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## Meridians 8:1

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PAULA J. GIDDINGS

## Editor's Preface

I confess that when Janell Hobson and R. Dianne Bartlow, co-editors of “Representin’: Women, Hip-Hop, and Popular Music,” offered to put together a special issue for *Meridians*, I was a little skeptical. My view of hip-hop was filtered through the lens of its misogyny. Yes, I knew about oppositional female and political rappers, and certainly understood how hip-hop and popular music have permeated youth culture around the world. Still, despite, or perhaps because of, a growing literature about women and hip-hop, I wondered if there was an entire volume’s worth of interesting ideas to explore—and if such an issue could reach the threshold of what *Meridians* readers would expect.

The questions were answered when we received these essays and the fine introduction by the co-editors. Indeed, I realized how limited my own thinking about women and popular music had been. There are so many important and understudied dimensions to explore, many of which are evocatively laid out by the contributors to this volume. They write about the relationship of contemporary popular music to social movements and identities, including black feminism’s second and third waves, queerness, and Muslim women. The authors reflect on the intersections with transnational music traditions such as Calypso, Afro-Cuban, and the vocalizations heard in Hindi films. The visual as well as the textual is explored through the double-voiced discourses of the music’s liberatory and exploitive potential; corporatism and street subculture; women as objects and women as subjects; and the politics of complicity and resistance. In short, the co-editors and contributors have provided what *Meridians* readers should expect: a rich volume with a critical edge.

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