



Rebel for the Hell of It: The Life of Tupac Shakur

Armond White, S.H. Fernando, Jr. (Foreword)

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The ever-controversial Shakur offers a great occasion for a close, passionate reading of rap and ghetto culture. White's understanding of Tupac's art will uncork the bottled up rage and confusion that attends the way hip-hop culture is produced and received. Rebel details each step in Shakur's development, from his early exposure to racism and political activism to his move from New York to the West Coast and his innovative work with early hip hop culture and music. Through connections drawn between Shakur and Public Enemy, Notorious B.I.G., Dr. Dre, Ice Cube, and Sister Souljah, White examines Shakur's life as a prism for the hip-hop world. Photographs, a useful chronology of important dates in the life of Shakur, and an updated discography and filmography of his career as a rapper and actor are included. "Talk about diversity, talk about identity, talk about icons—White's in-depth look at Tupac Shakur talks about all of 'em."—Booklist "White has written a nuanced, expansive and impassioned study of the life and art of Tupac Shakur."—Tyrone Williams, Metro Times Literary Quarterly "Rebel ... is a means of analyzing the rage, fatalism and rootlessness of the contemporary rap scene."—Select Magazine

Rebel for the Hell of It: The Life of Tupac Shakur Details

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From Reader Review Rebel for the Hell of It: The Life of Tupac Shakur for online ebook

Quan says

I can appreciate that the author wasn't just gushing over Tupac. With all the mythologizing around Pac, I could imagine that a lot of writing about Pac could be overzealous, or non-critical. Armond White, true to his rep as a contrarian, bucks that probable trend. (Not that I've read many books about Pac. But if Michael Eric Dyson is any indication, it's gushing over Pac is probably a trend.)

That said, the book is hard to get through, which was not what I intended when I picked up this 200-ish page book. White relies on close reading of Pac's music, music videos, and movies. But he doesn't tie his ideas together all that well. Even when he has good ideas, it's hard to follow why he even brought something up because it doesn't always logically tie to the previous idea. You get the sense he's kinda just throwing things to the wall and seeing what sticks rather haphazardly.

Also, there's not a whole lot of actual research into Pac's life. Maybe I'm looking for something that doesn't exist but I feel like there's a lot more source material you can dig through for a biography than White does.

Sukanya says

Music as a medium of protest.

jean_grey says

I read this book years ago mainly because I am a huge Tupac Shakur fan, I recently seen it in one of my old boxes where I've got some things stored and remembered how much I enjoyed this book. I'm determined to pick it up and start reading it again.

Sarah says

It was more like an analysis than a biography. I wanted more of Tupac's life story.

Anthony D'Juan Shelton says

The book looks like pop-crap, but far from it. It was written by one of the most controversial pop culture critics in America -- Armond White -- who is known for his esoteric approach to criticism. It is thought by most that White is a frustrated filmmaker, or just down right hates everything that comes out; when on the contrary, White loves his medium. He goes back and forth between music and film, but his reviews are often laced with odd cross references that resonate, beautifully, to his overall point.

And this book on Tupac Shakur is no different. White never fails to praise Tupac's brilliance, while also pointing out his flaws. It's one of the rare non-ass-kissing biographies (much like Arnold Rampersad's bio on Ralph Ellison, which is FAR SUPERIOR to the Lawrence Jackson bio on Ellison -- where Jackson was so wrapped up in being a fan, he could hardly be objective) that gives the reader a chance to understand the person, rather than the legend; and it's understanding the person that unlocks the legend that we all admire.
