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Psychodrama Review

Two weeks ago, the greatest album that you have never heard of was released:

Psychodrama, which is a reference to a [common therapeutic strategy](#). On March 8th, a twenty year old South Londoner by the name of [Dave](#) released his debut album and it topped the UK charts in less than a week. Dave, full name David Orobosa Omoregie, grew up in poverty in the streets of Streatham, England, and his traumatic past led him to create the masterpiece that is *Psychodrama*. This album is not the typical rap album, it does not have the songs that you play to hype up a party, but rather it has songs with impactful messages, piano rhythms, and a constant and somber undertone. As the name suggests, the album covers the important topic of mental health, as well as tackling issues such as racism and domestic abuse. It can be a lot to take in if you are not prepared for it, but the masterful lyricism and storytelling that Dave employs makes the album the best that has been released this year.

Psychodrama covers topics that typically rapper would not want to touch even in their later years, much less in their debut, but that is what sets this piece of work apart from other albums. Throughout *Psychodrama* there are voice clips of an unknown man, who is found out to be Dave's psychotherapist, who provides questions or insights that relate to many of the songs on

the album including “Psycho,” “Environment,” and “Lesley.” This is left in the album in order to support Dave’s challenge to mental health norms, that it should be hidden and not talked about. Dave puts mental health on the main stage with this album and it is done very well; rather than talking about how bad the healthcare system is or possible solutions to the problems, Dave brings up his own experience with mental problems on track such as “Psycho” and “Voices.” The theme of this album is addressing problems in society and this album is designed so that his message perfectly resonates by the time you have listened to the whole album.

The first song on the album, “[Psycho](#),” introduces the listener to Dave’s psychotherapist, who begins the song off with a voice log of Dave’s first meeting with him. This voice clip blends perfectly with the song because the psychotherapist asks for Dave to introduce himself, which makes sense for him to do as this is his first album. As the therapist asks Dave to explain his problems, the beat starts. It is not a typical rap beat, it has a somber beat with light piano sounds in the background, giving the song a haunted feeling. With the first lines of this song, Dave introduces the topic of mental health, singing “...how do I stop all the pain? I used to hear a voice when I was praying...” and later goes deeper by rapping, “My teacher used to say I need counseling, Couldn't stop asking me, ‘What do you feel?’ There's so many old scars that they wanna reveal...” The song continues with some more clever lyricism and reference to Dave’s traumatic past while also including typical rap elements such as bringing up wealth and talent, and it seems that the song is going to end that way until about three minutes into the song when Dave sings, “...Brother I'm a careful, humble, reckless, arrogant, extravagant n***a probably battlin' with manic depression. Man, I think I'm going mad again. It's like I'm happy for a second then I'm sad again And to my fans, the reason I could get to this You're my drug, the

instrumental my therapist...” The beat switch from a moody but still overall positive beat to a ghostly piano solo is enough to give anyone chills, and this final minute of the song is where the densest talk about mental health is located. Dave talks about losing his father and the struggle of living and then moves into the topic of suicide, singing, “If you're thinking 'bout doing it, suicide doesn't stop the pain, you're only moving it, lives that you're ruining...” which is one of the most powerful lyrics on the entire album. Dave’s masterful combination of lyrics and beats to match them is fully expressed in this song and it perfectly sets the tone for the rest of the album.

Psychodrama’s third song, “[Black](#),” is about precisely what the name would suggest, the struggles of growing up black. Once again using a piano beat with background vocals to provide an ominous tone for the message of this song, Dave paints a picture of his childhood, with all of the boundaries that are unfairly put on black citizens. His lyrics, “Black is growin' up around the barbershop, Mummy sayin', ‘Stay away from trouble,’” and “Black is bein' guilty until proven that you're innocent,” highlight the prejudice that is still being held towards black citizens. Dave’s use of anaphora throughout this song is meant to emphasize the importance of the word and the race, this can be seen through the lyric, “Black is so much deeper than just African-American,” which is trying to break the cultural normality of calling all black people African-American, no matter what their heritage is. Unlike “Psycho,” there is no twist ending to “Black,” but instead a passionate outcry that despite all of the terrors that black people must endure, “black is all I know, there ain't a thing that I would change in it.” Dave’s “Black” is meant to question society, to point out what is wrong with racism, and to say that even with all of that, being black is still what Dave wants.

The seventh song on *Psychodrama*, "[Screwface Capital](#)," starts with a soft piano beat and a background of warped vocals, certainly not the moodiest opening on the album, but not the happiest either. The lyrics generally stay positive until about halfway through the song when Dave sings, "I turned a loss to a lesson, I turned a curse to a gift and a blessing," which is a reference to the loss of his father at a young age and the mental illness that plagued his youth. If you keep listening to the song, you will find that Dave specifically points out his struggles with the later lyric, "I ain't got a memory of when dad was around, still a child when I turned man of the house, tell me what you know about a bad full of bills and your mom crying out, saying, 'Son, I can't take it.' And then staring in the mirror for an hour with a tear in your eye like, 'I gotta go make it.'" This heavy lyric provides the reasoning for Dave's career, his motive is to provide for his family, he needs to become the father figure that he never had. This motive is also referenced in the song when Dave raps, "So many days I starved myself just to make sure that my whole family eats." Typically at the end of a song there are a few seconds of music and then silence in order to transition to the next song, but at the end of "Screwface Capital" there is a minute and a half of just music playing, it is almost as if Dave could not bring himself to finish the song, and he left the music in as a time for the listener to reflect on what they just heard. The message that Dave is trying to convey with this song is that no matter what struggles you are dealing with, it is possible to overcome them, and no matter what your circumstances are it is possible to succeed in spite of them.

The next song on *Psychodrama*, "[Environment](#)," once again begins with a soft piano beat, preparing the audience for the message that is about to be presented. The message of "Environment" goes further than just the problems of Dave and his past. It encompasses all of

Streatham, the South London district where Dave grew up, and the struggles of everyone there. The song opens up with Dave's therapist asking what people see when they look at him. Dave's response opens the song, "You see our gold chains and flashy cars, I see a lack of self worth and I see battle scars, he has to be with twenty man when he wears jewelry, and you see it as gangster, I see it as insecurity..." and his response continues for the rest of the song. In this lyric, Dave is explaining the struggles of becoming famous, and how putting yourself on a new platform is the same as putting a target on your back. In "Environment," Dave talks about how everyone in Streatham is trying to get out of it, and to get out of poverty, but no one wants to see anyone else make it out, which leads to conflict at all times. In one of the final lyrics of the song, Dave describe how people are not born bad, but that the nature of their environment makes them bad. The powerful message of this song is that where you grow up and who you grow up with shapes who you are, so it is important to make the right choices so that you can end up where you want to.

The ninth song on *Psychodrama*, "[Lesley](#)," is the centerpiece of the album and it is a whopping eleven minutes long. To put that in perspective, "Rap God" by Eminem is only six minutes long, and that song is considered very long. This song opens differently than all of the rest of the songs on this album, there is no therapist or piano, but instead an ominous harp playing three notes repeatedly. In "Lesley," Dave takes the listener on a trip through the story of one of his friends named Lesley. As the song goes on, you learn that Lesley is in an abusive relationship with a man named Jason, and that she is pregnant with his child. Dave continues, explaining the unbelievable scenario that Lesley is in, when he reveals that one day she goes back to Jason's house earlier than normal. She finds Jason cheating with an unknown girl who

flees the house. Jason beats her until she bleeds and the police arrive. Dave ends the with the lyrics, “It's a message to a woman with a toxic man, I'm begging you to get support if you're lost or trapped, I understand that I can never understand...How many Lesley's are running from their Jasons?” This eleven minute message to women who are in an abusive relationship is meant to tell them that they need to get out, because worse things can still happen. It is one of the longest songs that you will ever hear, but you will not regret listening to it once it is all said and done. With this album, Dave has tackled many cultural normalities that are negative and “Lesley” is a perfect song that adds to his message by giving a real life example of domestic abuse.

The final song on *Psychodrama*, “[Drama](#),” opens once again with a recorded voice, but this time it is not the therapist that we've heard throughout the album, but instead it is a recording of a phone call between Dave and his older brother, Christopher Omoregie, who is in prison. In “Drama,” Dave talks about loss and heartbreak, the hardships of his childhood, and the obstacles that he has faced on his journey to making this first album. Dave's lyric, “Losing dad was big, losing you was even bigger, never had a father and I needed you to be the figure,” shines a light on his dark childhood, showing that even after the loss of his father and his brother he persevered to success. The reminiscent tone in this song shows the loss that Dave has experienced in his short twenty years of living. This song takes the messages from all the previous songs on the album and combines them to make the perfect closing for this album. This song gives the listener everything that the other songs did and makes them want to act on it, to change the world for the better.

I have been a fan of Dave for many years now and I can say that this album was fantastically put together, it even references some of his old works and every song fits his style

of music. With the release of this album, Dave has solidified himself as a real music creator and taken a successful first step into the music world. I would recommend this album to anyone who enjoys songs with clever lyricism and deep and meaningful messages along with beats that are a perfect mix of modern and classical. There is a song that everyone can relate to on this album, which is what makes it so good, it is obvious that Dave put a lot of time and effort into making every line. This album was more than just a quick money grab like many recent music releases have been, it was a message about mental health, domestic abuse, and racism.

Psychodrama is Dave's first step into the music world and it is a strong one, [topping UK charts in less than a week](#) and [currently being ranked first for album of the year](#). For anyone who has not listened to this album, I strongly recommend it. Dave's iconic sound is what sets him apart from the competition, rather than taking a typical "[trap](#)" rapping style, he uses true lyricism that has not been present in rap for a long time, so stay tuned for more of his work after his recent success.

<https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/eminem-kamikaze/>

<https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/22960-divide/>

Rules of the Review:

After reading the album reviews that I linked above, as well as many reviews from the album review website that is linked first, I created these rules that the authors of these reviews seem to follow in order to make a sufficient report on the album.

- 1. Talk about the work.** Talk about the about the album wholistically initially, and then move into the individual songs once you have discussed the meaning and purpose of the album. It is important to talk about how the ordering of songs in the album helps to build its theme and message.
- 2. Bring up the lyrics.** The message and title of each song is great, but the reader gains nothing from reading your review unless you give them lyrics to look at, and explain how they added or detracted from the song and the album as a whole.
- 3. Give some background info.** The reader may not know everything about the artist, so it's a good idea to tell them about past projects that the artist has completed and their background outside of music. Music isn't only about instruments and lyrics, an artist's past is just as important as the chorus of the song, so it's best if the reader knows about them.
- 4. Explain the impact.** Every album may not lead to the next Renaissance, but every album has had an impact in some way. It is your job to tell the reader what the album's message and goal was and how effective it was in impacting the community.
- 5. Give a rating.** If the reader does not want to go through and read the entire review that you have written, it is important to leave a numerical rating (typically from 1 to 10) at the top of the work above the title so that they can take a quick glance at your opinion of the work without actually having to spend time reading it.