

Armstrong

24 Bars to Kill

Hip Hop, Aspiration, and Japan's Social Margins

The most clearly identifiable and popular form of Japanese hip-hop, "ghetto" or "gangsta" music has much in common with its corresponding American subgenres, including its portrayal of life on the margins, confrontational style, and aspirational "rags-to-riches" narratives. Contrary to depictions of an ethnically and economically homogeneous Japan, gangsta J-hop gives voice to the suffering, deprivation, and social exclusion experienced by many modern Japanese. 24 Bars to Kill offers a fascinating ethnographic account of this music as well as the subculture around it, showing how gangsta hip-hop arises from widespread dissatisfaction and malaise.

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