

# Sample Q&A / Discussion Topics:

## **Q. Why did you decide to self-publish a book as a DJ?**

A. I believe that everyone embodies and carries knowledge that could fill tons of books and that art is not really a definite role or job, but a form of expression that all beings may practice. I also want to challenge common expectations of who's allowed to publish educational text and what that may look like. Honey Dijon, a Black trans woman DJ, producer, fashion icon, and electronic music artist, has said that the role of the DJ is to “challenge, educate and entertain.” The chronic pain that has amplified a bit over the past year or so made it very difficult to consistently DJ (among other things), so I found myself writing more and more while also taking time to self-reflect. Since I was in elementary school, my writing has been praised and supported by friends, family, teachers, community members, and even random people. Being uplifted by all of those people, accepting my power through my self-reflection and healing processes, and my genuine nerdiness/passion around the liminal spaces and intersections around art & popular culture, technology, and revolutionary led to me compiling writing I've collected since January 2019 and publicly share it.

## **Q. The title of your book plays on Philip K. Dick's 1968 novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* What were your intentions there?**

A. One of the main themes in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* from 1968 is empathy and whether or not that's what makes someone human. My book works similarly to the “fidelity tests” where android hunters in the novel ask potential androids questions to test their if they have supposed human levels of empathy. In 2020, *Do Androids Dream In Color?* adds questions of race, disability, and other marginalized identities into considerations of who's human and who's not. The book pushes you to self-reflect on why or why not you resonate with the content. Then, all of these ideas from the reader's own personal reflections and the text itself have implications with today's emerging and existing technologies, as we all operate in a world structured around oppressive systems.

## **Q. What are the major influences for your writing?**

A. I gravitate towards art that makes fine details and nuances of one's everyday life feel wildly intimate, thrilling, and maybe even revolutionary. Personally, I believe that there's magic in deeply exploring specific details or nuances. That may be the anthropology student / scholar in me. A few writers that influence me in this way include Akwaeke Emezi, Teju Cole, Kelela, R. Zamora Linmark, Moses Sumney, Empress Of, Kehlani, and Liniker. These folks hold identities such as Black, brown, non-binary or trans, femme, and/or queer and many also release work in several media alongside writing (e.g. music, photography, movement, film). I don't experience my identities—e.g. queer, Filipinx, femme—as separate things, and this collectiveness that I internalize is also externalized as multiple forms of expression. Really, I want to uplift things in

this world that are often overlooked. One way I do that work is through choiceful slowness through experiences (and sharing them), as well as experimental methods.

**Q. What are the key takeaways you hope for readers to get from this book?**

A. This book is foremost for me. Maybe that sounds weird, but I think that all art is (and should be, to a degree) self-serving so I like to acknowledge that first. For myself, I want to feel pride around my ideas and the fact that other people actually want to read them since I'm a pretty private person. Depending on who the reader is, I want them to feel suspended in confusion, validation, fantasy, curiosity, and/or self-reflection plus all of the feelings that may come with that. Overall, I imagined *Do Androids Dream In Color* as a gauge for someone's empathy and one's relationships to power, within oneself and among collective humanity—which are both themes in the *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick, which inspired the title of my book.

**Q. *Do Androids Dream In Color?* includes several styles of writing based on your personal experiences. Why did you choose to compile the book in this way?**

A. Essentially, I wanted to challenge the ideas of what some people may consider “real” and nonfiction vs. “unbelievable” or fiction. When I share some of my life experiences with other people, I'm honestly annoyed by some people's choice to stay in places of surprise or disbelief rather than really listening and, at least, working toward empathizing. In the book, there are some “traumatic” or intense moments presented to the reader. But, in the end, it's my sincere reality. As a child, I was known as someone who cried a lot. I had so many emotions, and I deeply hated constantly being told by almost everyone around me “Don't cry,” or being asked “What's wrong?” The way I write about some painful things, like post-traumatic stress and not being white in a white supremacist world, are never 100% negative. Not being nuanced about one's definition of “bad,” “sad,” “mad,” and other human conditions makes it easier to remove individuals from the realities of oppressive systems.

For example, I often feel sad when I think of my lolos and lolas who've all passed away and were in the Philippines for the majority of my life. I understand this sadness not as a reflection of my own faults or inability to move on, but as a refusal to accept the oppressive systems that made it so expensive and otherwise difficult to go home and visit them and a very natural manifestation of my love for them. Being disabled and Filipinx and brown are definitely empowering things for me, although the world tries to tell me in many ways that those are terrible experiences that I need to fix. That “fixing” of individuals rather than systems is false healing to me. I'm also negotiating with my own embodiment and experiences of our world that definitely doesn't align with what's considered normal. I'm trying to be real and present enough to engage realists, and wild enough to reign in all types of idealists and visionaries.

**Q. There is visual art and even QR codes that lead to online multimedia throughout the book. Why did you decide to include all of this content together?**

A. In true Gemini Moon fashion, I have a lot of ideas bouncing in my head at all times. I also typically think through ideas with more than one sense in mind (e.g. sight, touch, and hearing altogether). The inclusion of visual and audio artistic content is also a way I challenge what's considered "text" or "educational." Before I saved money and collected more of my writing together, I actually thought *Do Androids Dream In Color?* would be a zine, and zines often use QR codes to include external media alongside printed text and images.

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**About the artist:** Allison Masangkay (DJ Phenohype) is a sick and disabled queer Filipinx femme artist, scholar, and social justice advocate. They are a Co-Founder and Director of Kapatid Kollektive, a Filipinx arts & culture organization based in Duwamish territory (Seattle, WA). Allison's work has been published in *UW Magazine*, *TAYO Literary Magazine*, *Papeachu Review*, and others.

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*Do Androids Dream In Color?: Phenohype Is A Cyborg* by Allison Masangkay

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