock/>

Although there are a lot of thematic parallels between Jackson Pollock and Cate Blanchett, they contrast in their viewpoints on individualism. For example, “The Deep,” created by Pollock in 1953, displays a sense of isolation and desolation. For example in this piece of artwork, we can visualize the dark colors, conveying the feeling of seclusion and melancholy. Pollock’s history of depression and alcoholism are some of the key reasons why Pollock values individualism. I also can interpret the lines of the drips of painting that lead you towards the center of darkness, to convey this feeling of isolation and being dragged down in society. There is also a lot of texture in this painting, which also helps your eyes be drawn to the black “hole.” The balance between the white and the dark is interesting to observe because there is more whiteness than darkness; I can infer that slowly the blackness is beginning to take over, just like how in Pollock's real life his depression and alcoholism began to consume him. There is also definitely an emphasis on blackness, to portray this deep emotion of seclusion and individuality. There is also a substantial amount of fluid movement in this artwork, to represent his energy and instability in his life. Pollock uses individualism in a lot of his thinking and paintings because he was someone who believed being independent and self-reliant was crucial. Cate Blanchett, on the other hand, believes that during times of political instability and chaos, we can use each other and come together as a whole to fight the “darkness.” Pollock believed that in times of loneliness and fear, you resort to your thinking; you isolate yourself from others. Cate Blanchett had a very different perspective. She thinks the best way to combat misery and stagnation is to resort to public spaces, so we can coexist and create an overall integrated society and not experience individualism.

Overall, each of these paintings showcases the similarities and differences between Cate Blanchett and the ideals of Jackson Pollock. The unification and emotional similarities between

these two people are shown, because Pollock believes everything is interconnected, just like how Blanchett Believes we can coexist together to create a society exemplifying harmonious integration. Each of these paintings exemplifies the thematic elements that Pollock represents and compares them with the idea of a converging world. They believe that you can foster unity, and they differ in their opinions on individualism. Most important though, they both explore the complexities of human connection and interdependence.

#### Works Cited

1. Cate Blanchett, "I'm Not 'Mrs. America.' That's the point." *The New York Times*, 21 May 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/21/opinion/cate-blanchett>

Note about artworks: Since I provided full source information about each artwork with each figure caption, I do not need to provide this information on the Works Cited page.

Note on the use of generative AI:

I used ChatGPT in the process of creating this essay. While I did not borrow directly from the results, I asked questions like this:

- 1) Please rephrase/reword this phrase to make it sound a little more advanced
- 2) Took the direct title, "Canvas of Unity: Expressing Emotions and Individualism in Art"
- 3) Describe to me how Pollock shows unification