



Dance to My Ministry: Exploring Hip-Hop Spirituality (Research in Contemporary Religion)

Carl Petter Opsahl

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Hip-hop is a deeply spiritual culture, a culture that since its beginnings has provided urban youth all over the world with a sense of place, being and direction, with knowledge of self and knowledge of cultural heritage. By examining a number of rap tunes and graffiti walls, Carl Petter Opsahl explores different spiritualities and religious traditions informing hip-hop culture, including, Christianity, Nation of Islam, Nation of Gods and Earths and indigenous spiritualities. By developing a theoretical framework of hybrid spirituality, Opsahl outlines spiritual strategies of survival and resistance in contexts of oppression and struggle. He provides basic introductions to recent research on spirituality, to hip-hop culture and its esthetic practices and to Islam in the USA and the teachings of Nation of Islam and Nation of Gods and Earths. Then follow in-depth analyzes of hip-hop cultural expressions. One chapter is devoted to the study of graffiti murals, exploring artworks by some of New York's finest writers such as TATS CRU, TRACY 168, TOO FLY and QUEEN ANDREA. Then follows a chapter on rap and Christianity, featuring explorations of Lauryn Hill, 2Pac and a number of Christian rappers including G.R.I.T.S. Another chapter explores Islamic influences on rap, with studies on Public Enemy, Wu-Tang Clan, Erykah Badu and Mos Def. Embedded in rhythms, rhymes, colors and shapes, the exploration of hip hop spirituality expands the horizon of studies in spirituality.

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