



Writing the Future of Black America: Literature of the Hip-Hop Generation

Daniel Grassian

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Writing the Future of Black America explores the work of eight representative African American writers of the hip-hop generation to assess their common themes and offer insights into contemporary race relations in America as expressed and challenged in their works. In this groundbreaking study, Daniel Grassian takes as his subjects a group of impressive novelists, essayists, poets, and playwrights—Paul Beatty, Trey Ellis, Terrence Hayes, Allison Joseph, Jake Lamar, Suzan-Lori Parks, Danzy Senna, and Colson Whitehead—to chart the depths of their literary work against that of their predecessors in the civil rights generation and their predominantly white contemporaries of Generation X.

Characterized by the pursuit of empowerment through hybridity, social criticism, and personal expression, hip-hop has become the music and culture of choice for a sizable portion of America, regardless of race or socioeconomic standing. Meanwhile the writers of this generation have received little serious critical attention, aside from singular book reviews and occasional essays. Grassian fills in a gap in the discourse with his thorough analysis of the works crafted by these distinguished hip-hop writers, and he makes a case for the validity and value of studying their sophisticated engagements with race in contemporary America. Selected because their work addresses a broad range of African American life, these writers fathom such topics as what it means to be African American or multiethnic in an increasingly global society, what role art and literature play in affecting their communities, and what positive and negative authority has been assigned to popular culture (and hip-hop culture specifically) in modern African American life.

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