



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

*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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