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As Poetry Recycles Neurons

My Lyricist: Dre Dupre

*This paper is a part of a month long project I worked on during spring quarter of the class As Poetry Recycles Neurons. The objective was to pursue a passion and then write about that passion through another author or a poet. I decided that as a hip-hop artist and a poet that I could write through my own lyrics and my own poetry. My passion is hip-hop music so I spent the month writing and recording songs while also keeping a book of poetry that I would then draw from to write this paper. As with my My Lyricist: Tupac Shakur chapter, I used Maureen McClane's My Poets as a model for my term paper and tried to bring my audience into the world of who I feel like I speak for and where I feel like I'm speaking from, while instead of using multiple voices, most of this paper is my own voice through different mediums.*

Your table is full, full of everyday items you use for survival. On this table is a stack of books, a bag of marijuana, a box of condoms, a laptop you're working on and a box full of tissues because one of your homies from back home just died. You still have to continue to work because if you let your grades drop you'll get kicked out of school. You've come far in your life but even right now, you're not sure where you're going and it still seems like the world is against you.

*"Skate holes in my shoes*

*As I cruise down the avenues*

*Gettin' crooked looks and they wanna judge*

*But they never had a clue as to what I had to do*

*To get here, I ain't changed at all I just sit here*

*Pants hangin' off my ass I know I don't fit here*

*I am not society's perfect picture*

*If you ever been there, let me know*

*So I can flow something to free your soul"*

*Untitled, Sophisticated Moron*

My project "Sophisticated Moron" was my first attempt at creating a body of work full of completed songs. I set out to complete at least five, finished three, and started two. So, it did not become complete as I envisioned, but I think eventually I'll be able to turn it into an even bigger project.

Something that separated "Sophisticated Moron" from my other attempts at rapping is that there was a lot of experimentation involved. It was my first time pushing myself to complete the writing of a song, as well as the recording and the mixing. I did different things with the rhythms of the lyrics, switching up the flow. Also, I tested myself artistically to see if I could use another person's words to create a story around them with a common theme.

*"[Is it gonna be right this time?*

*Is it gonna be golden?*

*Is it gonna be right this time?*

*Right]*

*It's gotten to the point where I don't even know what's right or wrong*

*I'm lately at a loss for words so much I had to write this song*

*I couldn't even think of my own verses so I just wrote along*

*To everything you already said, you're such a know it all*

*It seems that even times I think I'm right you still know I'm wrong*

*And even when I come through at night you still go along"*

*Overdone, Sophisticated Moron*

A lot of the things I talked about in these songs were things that I had felt but couldn't express to people through just speaking. I addressed feeling outcast by groups of people, being looked at as a strange, weird creature and my acceptance of that, and also being unreliable as a lover and having the space to admit being wrong in a way that was also kind of unapologetic. From studying Tupac Shakur this quarter, I learned that at the end of the day, all you can do is be human. We make mistakes, we have triumphs, we have failures, we are good and bad and that dual state is what keeps us balanced, and that is something new I try to show when I'm going through my creative process writing lyrics and with poetry. In music, what touches people the most is something they can find to relate to, whether that's negative or positive.

You've seen and welcomed a lot of positivity in your life and lot of good has come of it. But along that journey it seems you've seen a lot more negativity than anything else. You've watched things come together then fall apart then come together all to fall apart all over again, it seems as though even when you win, you lose.

*"To get one's house in order*

*Is complicated*

*When unexpected acts of nature have made it a mess*

*When it is so unstable you can no longer bare the sight of it*

*But you continue to live in it*

*As it is*

*How do you order a house that seems unrepairable..."*

You look to medicate yourself because of your situation, trying to find a way to get away, just for a little while so that you can deal with it clear minded later. There aren't many around in college that look the way you do, but the ones that do are good friends and they've got your back and exactly what you need. You grew up watching your elders medicate this same way, it's all you know.

*"Well, the first step is to stop living in it*

*The second step is to destroy what it was*

*Then...*

*Finally...*

*You can rebuild your house in whatever order*

*Using new bricks, and old if you like*

*A top of the same foundation*

*Create a new house, stable and neat*

*And when it again becomes a mess*

*You can reconstruct it*

*But remember always*

*To get ones house in order*

*Is complicated"*

*To Get Ones House In Order, Indigenous Wisdom*

You come back to reality, clear headed, and the thought crosses your mind that if certain circles of friends knew how you acted and what you did when you were with the homies they would see you in a different light. You begin to think about being two people in the same body, constantly going back and forth between the two. Eventually, you come to the conclusion that it's really all just you, both sides, although they are different because you are aware of when behaviors are appropriate and not, who you're comfortable with and not as comfortable with, it's all still you. Why do you have to care what people think about you anyway? They didn't help you get here and they won't help you get any farther.

*"Ima grow my hair how I wanna*

*Sometimes I drink forty's and I smoke marijuana*

*They tellin' me to change but they knowin' I'm not gonna*

*There used to be a time when they thought I was a goner*

*They left me high and dry I ask why eyes wide*

*How could you decide when you wanna ride by my side*

*You would rather lie than to go against the strongest tide*

*And now you think you got an opinion upon my life?"*

*Untitled, Sophisticated Moron*

While creating this project, I wanted to destroy all barriers around my thoughts and creativity. I wanted to write exactly how I felt regardless of anyone else's feelings or any societal influence.

Although, I realized that to do this project without any societal influence would be near impossible, I'd

have nothing to write about. That's what the title is about, "Sophisticated Moron", aside from being the original meaning behind the word sophomore which is what I am in college right now, means to me knowing that you know nothing, but gaining that awareness. It means being conscious and unconscious at once, being good and bad, so the title drips duality. All my life, I've been looked at as the good kid while some of my friends were labeled "bad" or "ignorant", but I did the same stuff they did, I just didn't get caught doing it as often. So I've always felt like I was both, the college boy that used to steal from stores regularly, the hoodlum that mingles with his schools rich kids, something of a societal contradiction.

Because of being this kind of contradiction, I always felt shunned by people because I was looked at as weird or strange. It wasn't until I embraced the strange that I saw the value in being weird. As a teenager in high school, I realized that everyone I looked up to was considered weird at one time or another, some were even considered crazy. Everyone who I figured as "normal" was always going to be just that, "normal". This is a feeling that has stuck around with me for years, and led to me writing a poem and a song about being a "Monster" of sorts, and embracing being that monster as a way of being comfortable with who I am.

*"What happens when the supernatural becomes natural..."*

*When the inhuman becomes human*

*Demons rise to earth searching for understanding*

*Angels fall from grace*

*We are the fruit of both creatures...*

*The product of light and dark*

*Taught to fear ourselves...*

*No More*

*No More*

*Embrace the light and the dark*

*And become whole*

*No longer fear the unusual monsters*

*Embody the beast"*

*Monsters, Indigenous Wisdom*

*"Hardly just an artist I'm more part of the problem*

*There'll probably be a policy bout me when I'm long gone*

*I'm just hoping above all they remember the claws and fangs*

*The essence of my presence and the fact I never changed*

*Even when they dissed me even when they called me strange"*

*Monster, Sophisticated Moron*

You sit in your room contemplating the life your deceased homie lived. You think about what they left behind, they had hopes, dreams, loves, hates, they could've been where you are, they were smart enough, you two just took different paths because of something that you were fortunate enough to have had intervene. You look at the news on the internet, seeing people just like him, called criminals, dehumanized, made into the enemy.

What can you do now? You feel like regardless of anything you do, you'll either be a slave to the government or die in the system. You want to give up on everything and get revenge for everything else that drove you into this corner. Should you lash out physically? Hurt and destroy everything that oppresses you? Where would that get you? And that would only prove everyone that doubted you right. You at this point realize that you're at a point of privilege, you were lucky to even make it out of the city you're from. Your other option is to persevere and do something important for the people that live in this place and survive on a day to day basis. Because without them, without that place, that home, you wouldn't be who you are today.

A new technique I've developed when creating is to think about where I come from, how I grew up, how I live right now, and how I want to live in the future. I went through a long time where I lost that feeling of pride in where I grew up but since the process of this project, I've developed a new rejuvenated pride in my hometown and the people that live there. This place is where my family lives, where I had my first day of school, where I met my closest friends to this day, where I was poor but happy, where I first fell in love, and where I discovered that I was deeply connected to music. So, since this place and these people have given me so much I feel that it is my duty to give back because I couldn't have gotten this far without everything I learned in my hometown of Tacoma. The duality here is that although it wasn't the best place to grow up it was my place, and I have my issues with it, but I love it.

*"I heard sirens*

*They wailed a song which could*

*Put my brothers in captivity*

*And end them there*

*And here I stand adhered to the*

*Sweetest song I hear*

*But I do not hold much fear*

*Because I am not there*

*But I am out there*

*I am the street lights and the pavement*

*Every crack and crevice in places*

*You couldn't imagine and I wonder*

*How do I keep from going under?*

*How do I not feel for my brother*

*As if I am there with him*

*If we had been laid the same path*

*My life could have ended in an instant*

*But since we both started out as infants*

*Our innocence holds no difference"*

*I Heard Sirens, Indigenous Wisdom*

This project was very interesting for me to work on because by studying and discovering Tupac Shakur, I discovered more about myself. It has definitely affected my everyday life because I want to

convey more how I honestly feel instead of just nodding to everything and being afraid of how other people feel about it. That doesn't mean I've been more apathetic of other people's emotions, it just means I've put more value on my own thoughts and feelings and would like to be able to openly express them to people through more than just me but in my everyday life as well. That was something Tupac put a lot of value in, honesty. And as long as I find myself hoping that others will be honest with me, I will hold myself to the same standard, even through every contradiction, everything that may be looked down on or cause someone else to become upset, everything good I feel, everything uplifting or inspiring, because honesty, too, has a duality to it.