Why I Create Essay by Mehr Raheja

Grey, blue, black, white. Grey, blue, black, white. Those are most of the colors I see when I look outside today. You look at the road and you see the same grey, blue, black, or white cars. Made with the same cookie cutter design that most cars today are made with. After driving your generic grey, blue, black, or white car, you probably come home to your modern style or typical family house. The same decorations that everyone who shops at Ikea or Homegoods has. Maybe you come home hungry so you go into your generic kitchen with the same layout that every other suburban house has. You see all your bulky appliances sitting there simply to serve their purpose. But where is the color? Where is life? Where is the character? Where is the art in everyday objects that has disappeared in our modern society?

The more I thought about it, I realized that even with an increase in innovation and technology we have left behind the thought and creativity that goes into everyday objects. Why does a chair just have to be a chair? Why does a kitchen appliance have to just serve a purpose when it can also serve looks? 1950s appliances are a key example of this. Brands like General Electric had a way of adding innovation and style to something so simple and plain as a stove. They were built with the intent and thought of who was going to be using them and what for. Even without the latest technologies, appliances from back then served a greater purpose than any of the ones today. They were functional, innovative, creative, and visually aesthetic. Some might say, why care about the looks of anything if it's just meant to serve a purpose? But that can be said about anything in our society?

I didn't always think this way, though. It wasn't until I was exposed to different forms of creativity that I began to question the things being created around me. Covid hit when I was just entering middle school, a key developmental stage for most children. Rather than being in the comfort of friends and family, I found myself taking comfort in social media. At first, I was just doom scrolling as a way to keep myself entertained in the emptiness that I experienced during covid. But then I began to discover key influencers who changed the way that I thought about creativity. Creators like Dani Klarc were experimental, colorful, and strange in their interior designs. Francesca Frankcom was bold with her clothing and unique with her styling videos. Both of them inspired me to do the same. They were breaking the norms and boundaries for what I thought was possible at the time, and for what I'd seen around me. As I began high school and covid was slowly dying down I began to observe and realize more about the design and creation all around me. It was all the same. Cars, clothing, houses, even personalities all seemed so similar with no uniqueness and character to anything anymore.

The more I began to notice these things, the more I began to wonder what I wanted to do with my creativity. I thought back to the influencers that had inspired me to observe the world

around me. I realized that those videos I used to endlessly watch and that consumed so much of my time, could become a reality for me if I wanted it to be. While I've always had an interest in the creative field, I didn't truly ever consider it possibility until I got further into high school. My idea of the creative field was primarily made up of the phrase "starving artist". The phrase made the creative field feel unrealistic as a goal for my future. But the more I got exposed to creativity, the more I began to want to make it a goal for myself. I began to experiment with my art style, materials, and other aspects of my artwork. I wanted to create things that were unique, colorful, and different than what I had typically seen done in the world before. I wanted to change the grey, blue, black, white in our world to green, yellow, red, purple.

I started to notice more about the environment and what I was surrounded by, but not in a typical way. I began to think about the colors, textures, materials used, and so much more. I began to pay attention to aspects of things that I hadn't thought about before. From the small objects to the big housing designs, every aspect was chosen with intention and thought behind it. This made me question even more why everything felt so stereotypical when there are countless opportunities to make a design have character. I realized that this is what I like about creation, the ability to make choices that can make something stand out so much that it could be an art piece in itself. I wanted to actually be able to explore my creativity by actually designing and creating things myself.

Freestyle Academy, a creative media arts program during my junior and senior year, helped give me the opportunity to explore more into the creative process and design world. I learned new media like music production, video editing, photography, and so much more that influenced my knowledge of creation. I got to meet likeminded individuals that felt the same about so many aspects of creation. It gave me the confidence to pursue a career in design. Since there are so many aspects to design and the creation process that I love, I didn't want to limit myself to just one aspect of design. Instead I am applying to a variety of broad design programs across the U.S. and Europe that allow me to continue to learn all aspects of design. I've realized that although I still see the same grey, blue, black, and white colors everywhere, that it's okay because that just means there is more opportunity for better creation and design in this world.

Process Reflection:

When first drafting my ideas for my "Why I [write]" essay I thought back to my core values, brainstormed and even the thinking I had previously done for some of my college essays. I noticed one thing in common with them all. They all included my love for creation, design, and making things. To me by then it seemed clear what my essay should be about. It should be about the thing that has guided me for so long and has inspired me for so long that I feel the need and want to continue to pursue it.

When thinking about the layout and inspiration for my essay I thought back to the core text and essays we had read and studied earlier on. While both Octavia Butler's and George Orwell's "Why I write", were both inspiring and well written, there was one that stuck out to me. Octavia Butler's essay more matched the tone of what I wanted my essay to be like. It was my primary source of inspiration in terms of the formatting of my essay. One thing that she does is she writes in a sequence from when she was younger to as she got older what happened. I followed something similar in my essay going from my younger self, to my current self, and even my future self.

While I did use the core texts as a way to guide my writing, another important aspect of shaping my essay was the feedback I received from others. Starting from the Pre-Revision Reflection I got quite a lot of feedback about what I could do to improve my writing. That feedback guided me while writing my 1st revision to my essay. Although I didn't have as much written by the 1st Revision, the feedback I received from my peers was enough to guide my writing later on as I continued to work on it. A lot of the feedback consisted of getting more personal with my writing which is anyway something I wanted to do because it is something that Octavia Butler also includes in her writing. Personal stories and connection in writing can help the reader remain interested in the piece that they are reading. I think that the feedback I received really helped me also understand what the readers were feeling and how they interpreted my writing.

Although I think I had a good amount written during times we got feedback I think I could have improved my writing even more if I was a little faster in my pace of writing and developing my essay. I think that I was consistent from the beginning but I ramped up my writing towards the end of the deadline. Whereas if I ramped up near the middle of the assignment there would have been more content that my peers could have given me feedback on. I hope that the readers reading my essay get to better understand me and my passion for creation through this essay and why it really matters to me and to the world.

Level 3: While I do think I did a good job with the overall end product of my writing I think I needed to work at a faster pace that way I could have gotten more feedback and revision time. That would have allowed me to make my writing even better than it is now.