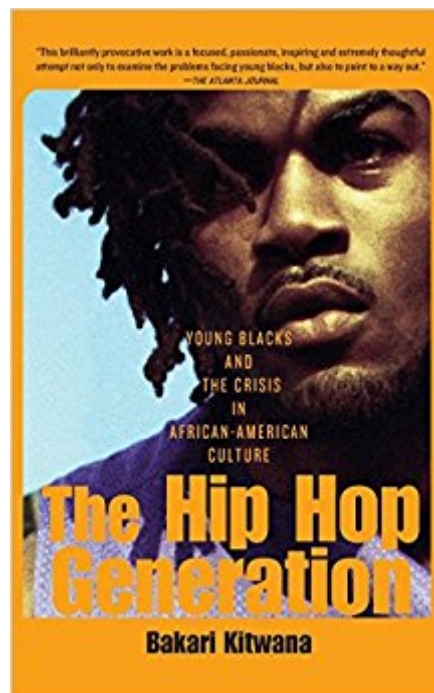




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The Hip-Hop Generation: Young Blacks And The Crisis In African-American Culture



Synopsis

The Hip Hop Generation is an eloquent testament for black youth culture at the turn of the century. The only in-depth study of the first generation to grow up in post-segregation America, it combines culture and politics into a pivotal work in American studies. Bakari Kitwana, one of black America's sharpest young critics, offers a sobering look at this generation's disproportionate social and political troubles, and celebrates the activism and politics that may herald the beginning of a new phase of African-American empowerment.

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Customer Reviews

Bakari Kitwana, a former editor at The Source, identifies blacks born between 1965 and 1984 as belonging to the "hip-hop generation" a term he uses interchangeably with black youth culture ("Generation X" applies mainly to whites, he says). He calls hip-hop "arguably the single most significant achievement of our generation," yet blames it for causing much damage to black youth by perpetuating negative stereotypes and providing poor role models. But this book is about much more than just rap music; it takes a broad look at the state of post-civil-rights black America and the crises that have come about in the past three decades, including high rates of homicide, suicide, and imprisonment and a rise in single-parent homes, police brutality, unemployment, and blacks' use of popular culture (through pop music and movies) to celebrate "anti-intellectualism, ignorance, irresponsible parenthood, and criminal lifestyles." Serious problems indeed, but Kitwana acknowledges that members of this generation have more opportunities than their parents had, and

he believes there is still time to make positive and lasting changes. He looks closely at this generation's worldview, politics, activism, and its high profile in the entertainment world, which has made it "central in American culture, transcending geographic, social, and economic boundaries." Emphasizing that "rap music's ability to influence social change should not be taken lightly," he calls for a more responsible and constructive use of this unprecedented power. Kitwana is concerned about the legacy of his generation, and he wants his book to "jump-start the dialogue necessary to change our current course." The Hip Hop Generation deserves to be read both for its aim and its execution. --Shawn Carkonen --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Kitwana turns from "rap music [and] the hip-hop industry's insiders" to "Black youth culture." He designates African Americans born 1965-84--the first "post-civil rights" generation of black Americans--the hip-hop generation. "Although individuals [in that cohort] may point to different defining events, all share a crystal clear understanding of coming of age in an era of post-segregation and global economics." In the face of "great disparities" in education and financial matters (jobs, wages, mortgage opportunities) that persisted beyond the civil rights era, the hip-hop generation has used newfound pop-cultural access and influence to "strengthen associations between Blackness and poverty, while celebrating anti-intellectualism, ignorance, irresponsible parenthood, and criminal lifestyles" and enjoying "a free pass from Black leaders" and "non-Black critics who . . . fear being attacked as racist." Mike TribbyCopyright Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I just needed it for a college course and it turned out alright

I enjoyed this! Me, as a baby-boomer always had problems with the concept of hip-hop, but this book shade some light on the why's and other aspects of hip-hop that I was unaware of. This book is definitely for people of my generation or any generation who ever wondered about hip-hop and why our young people think and feel the way the do.

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This is a well written book, but its in the clearance section for a reason. Its not the most intelligent, and not the most thorough, but it is a good read for the money.

I have enjoyed reading "The Hip-Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African-American Culture" very much; Kitwana possesses a no-nonsense yet accessible prose style reminiscent of Frantz Fanon, Chuck D, Kwame Nkrumah, and/or the James Baldwin of "The Fire Next Time"; his intellectual honesty, and thought-provoking passion for the challenges facing him/young Blacks and all Hip-Hop generationers should make him a central figure in Hip-Hop culture for the foreseeable future. In our age of multifaceted globalization, Kitwana talks simultaneously to Rap music enthusiasts, and all generations, races, and nations; he deserves to be mentioned alongside respected scholars of African-American culture. I would definitely recommend the use of "The Hip-Hop Generation" as a textbook in courses on African-American Studies (post-segregation Black culture). Having said this, as far as depth of argument is concerned Bakari Kitwana's informative and overall brilliant "The Hip-Hop Generation " is an unfinished work; I believe that his take on the SOLUTIONS to the various CRISES facing young Blacks in African-American Culture remains wanting. To start with Kitwana combines insider's knowledge, intellectual sophistication, and scholarship to surgically identify, discuss and evaluate what he calls the "new crises" confronting post-Civil Rights/Black Power African-American youths. Be it race & gender relations, politics, employment, and Black film/music aesthetics, to name a few, nothing escapes Kitwana's sharp critical gaze. I wish though that Kitwana could muster a similar strength in the second half of his book where he deals with "confronting" these crises in African-American Culture. What is more, Kitwana the author's (understandable?) bias against financially powerful Hip-Hop generationers and simultaneous (unhelpful!) implicit support of the politically and culturally radical-separatist elements of the same generation weakens his argument about building a viable UNITED political & cultural FRONT. "The Hip-Hop Generation" is more original in scope, and the directions it takes, than in the information given the reader about Hip-Hop per se; it still is a work in progress that cannot yet be classed as a manifesto or testament of the Hip-Hop generation: future revised/expanded editions might make this happen.

This is a very good book that clearly illustrates the evolution of the current African American movement- the Hip Hop Generation. The Author, Bakari Kitwana does a good job of comparing and contrasting this movement with the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements of our parents time. Kitwana clearly illustrates the good, bad, and ugly of our current movement and the things we most do to NOT repeat the shortcomings of the previous movements. Kitwana also explains the steps we must take to leave our positive mark in History. While the book explains that our generation must be more politically aware and activist-minded, more emphasis should have been placed on the vital

role economic development plays in this movement in order for us to make a profound impact in our communities.

Being that I was born in 1964 myself (thus my title), I can truly relate to what Mr. Kitwana laments about the lack of direction of the "hip-hop" generation and destructive courses that it is taking. I read this last night and it is an articulation of some of the concerns that I have (especially where he takes the youth to task for glorifying the likes of Tupac Shakur and Mike Tyson). How can anyone get anywhere with these kinds of people as "heroes?" Your voice needs to be heard, Bro. Kitwana. We have already lost one generation (two if you count the "Superfly" generation of the 70s who inspired/misled the hiphoppers), so we need to mentor the next one carefully before we lose another.

I thought that this would be a well-researched analysis of the generation born between 1965-1984, but what I found was cobbling together of statistics with the author's personal opinion and perhaps isolated anecdotes. I'm sorry but I could not have cared less that Tupac or Biggie died, does that mean I am less black? Apparently, the author has based his research primarily on urban youth. Even if I had gotten past this out-in-left-field assumption, I could not stomach the author's finger-wagging assertion that activism is dead among black youth, and what we are left with is gold-chain, wearing, poser thugs that care more about ballin' than education. To take such a sweeping analysis of my generation, is to miss out on the strength and resiliency of the black community and the growing numbers of black young people who go to church, dress nicely and yes, even attend college.

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