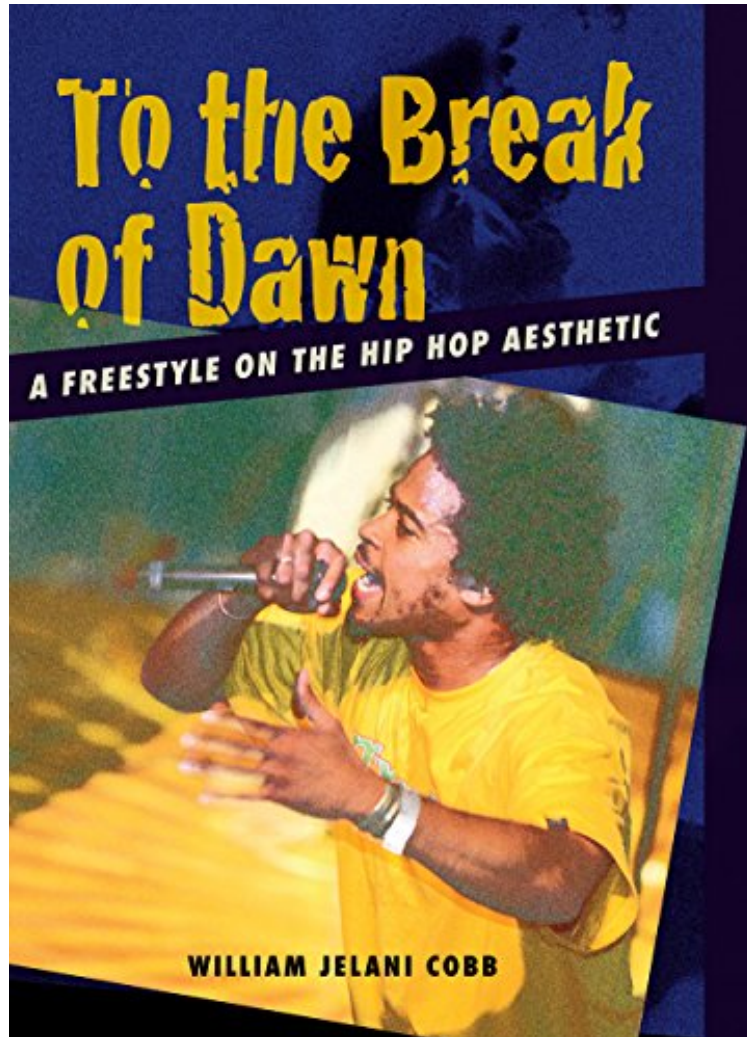


(Read free ebook) To the Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip-Hop Aesthetic

To the Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip-Hop Aesthetic

William Jelani Cobb

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William Jelani Cobb : To the Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip-Hop Aesthetic before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised To the Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip-Hop Aesthetic:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Blues People For A New Generation!By Kenneth CarrollWhat William Jelani Cobb does with "To The Break of Dawn" is very similar to what the great writer/author and music critic Amiri Baraka did in 1963 with his earth shattering book, Blues People. Cobb's focus on the aesthetics in hip hop, as seen primarily through its lyrics, and its connection to the African American musical continuum arrives not a moment too soon. As every other car commercial and sports endeavor welcomes hip hop as its soundtrack of commerce, Cobb reminds us that this music emerges from people who were once commodities themselves. The

experience of dehumanization created the unique aesthetic of Black music in America and despite the diamond grillz and the posh Atlanta estates "To The Break of Dawn" asserts and proves that rap music still pays homage to field shouts and work songs. Cobb's credentials as historian and social critic serve the reader well as he connects the dots between American history and hip hop aesthetics, but the reader is best served by Cobb's clear love of hip hop, his personal knowledge of the music as kid from Queens, and his adroit and clear writing style. One need not be a member of a historical society to enjoy "To The Break of Dawn." Cobb's clear, funny and incisive prose makes this a book that everybody, from dad in the den listening to old school Bobby Womack to the kid in the basement listening to the best of the dirty south, can understand and more importantly enjoy. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed the imagery connection in this book. By RubyLee I enjoyed the imagery connection in this book. Cobb has a way of drawing you in to his experiences and allowing you to explore with his wording. This is an excellent read. I respect the book because he kept it real throughout the entire novel. Simply relating his experiences with hip hop with the history. 5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. So many have tried... By TTT William Jelani Cobb actually succeeds in breaking down true hip hop for a few simple reasons: 1) He's one of the best cultural writers we have out there (see his Essence contributions as an example) 2) He's not afraid to speak truth (and not feestyle with multi-syllable words in order to create an uppity hip hop theory that excludes the very members of its group) 3) He is a child of hip hop, like Chuck D. said. If you're tired of people trying to grind hip hop's meaning down to a minutae of a granule of a spray paint residue with their overly academic hypothesis and their inability to actually pick up a De La Soul CD and listen to the music, then you need this book. Down with the posers.

2007 Arts Club of Washington's National Award for Arts Writing - Finalist SEE ALSO: Pimps Up, Hos Down: Hip Hops Hold on Young Black Women by T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting. With roots that stretch from West Africa through the black pulpit, hip-hop emerged in the streets of the South Bronx in the 1970s and has spread to the farthest corners of the earth. To the Break of Dawn uniquely examines this freestyle verbal artistry on its own terms. A kid from Queens who spent his youth at the epicenter of this new art form, music critic William Jelani Cobb takes readers inside the beats, the lyrics, and the flow of hip-hop, separating mere corporate rappers from the creative MCs that forged the art in the crucible of the street jam. The four pillars of hip hop break dancing, graffiti art, deejaying, and rapping find their origins in traditions as diverse as the Afro-Brazilian martial art Capoeira and Caribbean immigrants' turnstile artistry. Tracing hip-hop's relationship to ancestral forms of expression, Cobb explores the cultural and literary elements that are at its core. From KRS-One and Notorious B.I.G. to Tupac Shakur and Lauryn Hill, he profiles MCs who were pivotal to the rise of the genre, verbal artists whose lineage runs back to the black preacher and the bluesman. Unlike books that focus on hip-hop as a social movement or a commercial phenomenon, To the Break of Dawn tracks the music's aesthetic, stylistic, and thematic evolution from its inception to today's distinctly regional sub-divisions and styles. Written with an insider's ear, the book illuminates hip-hop's innovations in a freestyle form that speaks to both aficionados and newcomers to the art.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Hip-hop "freestyle," according to Cobb, assistant professor of history at Spelman College, is an extension of "the dozens" exchanging barbs using "the rapid-fire calculation of speed chess combined with the language virtuosity of a poetry recital." Cobb subtitles his book a freestyle, and on literally every page he displays a tremendous command of language and history as he "examines the aesthetic, stylistic, and thematic evolution of hip hop from its inception in the South Bronx to the present era." But make no mistake: this groundbreaking work is an artfully constructed and vividly written look at "the artistic evolution of rap music and its relationship to earlier forms of black expression." Cobb brilliantly displays how hip-hop has its own aesthetic in five sections: hip-hop's relationship to ancestral forms of African-American culture; the history of its aesthetic evolution; its use of the "entire palette of poetic techniques"; the influence of the storytelling tradition, especially black autobiography; and studies of seven important artists in the field, from Rakim to the Notorious B.I.G. Much of the book's pleasure also comes from Cobb's ability to "freestyle" serious and humorous insights from how artists such as Tupac and Nas sometimes "stepped outside the conventions of hip-hop to pen sympathetic narratives about the sexual exploitation of young women," to how LL Cool J's pioneering "I Need a Beat" sounded "like he'd raided every entry in an SAT book." (Feb.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist History professor Cobb delivers his disquisition on hip-hop's place in the larger cultural landscape in a manner resembling the rapper's flow that he says is, along with break dancing, graffiti art, and deejaying, one of four pillars of hip-hop. Despite the effort, he may leave readers neither actively nor enthusiastically involved in hip-hop culture baffled or disinterested. He makes many cogent points (e.g., "Hip hop has intentionally not produced the equivalent of blues standards like 'Stagger Lee' or 'C.C. Ryder,' because hip hop has no room for 'standards' in the traditional sense") as he describes hip-hop's growth and cultural reach, but his cozy, occasionally idiosyncratic verbiage and underlying seeming assumption that hip-hop is the pop-cultural be-all and end-all may just undercut the book's appeal. Still, this is vital stuff for hip-hop fans eager to know more about their favorite cultural idiom's development and underpinnings, and for the edification of the merely curious who are willing to immerse themselves in hip-hop for the

sake of better understanding. Mike Tribby Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved To the Break of Dawn tells the serious story of hip hop's artistic roots, and in the process reveals in the great MCs who stand at the crossroads of music and literature. In a crowded field of hip hop scholars, pundits, and journalists, To the Break of Dawn puts William Jelani Cobb way out in front. -Ta-Nehisi Coates To the Break of Dawn dissects the evolution of hip hop lyricism from its most primitive beginnings to its current manifestation as a global phenomenon. Author Jelani Cobb examines issues of race, geography, genre and bravado in this overview of hip hops lyrical art. Covering words from B.I.G., Cube, Obie Trice and Pimp C, Cobb offers an intellectual and up-to-date report on hip hops most powerful element. -The Source Magazine This book makes an important contribution to hip-hop history. . . . Cobbs writing style is engaging, and the book benefits from the legitimacy provided by the authors background: he is a former MC who grew up with the culture.-Choice At a time when academics are just beginning to recognize hip hop as a legitimate form, William Jelani Cobb, a child of rap himself, brings an unparalleled level of understanding to the music. His historically informed yet hip-to-the-tip viewpoint roots readers in the art form rather than the hype.-Chuck D What makes William Jelani Cobbs To the Break of Dawn so refreshing is that it centers on what hip-hop is, rather than on what it does. Eschewing the common practice of treating rap lyrics as just another way to talk about race, politics or the self, Cobb treats them as art. His aim is ambitious: to articulate hip-hop's aesthetic principles while tracing its roots back to the ancestral poetic and musical traditions of black oral culture, from Sunday sermons to gut-bucket blues. To the Break of Dawn celebrates lyrical invention, the artists and even the particular rhymes that make hip-hop great. For the uninitiated, it is Hip-Hop 101, offering a rich overview of rap's verbal artistry. For the aficionado, it alternately affirms and challenges deeply held beliefs of what is valuable in hip-hop. -Washington Post Book World Cobb has contributed a worthy study to the growing literature on hip-hop.-Popular Music Finally, a hip hop study that captures the verve and swagger that marked the work of our critical forebears Albert Murray and Amiri Baraka. In his brilliant new tome, William Jelani Cobb bridges the gap between the majesty of the blues and the gully regality of hip hop.-Mark Anthony Neal, author of New Black Man Wow! To the Break of Dawn is a crucial contribution to hip hop history. I'm thrilled that William Jelani Cobb has documented hip hop's relationship to the blues. If you want to truly understand how hip hop was born, read this book. -MC Lyte To the Break of Dawn is smart, funny, conversational a book to touch off serious study of the modern MC. -The Austin Chronicle To the Break of Dawn marks a crucial turning point in hip-hop writing. . . . By opening the discourse on hip-hops aesthetic, Cobb spearheads a new sub-genre, and perhaps a return or revolution in hip-hop aesthetics. -Black Issues Book [P]eels back the many digitized layers of hip-hop to explore the evolution of the MC, from African folkloric traditions to the global (and often hypercommercial) phenomenon it is today.-Utne With poetic passion and surgical precision, William Jelani Cobbs engaging exploration of the hip hop aesthetic lovingly demonstrates that, when it comes to beats and rhymes, the beauty of the (bass) god resides in the details.-Joan Morgan, author of When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost Vital stuff for hip hop fans eager to know more about their favorite cultural idioms development and underpinnings.-Booklist Upon finishing To The Break of Dawn any objective fan will acknowledge that Cobb has done a commendable job in chronicling raps evolution and explaining its multiple influences and impact. -City Paper On literally every page [Cobb] displays a tremendous command of language and history as he examines the aesthetic, stylistic, and thematic evolution of hip hop from its inception in the South Bronx to the present era. But make no mistake: this groundbreaking work is an artfully constructed and vividly written look at the artistic evolution of rap music and its relationship to earlier forms of black expression. Much of the book's pleasure also comes from Cobbs ability to freestyle serious and humorous insights-from how artists such as Tupac and Nas sometimes stepped outside the conventions of hip-hop to pen sympathetic narratives about the sexual exploitation of young women, to how LL Cool Js pioneering I Need a Beat sounded like hed raided every entry in an SAT book.-Publishers Weekly (starred review)