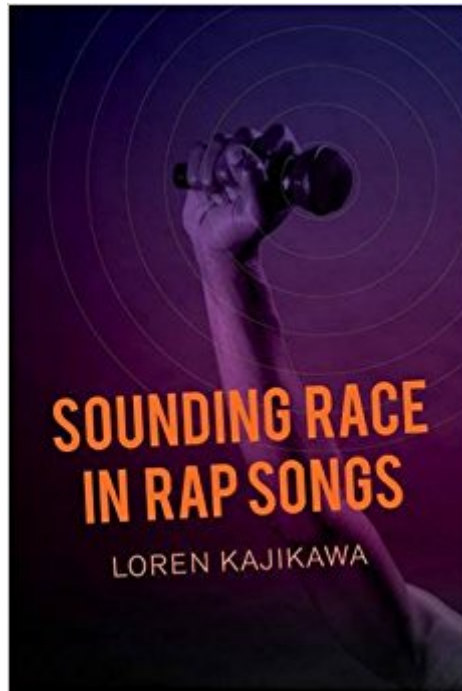




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# Sounding Race In Rap Songs



## Synopsis

As one of the most influential and popular genres of the last three decades, rap has cultivated a mainstream audience and become a multimillion-dollar industry by promoting highly visible and often controversial representations of blackness. *Sounding Race in Rap Songs* argues that rap music allows us not only to see but also to hear how mass-mediated culture engenders new understandings of race. The book traces the changing sounds of race across some of the best-known rap songs of the past thirty-five years, combining song-level analysis with historical contextualization to show how these representations of identity depend on specific artistic decisions, such as those related to how producers make beats. Each chapter explores the process behind the production of hit songs by musicians including Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, The Sugarhill Gang, Run-D.M.C., Public Enemy, N.W.A., Dr. Dre, and Eminem. This series of case studies highlights stylistic differences in sound, lyrics, and imagery, with musical examples and illustrations that help answer the core question: can we hear race in rap songs? Integrating theory from interdisciplinary areas, this book will resonate with students and scholars of popular music, race relations, urban culture, ethnomusicology, sound studies, and beyond.

## Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: University of California Press; 1st Ed. edition (March 7, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0520283996

ISBN-13: 978-0520283992

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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## Customer Reviews

"Simply one of the best works of popular music scholarship I have ever read. Blending close analysis of specific musical examples with sophisticated social theory and nuanced historical context, Kajikawa explores not only what music does in terms of race, but&#151;perhaps more

important&#151;how it does it. This book is a must-read not only for hip hop fans and scholars but for anyone who wants to understand the relationship between music and identity."&#151;Joseph G. Schloss, author of *Making Beats: The Art of Sample-Based Hip-Hop* "A tour de force, an insightful, original, and immensely generative book. Through clear, concise, and convincing analyses of iconic rap songs, Kajikawa teaches us how racial difference is re-created every day through sonic practices that make our identities heard as well as seen and forged as well as found."&#151;George Lipsitz, author of *How Racism Takes Place* "Kajikawa does what I have not seen before in hip hop scholarship. By combining archival research, ethnography, critical theory, history, and musical analysis, he is able to illuminate the cultural power and sonic subtleties of the music in a way that few others have. A major scholarly achievement that will change the way we hear and think about hip hop."&#151;Mark Katz, author of *Groove Music: The Art and Culture of the Hip-Hop DJ* "Loren Kajikawa returns us to the sound of rap! While thoroughly conversant with the sprawling body of trenchant critical work that addresses hip hop and rap as powerful social movements, Kajikawa returns us to musical sound in all its dense referentiality. He reconfigures formal musical analysis by infusing it with the lessons of critical race theory, and the result is stunning. I won't ever hear breakbeats in the same way."&#151;Deborah Wong, author of *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music*

Loren Kajikawa is Assistant Professor of Musicology and Ethnomusicology at the University of Oregon, where he teaches courses on a variety of twentieth- and twenty-first-century musical practices.

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