



Hip-Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap (Culture America)

By Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar

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In the world of hip-hop, "keeping it real" has always been a primary goal—and realness takes on special meaning as rappers mold their images for street cred and increasingly measure authenticity by ghetto-centric notions of "Who's badder?"

In this groundbreaking book, Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar celebrates hip-hop and confronts the cult of authenticity that defines its essential character—that dictates how performers walk, talk, and express themselves artistically and also influences the consumer market. *Hip-Hop Revolution* is a balanced cultural history that looks past negative stereotypes of hip-hop as a monolith of hedonistic, unthinking noise to reveal its evolving positive role within American society.

A writer who's personally encountered many of hip-hop's icons, Ogbar traces hip-hop's rise as a cultural juggernaut, focusing on how it negotiates its own sense of identity. He especially explores the lyrical world of rap as artists struggle to define what realness means in an art where class, race, and gender are central to expressions of authenticity—and how this realness is articulated in a society dominated by gendered and racialized stereotypes.

Ogbar also explores problematic black images, including minstrelsy, hip-hop's social milieu, and the artists' own historical and political awareness. Ranging across the rap spectrum from the conscious hip-hop of Mos Def to the gangsta rap of 50 Cent to the "underground" sounds of Jurassic 5 and the Roots, he tracks the ongoing quest for a unique and credible voice to show how complex, contested, and malleable these codes of authenticity are. Most important, Ogbar persuasively challenges widely held notions that hip-hop is socially dangerous—to black youths in particular—by addressing the ways in which rappers critically view the popularity of crime-focused lyrics, the antisocial messages of their peers, and the volatile politics of the word "nigga."

Hip-Hop Revolution deftly balances an insider's love of the culture with a scholar's detached critique, exploring popular myths about black educational

attainment, civic engagement, crime, and sexuality. By cutting to the bone of a lifestyle that many outsiders find threatening, Ogbar makes hip-hop realer than it's ever been before.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Easily one of the most substantial and thoughtful works on the cultural politics of hip-hop. Ogbar successfully balances an insider's love of the culture with a scholar's critical eye."—**William Jelani Cobb**, author of *To the Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip-Hop Aesthetic* "What does it mean now to 'keep it real'? Is hip-hop ripping society apart? Ogbar shows that these questions—among the many more that rap music raises—are much more complicated than they first seem. *Hip-Hop Revolution* compellingly examines race, gender, authenticity, and this African American generation's quest for true democracy and liberation."—**Jeff Chang**, author of *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* "Hip-hop mogul Shawn 'Jay Z' Carter once rapped about 'Politics as Usual,' but little has been usual since the emergence of hip-hop as a global phenomenon. As Ogbar highlights throughout his thoughtful and provocative book, hip-hop culture is on the cutting-edge of all that matters in contemporary America."—**Mark Anthony Neal**, author of *New Black Man* "A far-reaching historical account of the social, cultural and political influences of hip-hop past and present. Ogbar probes deeply into the roots and realities of hip-hop's image, its 'keeping it real' mantra, and its rebellious reputation. . . . An important book that offers insight into how hip-hop is involved in shaping the future and how forces have attempted to co-opt its most powerful voices."—**Marcyliena Morgan**, director, Hip-hop Archive, Stanford University, and author of *Language, Discourse, and Power in African American Culture*

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"This is a primer for those wanting to delineate hip-hop's salient debates, making it a solid resource for undergraduate classes."

From the Back Cover

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