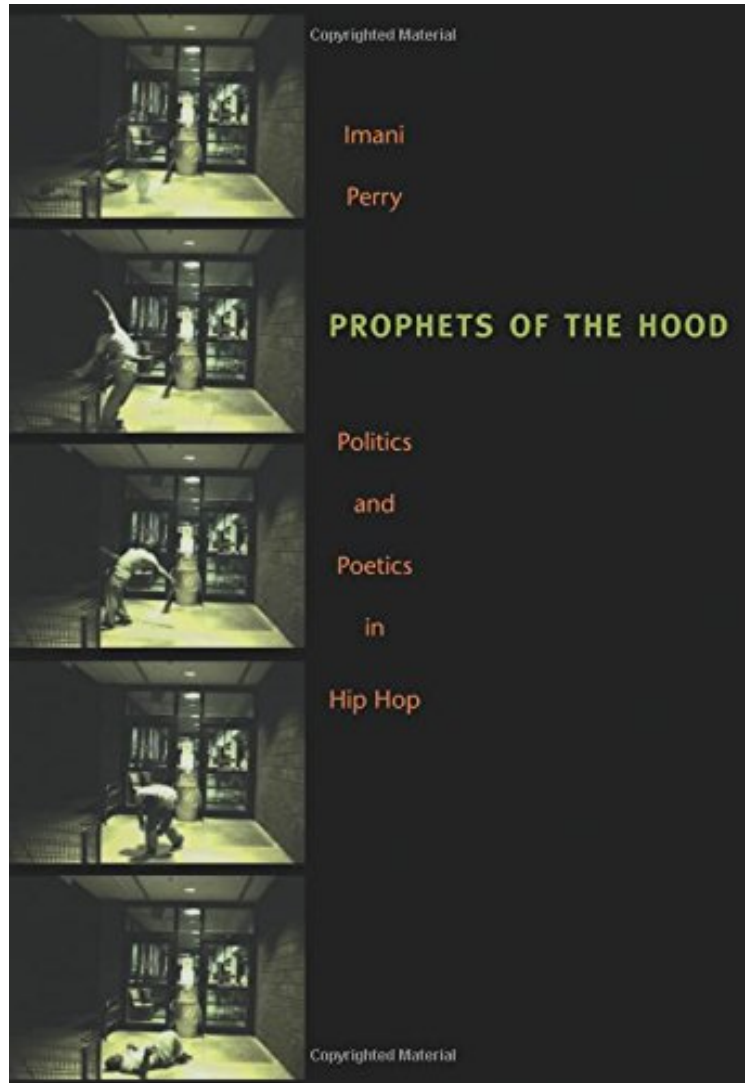


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# Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop

*Imani Perry*

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**Imani Perry : Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy CHARLES YOUNG-BEYMust read if you are a music lover or HIP HOP head1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Prophet of the hood.By adebayoWhat a language and voices that we ahve been avoiding for ages? It has become loud and clear that we may not be able to ignore the Prophet amd its message , if we want a bright and constructive future. Good and timely delivered.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Wonderfully well researched bookBy D. RobbinsThorough and dynamic work. Academic writing style full of information to be savored over time or devoured in an enrapturing read.

At once the most lucrative, popular, and culturally oppositional musical force in the United States, hip hop demands the kind of interpretation Imani Perry provides here: criticism engaged with this vibrant musical form on its own terms. A scholar and a fan, Perry considers the art, politics, and culture of hip hop through an analysis of song lyrics, the words of the prophets of the hood. Recognizing prevailing characterizations of hip hop as a transnational musical form, Perry advances a powerful argument that hip hop is first and foremost black American music. At the same time, she contends that many studies have shortchanged the aesthetic value of rap by attributing its form and content primarily to socioeconomic factors. Her innovative analysis revels in the artistry of hip hop, revealing it as an art of innovation, not deprivation. Perry offers detailed readings of the lyrics of many hip hop artists, including Ice Cube, Public Enemy, De La Soul, krs-One, OutKast, Sean Puffy Combs, Tupac Shakur, Lil Kim, Biggie Smalls, Nas, Method Man, and Lauryn Hill. She focuses on the cultural foundations of the music and on the form and narrative features of the songs: the call and response, the reliance on the break, the use of metaphor, and the recurring figures of the trickster and the outlaw. Perry also provides complex considerations of hip hop's association with crime, violence, and misogyny. She shows that while its message may be disconcerting, rap often expresses brilliant insights about existence in a society mired in difficult racial and gender politics. Hip hop, she suggests, airs a much wider, more troubling range of black experience than was projected during the civil rights era. It provides a unique public space where the sacred and the profane impulses within African American culture unite.

*Prophets of the Hood* is the most comprehensive and intellectually original study to date of hip hop as a complex and innovative literary narrative form. Written with a refreshing blend of savvy critical rigor and brave and imaginative narrative verve, Imani Perry's study is an impressive analysis of late-twentieth-century American popular culture. Daphne A. Brooks, Princeton University