

Book Review

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PETCHAUER, EMERY. *Hip-Hop Culture in College Students' Lives: Elements, Embodiment, and Higher Edutainment*. New York, NY: Routledge. (2012). 144 pp. \$35.95 paperback (ISBN 978-0-415-88971-1)

In 2009 Emery Petchauer published an article that signaled scholars' shift away from rap lyrics to hip-hop culture and its four elements: graffiti, breaking, deejaying, and emceeing. He identified a research strand that investigates how hip-hop practices and aesthetic forms (i.e., the elements) influence people's ways of doing and habits of mind. His recent book, the subject of this review, follows naturally from the earlier article. *Hip-Hop Culture in College Students' Lives: Elements, Embodiment, and Higher Edutainment* introduces readers to "hip-hop collegians" and to the spaces on and near campus that they set up, fill up, and take over. The book is intended for an audience that has yet to notice the hip-hop collegians in their midst:

Hip-hop ... is a physical, affective, and philosophical pursuit—one that has habits of body and habits of mind. For people who are deeply familiar with hip-hop in its local forms, this information is not new. However, these are not the same people in charge or teaching at most universities. (p. 2)

Hiphop collegians do more than listen to rap music; these women and men have a commitment to the culture that results in an almost automatic tendency to consider new experiences and material as potential resources to create hiphop. They have in-depth understanding and knowledge of the culture and use hiphop as a resource for their entire educational experience by applying it to their relationships, their classes and coursework, and their extra-curricular activities. To illuminate the ways hiphop collegians integrate hiphop into their lives, Petchauer isolates three perspectives and then models how they are interconnected. His model for understanding hiphop in the collegians' lives includes: identity frameworks, hiphop aesthetic forms, and habits and practices. By using Petchauer's book and model, academic personnel and faculty would be in a stronger position to serve hiphop collegians in a manner that supports their ways of doing and habits of mind.

A particular strength featured throughout the book is Petchauer's ability to provide basic information about the hiphop culture without losing sight of the research topic. The book includes several hiphop terms and some material created by the hiphop intelligentsia that presents an insider perspective to the culture. Petchauer's personal history and connection to hiphop appear to solidify the insider knowledge. Some readers may hope for more insights into Petchauer's links to hiphop as a deejay, a b-boy, a professor, and a researcher; unfortunately, he does not describe these links in great detail. Quite possibly, he resembles a hiphop collegian. Future studies that build on his model may reveal the ways a connection with hiphop can become a tributary to a career that maintains hiphop as a central feature yet has its own distinct practices and outcomes; a career that runs parallel to visible hiphop professions (e.g., artist, performer, producer, musician, organizer). That said, the book's elementary presentation of hiphop vocabulary and concepts affords a deeper appreciation for the "ways students bring hip-hop into university life [that] include rituals, practices, habits of mind, daily routines, texts, and authoritative bodies of knowledge" (p. 4). For example, "sampling," a foundational technique to create hiphop music, involves assembling sound samples taken from prior recordings into a new audio track. Petchauer demonstrates how one participant, Barry, a popular event organizer and student leader on campus, uses the sampling principles to intentionally draw "from different disciplinary sources including history, political science, news outlets, and hip-hop songs and lyrics to give him ideas or content for classes" (p. 78). The book balances between being a hiphop primer and an academic study that relies on "the rituals, metaphors, and constructs of hip-hop collegians" as beginning and ending points of analysis instead of depending on current theoretical perspectives on hiphop (p. 9). Petchauer draws upon hiphop as an authoritative source to demonstrate the variety of ways hiphop collegians apply it to their classroom practices and educational lives. This particular

strength broadens the reading audience from university personnel and faculty to include readers interested in art, education, and hiphop studies.

The book emerges from the theoretical lineage that began with text analysis of rap songs, then gradually examined the song lyrics' role in identity formation; eventually investigating hiphop youth's linguistic practices in local and global contexts. Presently, some scholars analyze hiphop-based education (HHBE) as a resource to redesign the nature and purpose of education. Petchauer's work follows a recent trend in hiphop scholarship that questions the use of hiphop education in a responsible manner, the source of expertise for hiphop educators, and the professionalization of HHBE. By concentrating on processes rather than products, on the complex manner that hiphop practices and aesthetic forms influence people's ways of doing and habits of mind, Petchauer follows the trend. At the same time, he sets his own course.

For Petchauer hiphop is flesh and blood, places and spaces—people and their social networks create, critique, and enjoy hiphop through visual art, dance, music, and spoken word. He concentrates on the hiphop collegians, their materials and venues to better understand hiphop as an intangible and tangible product. By considering people in settings that manifest hiphop culture and its expressive elements, we have the opportunity to better understand hiphop collegians' claim that they “be” hiphop. For example, to “have” hiphop implies a commercial transaction, or the passive act of listening to hiphop music, while to be hiphop indicates active participation in the culture itself. Hiphop collegians actively participate to such a degree that they intuitively extend hiphop practices and habits into their academic lives and skill sets. They do this in a variety of ways that include membership in hiphop organizations, planning public and private hiphop activities, and the application of aesthetic practices to learn course content and satisfy course assignments.

Academic personnel and faculty appear unaware that hiphop collegians are on campus and in the classroom. They may not know enough about hiphop culture to effectively interact with women and men whose active participation informs their educational interests, skill sets, and decisions. Individuals steeped in the culture, do not necessarily separate themselves from the culture—they neither perform nor purchase hiphop; they are hiphop. The importance of distinguishing between a hiphop person and hiphop product prompts us to turn to the culture and finds ways to serve hiphop collegians instead of looking to the culture for ways it serves to transform traditional schooling.

REFERENCES

Petchauer, E. (2009). Framing and reviewing Hip-Hop educational research. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(2), 946-978. doi: 10.3102/0034654308330967

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