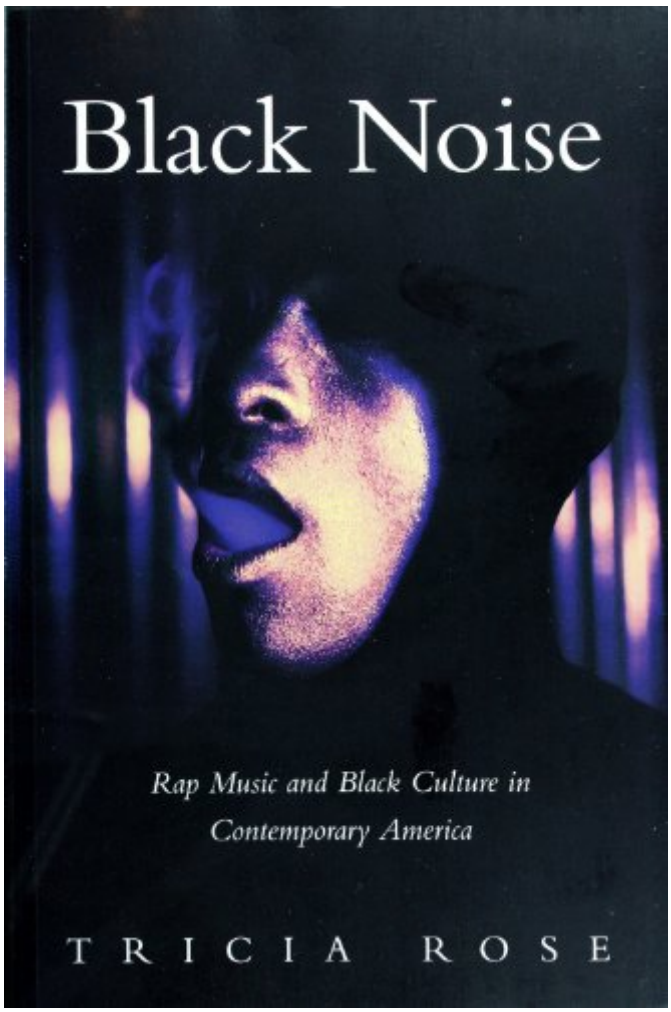
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Black Noise: Rap Music And Black Culture In Contemporary America



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Synopsis

This groundbreaking 1994 book on the early years of rap musicÃ¢â ¬â„¢s emergence is now available as an e-book. This ethnographic, cultural studies text is considered the first detailed and theoretical exploration of rap music within its social, cultural, and artistic contexts. Black Noise won the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 1995, and in 1999 was listed by Black Issues in Higher Education as of its Ã¢â ¬Å“Top Books of the Twentieth Century.Ã¢â ¬Â• From its beginnings in hip hop culture, the dense rhythms and assertive lyrics of rap music have made it a provocative and influential fixture on the American cultural landscape. In Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America, Tricia Rose, described by the New York Times as a "hip hop theorist," takes a comprehensive look at the lyrics, music, cultures, themes, and styles of this highly rhythmic, rhymed storytelling and grapples with the most salient issues and debates that surround it. Rose sorts through the complex forces that shaped hip hopÃ¢â ¬â„¢s emergence by exploring its underlying urban cultural politics, particularly the influential setting of post industrial New York City and the black and Latino communities where hip hop developed. Rose discusses rap as a unique musical form in which traditional Afro-Diaspora oral traditions fuse with cutting-edge music technologies. Next she takes up rap’s racial politics, its sharp criticisms of the police and the government, and the responses of those institutions. Finally, she explores the complex sexual politics of rap, including questions of misogyny, sexual domination, and female rappers’ critiques of men. But these debates do not overshadow rappers’ own words and thoughts. Rose also closely examines the lyrics and videos for songs by artists such as Public Enemy, KRS-One, Salt N’ Pepa, MC Lyte, and L. L. Cool J. and draws on candid interviews with Queen Latifah, music producer Eric "Vietnam" Sadler, dancer Crazy Legs, and others to paint a wide range of rap’s political and aesthetic spectrum. In the end, Rose observes, rap music remains a vibrant force with its own aesthetic, "a noisy and powerful element of contemporary American popular culture which continues to draw a great deal of attention to itself."

Book Information

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Rap music is the subject of much criticism and debate. Controversial lyrics, loud dance sounds, and misinterpreted music videos have led rap and subsequently the hip hop movement to fall under intense scrutiny. In Black Noise, Tricia Rose enters this scene of intense arguments surrounding Hip Hop, and offers a unique view of Hip Hop: the view of a historian, scholar, professor. Rose takes on debates regarding Hip Hop and grounds them in academic research and history, unravelling the complexities of the genre.Black Noise begins by explaining the importance of graffiti and b-boying in Hip-Hop/Rap. For this reason, Tricia Rose successfully communicated the relationship between graffiti, b-boying, and rap as black noise--black expression. Unfortunately, because the historical content of this text is limited to the relationship between Graffiti and b-boying within the black community--as it should--the text consequently loses insight on the contributions from non-black ethnic groups to these Hip-Hop elements. While Tricia Rose sought to make the black community the focal point of her writing, it seems confining to discussing the emergence of graffiti and B-boying without acknowledging its influence from/on different cultures (i.e Greek, Latino, and Asian)Rose provides the reader a historical background explaining the emergence of these distinct forms of expression within the Hip Hop domain and greater black culture. She draws a picture of postindustrial New York, influenced by the growth of multinational telecommunications networks, technological revolution, global economic competition, new migration patterns from Third World countries, and changing divisions of labor. While these changes are not unique to New York, she details specific developments in the Bronx, like truncated social services programs, disrupted

housing patterns, and media exploitation during the 1970's, that prompted youth to respond to feelings of abandonment by their local government. In focusing solely on Hip-Hop as a explicitly New York phenomenon, the problems she describes are painted as New York problems. There is an overemphasis on New York that deprivileges other regions that contributed to the maintenance of Hip-Hop elements. She merely mentions other cities and regions, like the "Snowbelt cities" that contributed to the evolution of Hip-Hop without interpreting the origin of Hip-Hop within those cities. For example, in referring the Rap element of Hip-Hop, Rose mentions the influence of New Orlean jazz on early Hip-Hop artist DJ Kool Herc's music but does not entertain New Orleans as a site for Hip-Hop exploration.Tricia Rose demonstrates how Hip Hop functions within existing structures, such as mass media and the corporate record companies. In "Voices from the Margins", Rose describes how record companies, music video directors, and producers attempt to pigeon hole and box the intricate and unique world of hip hop, and package it for mass consumption. She laments the freedom, creativity, and authenticity of Hip Hop and rap music that is lost to the corporate shuffle; rap artists are often stripped of parts of their identity to make them more marketable to a wider audience. While Rose describes the "sell-out" of rap artists to large record companies with a sense of loss, she does not call future artists to action. She laments the trade offs rappers make in order to achieve recognition, but she does not criticize these trade offs nor does she hold rappers accountable for allowing their culture and message of social change to be reduced in order to make money.Rose also observes these mediums where rap music was displayed in order to show how mainstream America used this rising genre to critique black culture. Rose addresses MTV's choices when promoting rappers, the extreme contentions between security and spectators in rap concerts, the misunderstandings of music critics' writings when addressing this rising genre, and the parallels between the violence connoted by metal, a "white" genre, and rap music. Through this variety of sources, Rose displays corporate and conservative America's rejection of black culture because of its contention with rap music. Tricia Rose also does a very thorough job of covering the various gender roles both men and women play in the hip hop industry. Although she uses gender as a constant theme throughout the book, she really explores specific examples of gender roles in chapters 2, 4, and 5. She covers the role of males and females in early breaking and graffiti developments; images of hypermasculinity and the oppositional identity development of Black males; and the sexually progressive content of female Hip Hop lyrics. Although Rose does a very methodical job of covering gender in Hip Hop, she does not address sexuality. When she does, she only addresses heterosexuality. Her argument would be stronger if she discussed how different types of sexualities contribute to the gender performativity in Hip Hop. Rose operates with an

afrocentric framework, justifying her approach in the Introduction. Consequently, there is an expectation that the text will provide a host of examples and historical accounts that illuminate the contributions and challenges of Black Americans in Hip-Hop cultural production. However, this work serves as the first critical model of the Hip-Hop genre for mass consumption. The text should give a more inclusive account of this genre's construction. Rose glosses over the contributions of other ethnic groups and cities in her history introductory history lesson. Certain elements of Hip-Hop, like breaking and graffiti art, have a known multicultural origin.As the first scholarly analysis of Hip-Hop, Rose includes a variety of sources. Interviews and song lyrics from Hip-Hop artists serve as primary sources for her investigation while outside texts, like Angela Davis' article "Black Women and Music: A Historical Legacy of Struggle" and Leroi Jones' Blues People: The Negro Experience in White America and the Music That Developed From It demonstrate how other genres, public figures, and scholars inform and are informed by the Hip-Hop culture. In constructing the text, Rose uses a lot of high-sounding language that, on one hand signifies the intellectual function of the text while distancing the audience from the popular aspect of the subject in question. While Tricia Rose masterfully guides readers through the history, rise, and influences of rap and the Hip Hop movement, she is merely the first of many voices. With her work Black Noise, Rose opens a new genre of academic research and study for the public. Her work is simply the first chapter in a long narrative on rap and Hip Hop culture in the United States. It serves as a starting point for future writers in this field.Davidson College, ENG393DC, Group 2

This is a great book. Dense, academic, but very influential. I haven't finished it yet, so can't complete a full review....

This was a great foundational text for hip-hop scholarship. The text also provides a story-telling aspect to the book that is interesting and useful to understanding the foundation of rap music in America.

Check this out if you're trying to learn the rise and decline of Hip-Hop

Great book!

Eye opening and well put together.

great book

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