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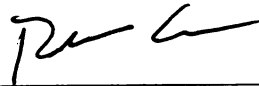
FAR EAST COAST IS IN DA HOUSE :
EXAMINATION OF HIP HOP CULTURE IN JAPAN

presented by

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**FAR EAST COAST IS IN DA HOUSE :
EXAMINATION OF HIP HOP CULTURE IN JAPAN**

By

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ABSTRACT

FAR EAST IS IN DA HOUSE: EXAMINATION OF HIP HOP CULTURE IN JAPAN

By

Kozo Okumura

This written thesis accompanies a 32 minute documentary video project about hip hop culture in Japan. It explains about hip hop culture and its appeal to Japanese youth. The purpose of the video is to demonstrate hip hop street dance culture in Japan and how its values are very different from Japanese traditional values. The written thesis provides background information on hip hop culture and art forms, explains the documentary format and how it is used in the video, and provides an evaluation of the program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It was the summer of 1989 when I happened to see a part of this culture called hip hop. It was a TV program showing people dancing to hip hop or black music in a club. Of course, at that time, I did not know anything about this street dancing as being a part of culture called hip hop. And I never imagined that this culture was going to affect my life in many ways. Since then, I have been involved in this culture mainly as a dancer. My experience of being a dancer has been very special and wonderful to me. It has affected my life in a positive way so much that I even tell people that I was reborn after I met this art form of dancing.

Being involved in this culture, I have always had a desire to share my experience with other people. Many people do not take this type of dancing seriously. The Media has failed to introduce the positive aspect of hip hop culture and tend to pick up the negative aspect such as so-called gangsta rap which glorifies violence. Even though the gangsta rap really does not represent hip hop culture, the media still focuses on it, which creates misconception of this culture. Therefore, introducing my positive experience to others is the way I can give back to this culture since it has given me so many things. Also the media in the US has not introduced alternative Japanese youth culture as much as the traditional culture. These are my motivations to make a documentary TV program about street dancers in Japan. This project is a result

of both my involvement in hip hop / street dance culture up to this point and my study of video production at Michigan State University.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Hip hop culture is an art form of expression created by youth of African and Hispanic American living in South Bronx, New York in the 1970s. It includes rap music, Deejaing, street dancing which is also known as breakdancing, and graffiti arts. Rapping as we know it today, saying rhymes to the beat of music, was originally called emceeing. It draws its roots from the African art form known as toasting. Deejaing is the manipulation of a record over a particular groove so it produces strange sounds. It is said that this was invented by either Grand Master Flash or Grand Wizard Therefore, two popular disc jockeys from the Bronx. Dancing in hip-hop, which is generally called breakdancing, is a colorful and acrobatic style of dance which includes moves such as headspins and backspins. Aerosol art also known as graffiti art developed out of the scrawled nicknames, called "tags," that rebellious youth have been scribbling illegally with felt-tip pens and spray cans on walls, poles, road signs, even tree trunks, at least since the late 1960s. Unlike graffiti you see on walls of bathrooms, aerosol art is a sophisticated art form with "a complex web of electrifying color, innovative calligraphy, and a kind of rhythmic chaos" and most of time it has a message to the society (Farrell).

When hiphop was born, people who appreciate this culture tended to be limited to African and Hispanic people living in a inner city because it was

strongly related to their social and ethnic backgrounds. Skeptics predicted a quick demise for this culture. They were wrong. About twenty years later, this culture, born in a small area of New York city, is popular across the states. It is even appreciated by people in other countries such as Europe and Asia.

Japanese people are not the exception even though some of their traditional values are against this culture. Since hip hop dancing was introduced as a part of hip hop culture in 1983, there have always been extreme enthusiasts for this culture, especially dancing. Hip hop dancing is one of the most popular activities among Japanese teenagers now. Why do Japanese youth get involved in hip hop which was originally for African and Hispanic youth? There are three main reasons. First, with the influence of internationalization, young people in Japan who are inspired by the individualism which came from Western culture, tend to have a desire to express themselves, which has not been traditionally respected in collective society. They found hip hop culture as a stylistic medium to express themselves. Second, many young people in Japan feel that their life is very stressful. They found that hip hop culture provides relief from the stress of their life. The third reason is a sort of subsidiary reasons for the previous two reasons. They found that a way of expression in hip hop is something new. This is because of "black expressiveness" which is said that African American culture shares. Since hip hop culture has been mainly practiced by African Americans, hip hop culture has black expressiveness. This attracts the Japanese youth.

The documentary TV program titled "Far East Coast is in da House! -street dancers in Japan" is a project to show street dance culture which is a part of hip hop culture in Japan. Chapter 2 gives the background of the subjects in the program which includes history of hip hop in the US, history of hip hop in Japan, social background of Japanese people, and the reasons for Japanese youth's deep involvement in this culture. Chapter 3 explains about the method to convey the researcher's message which is the documentary format. It gives the definition of documentary and its brief history. Chapter 4 introduces the program content to show the specific direction of the program. Chapter 5 covers the evaluation of the program and the conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

HIP HOP CULTURE

I. What is hip hop culture

Hip hop is an art form that includes deejaying, emceeing/rapping, dancing, and aerosol art. These art forms originated in the South Bronx section of New York City around the mid 1970s. Afrika Bambaataa, who has made a great contribution to the hip hop community by founding the Universal Zulu Nation, a worldwide hip hop organization talked about hip hop culture as follows:

Hip hop means the whole culture of the movement.. When you talk about Rap.. Rap is part of the hip hop culture.. The emceeing.. The deejaying is part of the hip hop culture. The dressing, the languages are all part of the hip hop culture. The break dancing, how you act, walk, look, talk are all part of hip hop culture (qtd. in Cook).

The reason why these four subcultures of rapping, deejaying, dancing, and aerosol art are put into hip hop culture is that they were popular activities in the South Bronx in the same period and share the same background and concept as art forms though each has different ways of expression. Because of this, it was common that one person got involved in more than one activity of hip hop. For example, some graffiti writers such as Fab Five Freddy produced rap music. Some dancers were also DJs. Crazy Legs, a member of the Rock Steady Crew -a breakdancing crew, describes the communal atmosphere between writers,

rappers, dancers in the formative years of hip hop: "Summing it up, basically going to a jam back then was (about) watching people drink, dance, compare graffiti art in their black books. These jams were thrown by the DJ....it was about piecing while a jam was going on" (qtd. in Rose, 35). The driving force behind all these activities was the same which is people's desire to be seen and heard (Cook). In order to know and understand their roots, it is important to understand the background of the South Bronx around the period when hip hop culture was born.

II. Historical Background

In the 1950s, the Bronx was known as "the borough of apartment buildings" and it had a good reputation as a place to live. However, when the city began building an expressway through the heart of the Bronx in 1959, the Bronx suddenly started to suffer a precipitous decline that would not be slowed until more than 1,500 buildings were left abandoned. Marshall Berman wrote the effects of the construction of expressway in his book All That Is Solid Melts Into Air.

My friends and I would stand on the parapet of the Grand Concourse, where 174th Street had been, and survey the work's progress -the immense steam shovels and bulldozers and timber and steel beams, the hundreds of workers in their variously colored hard hats, the giant cranes reaching far above the Bronx's tallest roofs, the dynamite blasts and tremors, the wild, jagged crags of rock newly torn, the vistas of devastation

stretching for miles to the east and west as far as they could see-and
marvel to see our ordinary nice neighborhood transformed into sublime,
spectacular ruins (qtd. in Hager, 2).

The middle class Italian, German, Irish, and Jewish neighborhoods disappeared overnight. Businesses and factories relocated. Only the poverty was left. Poverty caused many problems: crimes, drug addiction, unemployment. It was apparent that the city cared little for the small communities in the Bronx. This city's attitude toward the community also brought a sense of injustice. Under these circumstances, youth gangs became popular. According to Steven Hager, by the 1970s, estimates of gang membership ran as high as 11,000. For over several years the Bronx had lived in constant terror of street gangs. The youth in the Bronx were sick of this situation. Something had to come along to replace the gangs -the hip hop movement caught the youth mind. Afrika Bambaataa, the founder of the Universal Zulu Nation, an organization born out of the South Bronx gangs but dedicated to peace, unity, and self-knowledge, recalled the situation saying, "When I came out of the Black Spades (a gang in which he was involved.), and went straight into the hip hop thing, a lot of gang members followed me. In the mid-70s, gangs were dying out. The police were cracking down, community leaders were speaking out, women were fed up with the violence" (qtd. in Owen). Emceeing/rapping, deejaying, aerosol art/graffiti art, and dancing were all developed in the atmosphere that people should do something better than gang activity though they were still in poverty. They found it "preferable for them

to channel their anger and aggressions into these art forms” which eventually gave them free opportunity to express themselves (Cook). The fact that Hip hop activities do not require people to spend any money or much money to get involved made it more attractive to the youth in Bronx. It was in block parties or clubs where these art forms were developed. DJs such as DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, Grandmaster Flash were the ones who organized these parties and played a very important role in the history of hip hop.

Gang activity was replaced with hip hop activity. Dancing which was called b-boying at that time had a great responsibility for this replacement because gang fighting was directly transformed into dance fighting which was called a battle. “You wanna fight or you wanna rock.” was the famous line that explains this transformation. Or instead of saying “I’ll meet you at the corner and knock you down”, dancers are saying “I’ll meet you at the Roxy and dance you down” (Rosenwald, 78). Many youth with aggression or frustration was channeled to dance battle, not real fighting. They formed dancing crews instead of a gang family. Dancing crew also fulfilled the need of camaraderie which also played a big part in gang family.

In the early 1980s, hip hop culture was introduced by media. Movies such as Flashdance, Wild Style, Breakin’, Breakin’ 2 and Beat Street had a big impact on young people in the US and even all over the world. Among four elements, rap music is the one which has grown up so that it became a great business

and had an influence on society. In the 1990s, rap music even became more diversified and many types of rap music exist. One of the styles which became popular in the 1990s is “gangsta rap,” which came from the West coast, whose subject is mainly about the life of street gangs and often glorifies violence and disrespect for women. Nowadays, because of the strong negative image of “gangsta rap” which totally misrepresents hip hop culture (some even do not consider gangsta rap as hip hop) -the original meaning of hip hop culture has been misunderstood by many people. On the other hand, the real hip hop culture still exists and functions as an art form of expression not only in the United States but also all over the world.

III. Hip hop In Japan

In Japanese hip-hop, dancing has been the center of the main culture, rather than rapping, graffiti, and Deejaying. This is because dancing has a visual impact so everyone can understand; when it comes to dance there is not a language barrier. Another reason for this situation may be that there were more information about dancing available than rapping through the media in Japan. (Paul, 22). Hip hop dance culture in Japan started after the movie Flashdance appeared in the summer of 1983. At that time, it was called “breakdancing”. Although the movie was not about breakdancing, a few seconds of young people doing some moves of breakdancing on the street caught many Japanese people's attention. Mitsuhiro Harada, a long time hip hop dancer in Japan, said “I started to dance inspired by the movie Flashdance. There are

many people who started to get involved in hip hop culture after watching the movie." After Flashdance, many other movies followed such as Wild Style, Beat Street, Breakin', and Breakin' 2. Rock Steady Crew, the most famous dance group at that time, came to Japan in 1983 and Boogal Shrimp, who played a role in the movie Breakin' came to Japan and planted the seeds of hip-hop dancing in Japan. Many breakdancing crews existed just like in the United States. Some crews such as Be-Bop Crew (Fukuoka area), Imperial JBs (Hakata), Angel Dust Breakers(Osaka), Osaka Gangstar(Osaka), and Be-Bop Crew Tokyo (Tokyo) represented many areas and got respect among dancers. After 1985 or 86, the breakdancing trend was gone in Japan as well as in the United States. Many people stopped dancing. However, there were still many die-hard dancers who truly loved dancing. The second boom of hip hop dancing came with the new style of hip hop dancing called "New School" hip hop around 1990. The music videos of artists such as Bobby Brown, Bell Biv DeVoe, Heavy D, and M.C. Hammer proved that a new way of dance was coming alive and all of the young dancers were ready to explore this new form. In contrast to the boom of breakdancing, the second boom of hip hop dancing involved more women because this style does not require much physical strength. A local dance TV show in Tokyo called "DADA LMD" started in 1989. Like the American Soul Train, there was line dance at the end of the show. There was also the dance lesson introducing the latest trendy steps instructed by regular dancers in the middle of the show. Later, these regular dancers made their debuts as singers and achieved commercial success. Also, there

was another local dance TV show called "Dance Dance Dance" . This show featured a dance contest among four groups every week, and a special dance performance by the program's regular dancers called "Megamix". Since these two programs were local programs and also aired after midnight, the impact was not enough to create an explosive boom of new dancing. The national TV show "Dance Koshien" started in 1989. This show aired at 8 o'clock on Sunday. It is a hip hop dance contest for high school students, and had a great impact on many young people who began to dance. Some people who made their appearance on Dance Koshien found fame. The existence of these three dance programs indicate the new popularity of dancing.

As the first boom of breakdancing did, new school hip hop dancing also lost its explosive popularity after a few years. However, many dancers stayed in this culture. Combined with the people from the old-school era (breakdancing era), these people brought hip hop dancing in Japan into the next level. Hip hop dancing is no longer just a fad but a real culture rooted among young people in Japan.

Japanese dancers have been greatly influenced by African American dancers who appeared on music videos. African American dancers are even idols among many young dancers in Japan. This is because dancers in the United States shown in music videos, played a very important role as a sort of teacher especially in early days of hip hop in Japan when hip hop culture was

still not well understood and developed. Young dancers learn a new move or get inspiration from those videos. Keisuke Nakao, a hip hop dancer in Japan, recalls "There was a period of time when trends of dance moves changed so quickly and everybody wanted to follow those trends. At that time, watching videos was the only way to catch up. Everybody depended on the videos from the United States for getting a new move and improving their skills. It was a kind of competition to get the latest clips from the United States. Many people didn't want to show videos they had to others because they wanted to show moves that people didn't know. It was funny because to be a good dancer, it was more about how fast you got the latest video rather than how good you can dance." One of the videos which had the greatest impact on dancers was Lalah Hathaway's "Baby Don't Cry" featuring Mop Top crew, a top hip hop dancing crew in New York City. The documentary program about hip hop dancers in NY "ALIVE TV:wreckin' shop live from Brooklyn", produced by PBS, also had a great influence on dancers in Japan. Some people who were not satisfied with just watching videos even started to travel to New York to see dancers in New York and actually take private dance lessons from them. Currently it is not unusual for Japanese dancers to spend lots of money to go to New York to see dancers there. ADHIP, A hip hop entertainment production company in Japan, also started to bring dancers from New York to Japan and organize their show in Japan. Japanese dancers' feeling that they want to be like African American dancers in New York is so strong that their appearance is also strongly influenced by dancers in New York. They want to wear the same brands of

clothes. They go to tanning salons, and they have their hair done in dreadlocks (Spence-D, 9) because they want to have a look similar to dancers in New York as well as to emulate their dancing.

Some American hip hop artists question if Japanese people really understand hip hop culture or not. These questions arise from the phenomenon of some Japanese going to tanning salons and having their hair done in dreadlocks. Also many Japanese dancers tend to copy the moves from American dancers. These can be interpreted as being against the philosophy of hip hop called "keep it real". "Keep it real" means to stay true or honest to yourself. Hip hop is an art form of expression. When people express themselves, they have to represent themselves, not something stolen from others. For example, in hip hop dancing, stealing anothers' move is called "bite" or "biting" and is highly disrespected (Holman, 172) . Key-Kool, an American rapper who visited Japan in 1994 said "Peering across the room full of many fake dreadheads, young women with tanning salon complexions, and more fly gear than a hip hopper could ever dream of having, brings up the questions, 'How many of these people really embody hip-hop?'" (12) . The Japanese people's lack of understanding of hip hop culture comes from language barriers. Since most Japanese do not understand English and have little chance to know a specific message or philosophy of hip hop culture through sources such as lyrics in rap music and hip hop magazines in the United States, most people tend to depend on only visual or external impacts to

perceive the culture. DJ Krush, a Japanese DJ who received a lot of credit outside Japan, criticized this situation as follows:

They care about the externals of hip hop, not the internals. They think if you have the external [the look], that's enough. Unless these kids perceive that, they just can't go around imitating and carbon copying these people [black people], the Japanese hip hop scene is not going to grow (qtd. in Spence-D, 22).

However, the situation is changing. About one decade after hip hop culture was introduced to Japan, they started to try to create their own Japanese hip hop culture. There are more dancers, rappers, DeeJays and aerosol artists who try to create their own style. DJ Krush mentioned this change, "I think all young people just imitate the externals when they first become infatuated with hip hop and they just get obsessed with the externals. When I was younger I just imitated that too. It's just a matter of when you perceive that the externals have nothing to do with your own reality, it's just a matter of when you perceive this and grow out of it" (qtd. in Spence-D, 12). Ejoe Wilson, a famous hip hop dancer from New York who often goes to Japan to teach also mentioned:

Two or three years ago, lot of Japanese kids I taught, they tries to get the same style as a person completely. But now it is changing. Those dancing from three years back are better now. They are making their own moves and combinations. I knew that was gonna happen. So any dancers who try to move just like some dancers in New York now, later on they will start to move differently. I can see the change in lots of dancers.

Key-Kool also mentioned:

It [hip hop culture] is growing at an incredible pace and this means many “bandwagoning” type individuals that lack understanding of the culture as a whole do exist. But isn’t this true in the US as well, with a bunch of kids exposed to rap solely on commercial radio, or the cable television, who claim to love rap but are ignorant of the under goings of the hip hop world? Potentially, some of these individuals will grow and learn to love this culture and those other superficial ones will leave as quick as they came (12).

In Japan, hip hop culture itself is young because of the language gap even though it has been around over ten years. Many people are still superficial to the culture. It may take time for individuals to learn a culture as a whole. However as those individuals who learned about culture accumulate, hip hop culture in Japan will grow faster than before since people can learn from these individuals as well as from sources which came from outside Japan.

IV. Japanese youth’s enthusiastic involvement of hip hop culture

As it was explained in the earlier, the birth of hip hop culture has lots to do with ethnic and social background of African Americans and Hispanic Americans and for the present, it still has a deep relation in their life. The question is why young people in Japan enthusiastically get involved in this culture. There are three reasons. First, with the influence of internationalization in Japan, young people are inspired by the individualism which came from

Western culture and they tend to have a desire to express themselves, which has been traditionally disrespected in collective society. They found that hip hop culture a stylistic medium to satisfy the desire for self-expression. Second, many young people in Japan feel that their life is very stressful. Hip hop culture provides relief from the stress of their life. The third reason is a sort of subsidiary reasons for the previous two reasons. They found that a way of expression in hip hop is something new. This is because of "black expressiveness" which is said that African American culture shares. Since hip hop culture has been mainly practiced by African Americans, hip hop culture has black expressiveness. This attracts the Japanese youth.

I. Emergence of Individualism among Japanese youth

Collectivism that respects a group highly more than an individual, has been traditional value in Japan. After Japan's surrender in World War II, Japan experienced prominent recovery with high economic growth (1955-1974). It is said that Japan's economic success was built upon the foundation of corporate loyalty, imposed through particular forms of collective group orientations (Miyana, 124). This strong loyalty to group came from feudalism in Japanese history. Kuniko Miyana explained this collectivism as follows:

Confucianism was adopted from China among the samurai, the ruling class in Japan; the fundamental ethic of filial piety was more actively applied to the relationship between a lord and his subjects than the real biological relationship between parents and children. A lord and his

subjects entered a quasi-parent-child relationship, which was socially given a higher priority over the biological one (20-21).

She also mentioned, "Individualism in Japan was traditionally viewed as a social option for deviant people who did not fit into the mainstream of society. Many people, in order to live their own lives, felt compelled to leave the mainstream culture that so rigidly bound its members." (125) The recent westernization movement in Japan has influenced Japanese especially young people who are sensitive and interested in western culture. Among this new generation of Japanese, the emergence of individualism was a natural phenomenon (Miyanaga 4). Their value no longer fits the traditional collectivism value and they have a desire for self-expression. Hip hop is an attractive medium for those Japanese young individualists just like it was for young people with anger and aggression in the South Bronx in the 70s. Kikuko Tachibana, who has been dancing for four years says "I am addicted to moments when I perform on a stage or dance in a club while feeling lots of other people's attention. It makes me feel so good. In usual life, there is hardly opportunity to express myself to others like this." Tomomi Arai, who used to be a jazz dancer but is now a hiphop dancer, says, "When I met hip hop, I thought hip hop is more attractive than jazz because when I dance in a club, I can express something in my own way. I mean, in jazz dancing, I have to always follow the choreographed routine which doesn't come from me completely."

II. Stressful Japanese society

The second reason for some Japanese enthusiastic acceptance of hip hop culture is that hip hop plays a role of reducing stress in their life. The system of Japanese society is called "gakureki shakai" -a system where firms employ people simply on the basis of what university or school they went to (Clark). Firms only care about the name of the school students went to rather than other qualities such as what they actually did in school and outside school or their personality. Because of this, young people in Japan are always under pressure because of competition for success in the future -entering a good school. To enter a good college or university, a good performance on the entrance examination is required. High school students waste three years of their lives cramming for the absurdly paper tests set for entrance to the so-called prestige universities (Clark). This situation creates so called "juken jigoku" - entrance examination hell or "juken sensou" -entrance examination war. Some people are put in this "juken jigoku" before high school. Some parents believe that their children should enter a good junior high school to enter a good high school which also requires an entrance examination. Japanese youth have to deal with this competition usually from junior high school and even from elementary school if parents are very enthusiastic about their "academic" education. This situation creates incredible stress so much that some students even commit suicide. Many people discovered hip hop as the "releasing medium" (Key-kool, 12). It is the same situation as youth in the South Bronx who released their frustration from their life by getting involved in hip hop

culture. Alfred B. Pasterur and Ivory L. Toldson, explained a part of function of African American culture as release of stress as follows in their book Roots of Soul:

Western society, particularly in America, is gripped by tension, strain, frustration, and other stresses that significantly lower the quality of life. It is the rhythmic force that gives momentum to black expressiveness, we argue, that provides relief from the stress of Western life. Blacks have given America and the West a cherishable facet of their African heritage - soul- a medium for the attainment of increased happiness (6).

III. Uniqueness of hip hop culture with black expressiveness

Hip hop culture is a unique art form of expression. This is because hip hop culture is a part of black culture that has unique creative "black expressiveness".

Pasterur and Toldson explained this "black expressiveness" as follows:

We define "black expressiveness" as the readiness or predisposition to express oneself in a manner characterized by vital emotionalism, spontaneity, and rhythm. Often these traits act in combination with one or more other essential characteristics; naturalistic attitudes, style, creativity with the spoken word, and relaxed physical movement. These interact to produce human behavior that when expressed or perceived registers images, sounds, aromas, and feelings of beauty to the senses. It is the intensity, duration, frequency, and utilitarian features of the behavior, resembling those of traditional African people, which make it unique (4-5).

According to Pasterur and Toldson, black expressiveness is identified with five aspects: depth of feeling, naturalistic attitudes, stylistic renderings, poetic and prosaic vernacular, and expressive movement (5). These aspects overlay each other and act in combination to produce wonderful expressions of the soul. And these aspects are involved in hip hop culture.

a. Depth of feeling

The first aspect, depth of feeling, discusses the utility of feelings or emotions in black expressiveness, most particularly in musical form. Spirituals and gospels, blues, and jazz all abundantly utilize feelings in their derivation and expression. In black culture, feelings are often expressed deeply and openly without reserve when the opportunity is available (Pasteur and Toldson, 10). Hip hop music is no exception to this. Not only in music, but also hip hop dancing has so much to do with feelings since it is a representation of the dancer's emotions and reaction to the music he/she dance to.

b. Naturalistic attitudes

Naturalistic attitudes, the second aspect, flow from a free acceptance of nature and self. It is acceptance of common human drives that reflect such simple manners as relaxed posture, uninhibited walk, and nonpretentious voice tone in conversation. These naturalistic attitudes are represented in the word "Funk". White people defined the word "funk" as a negative meaning which is earthy sights, sounds, and smells, but especially to a body odor produced

during sexual excitement or intercourse (Shaw, 257). On the contrary, black people's naturalistic attitudes made funk "sweet" (Pasteur and Toldson, 142). As a music term, funky became prominent in the 1950s, when pianist/composer Horace Silver, drummer Art Blakey, and other jazzmen sought to develop a style counter to the coldness, complexity, and intellectualism introduced into the music at that time. Playing "funky" meant to return to the evocative feeling and expressiveness of traditional Blues, to play hard and on the beat, with the use of Blues shadings and sonorities (Shaw, 257). George Clinton, who plays a major role in music called "p-funk" music assures that "All you got to do is acknowledge funk and it frees you instantly, right there and then" (qtd. in Berry 40). Clinton insists that people can not abandon their instincts and some people place too much emphasis on intellect which disables them in important life endeavors like releasing themselves. The concept of funk, which represents a naturalistic attitude, instead of looking down on it as something primitive, appreciates the human's instinct in the raw which is oppressed in a civilized society with high morals and good manners. "Funky" came from "funk" and dictionaries define it "eccentric in style or manner". It is said to be eccentric because its style is different from white people's mainstream pattern. It is obvious that this concept of "funk" lives in hiphop culture. In hip hop culture, the word "funky" is often used as a compliment like "his dancing is funky" or "Your style of rapping is funky". In addition to this, when hiphop artists such as dancers show incredible moves, that is when their move totally came from their basic drive and not from the intellect.

c. Stylistic renderings

The third aspect involves stylistic renderings. "Style" is the way in which one puts one's personality on display and it is a widespread concept among black people. There is an infinite way of expressing individuality. Dress and costume is one of the most simple ways to show your individuality. Pasteur and Toldson mentioned, "The way or ways one chooses to express his differentness is his style. It is possible to make the same step that everyone else might make, on the same foot, to the same beat, and yet do it differently. The desire to do it differently is widespread in black-folk community" (Pasteur and Toldson, 12). In hip hop culture, since dancing, rapping, deejaying and aerosol writing are all art forms of expression, the concept of stylistic rendering is very strong. People who have their own style receive respect from others. Stealing or copying other people's technique or style is called "bite" and people who "bite" are disrespected. It is very important to put your own personality or individuality in dancing, rapping, aerosol writing, and deejaying. Competition or "battle" is an important essence of hip hop culture. This battle is sometimes called "style wars" because the style is the most important value in the battle.

d. Poetic and prosaic vernacular

The fourth aspect is poetic and prosaic vernacular. Pasteur and Toldson explained about this vernacular as the aspect of black expressiveness as follows:

Black vernacular is both poetic and prosaic. It therefore looms as an

artistically expressive medium in the formalized traditions of prose and poetry. Whether written or oral, black vernacular has long been of interest to those captivated by beauty that arises from the artistic sequencing of words. Be it in the form of sermon, rap, dozens, signifying, folk tale, song (shouts, spirituals, gospels, field hollers, rhythm & blues, reggae, jazz), it emotionally stirs and seizes upon transmission (28).

As Pasteur mentioned, rapping in hip hop culture has direct influence of this poetic and prosaic vernacular. Rhyming is one of the most important essence of rapping. Many lyrics of rap music are also very poetic and abstract.

e. Expressive movements

The fifth aspect that Pasteur pointed out is expressive movement. Black people employ the entire body as a medium of expression. Lee Warren wrote in The Dance of Africa as follows:

The importance of physical exertion in traditional African society, simply for survival, makes physical expression a natural outgrowth of experience. As an instrument of expression, the body is a distinctive medium. Its movements can convey joy, fear, hate, anguish, every nuance of emotion (23-24).

Dancing played such a big part of life among the Africans that its tradition never died after they were brought to the New World as slaves. African dances has had a great influence in the development of many forms of dance existing in North and South America such as Tap, Salsa, Milenge, Samba, Calibian

dances, and popular dances like Twist, Rock'n roll, Swing, and Lindy Hop. This is proof that Africans never lost the appreciation of dance even though their style of dancing might be changed by mixing with another culture or adjustment toward an environment where they live. Expressive movement which came from strong appreciation of dancing is an important aspect of black expressiveness. The characteristics of African dance movement are, Pasteur and Toldson wrote "with freedom of body; respect for nature, particularly other animals; freedom in individual expression and improvisation; natural concentration of movement in the pelvic region; and propulsive rhythm, which give a swinging quality" (249). And most of these characteristics are seen in African Americans style of dance movements. Also, relaxed posture is the another characteristic of movements. It is interesting to compare the way black tap dancers dance and white tap dancers dance. Usually, you see the black tap dancer dance with a relaxed posture while white people dance with a rigid posture. Also ballet dancing which came from European culture placed value on tight posturing severely while African dancing does not put value on posturing itself. It is assumed that black people's relaxed posture comes from naturalistic attitudes because as Pasteur wrote, "The fear of human instincts shows in attempts to suppress or control them excessively, which leads to stiff, tight, rigid posturing" (241). Hip hop dancing is no exception. Unlike academic dance such as ballet, hip hop dancing has no formula or rule in movements dancers must follow, which provides freedom in individual expression. Since clubs are the place where people dance hiphop, people usually just improvise

movements according to the music. Many dance moves have natural concentration of movement in the pelvic region and most movements are done in a relaxed posture.

These five aspects may not be always in hip hop culture. Also, all Japanese youth who get involved in hip hop culture are not always aware of these characteristics. However, it is certain that many feel some unique attractiveness in hip hop culture even though they may not be able to analyze what exactly it is and they may not be able to put it into words. It can be believed that this unique attractiveness is strongly related to this black expressiveness.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

I. What is documentary

The documentary format is chosen as the most appropriate to achieve the goal of this project which gives information about Japanese youths' involvement in hip hop culture with the film maker's point of view. Documentary is an informative format compared to other formats since it was developed from newsreels (Rabiger, 15). The function of documentary is, according to Video Communication by Smith, to convey information, ideas, and history, to describe a subject and describe and develop issues (149). The characteristic that makes documentary different from other formats is the use of non-staged natural material (Grierson, 145). The use of natural material helps people effectively believe that what they are watching is what is actually happening or has happened in real life.

However, simply showing natural materials does not make a documentary. In documentary, footage should be organized into "the kind of embracing (filmmaker's) statement about human life" (Rabiger, 14). For example, newsreels use factual footage and were very popular during World War II. However, newsreels are not considered documentary. Footage in newsreels are documentary material, but the footage is so episodic and disjointed that it fails to present a film maker's message. It focuses on introducing events

instead of human life through the filmmaker's point of view. In this sense, painting or caricature has more of the essence of a documentary because the subject is portrayed directly by the artist's hand, which is that the way the artist portrays the subject reflects his/her point of view. John Grierson, the leader of the British documentary movement of the 1930s, said that a documentary is "the creative treatment of actuality" (Rabiger, 17). How you treat the actuality shows the producer's point of view.

II. The Issue of objectivity

In documentary, it is important to present a filmmaker's message fairly in treating the subject. Penetrating, yet fair-minded exposure of a subject is often called "objectivity". The lack of "objectivity" causes bias and mistreats actuality. Rabiger gives the example of the lack of objectivity as follows:

Nettie Wild's "A Rustling of Leaves (1990), a courageous and sympathetic account of the populist guerrilla movement in the Philippines, leaves one guiltily skeptical throughout. Wild's political commitment has led her to showing heroic left-wing peasants in a struggle against bad right-wing thugs. This is probably true, but anyone with a grain of political savvy knows that when the most honorable resistance movement has been fighting for a while, both sides inevitably commit atrocities. Thereafter the waters become muddy indeed.(7)

To avoid bias, the work should include every possible attitude that the filmmakers can find. The makers of the work leave it up to their audience to make up their own minds. In the case of Wild, it should not only show the protagonists' declared principles but also the ugly and paradoxical aspects of liberation through violence.

However, it is impossible to present an issue with perfect objectivity since any decision during the production can be biased. For example, what is an "objective" camera position? When does one "objectively" decide when to turn the camera on and off? How can one "objectively" decide which parts most represent "objective truth"? If the maker of a work strongly intends their work to be objective, they have to be very careful for each decision to reduce the degree of those inevitable bias.

III. The evolution of documentary film

I. Vertov's Kino Eye

The spirit of documentary is said to be found first in Russia with the Kino-Eye of Dziga Vertov. During and after the 1917 Revolution, Russian film makers were very much involved in documenting fighting ,wars, and governmental changes. Vertov, a young poet and film editor, was charged with shaping and editing a mass of film into a finished product. Vertov's fame is not as an editor, but as a theorist and developer of an approach to film making. His theory was called "Kino Eye", a cinema to record life without imposing on it. The Kino Eye

method has much in common with the newsreel, but it is a purer form of factual film, for its aesthetic intent is to separate and to preserve the more permanent aspects of everyday life from the transient stuff that constructs newsreels. The Kino Eye approach was different from newsreels because it used all the interesting grammar of cinema, including slow motion, rapid motion, reversed movement, still photography, divided screen, microscopic images, and all forms of montage. The Kino Eye was a "lively cinema which called the viewer's attention not only to the camera and the cameraman, but also to his own eye and to his own sense of visual perception." (Barsman, 24-25). In this sense, the Kino Eye of Dziga Vertov had evolved the spirit of documentary first in the history of film.

II. Flaherty's Nanook of the North

The term "documentary" was first used by John Grierson while he was reviewing Robert Flaherty's Moana in 1926. Robert Flaherty was an American filmmaker whose work Nanook of the North (1922) is acknowledged as documentary's seminal work. Nanook of the North shows the life of an Eskimo family. He began shooting in 1915. Flaherty shot seventy thousand feet of film (approximately 17 1/2 hours of screening time), and he assembled it into a print. Later while packing the negative for shipment, he dropped a lighted cigarette into it and the film went up in flames. This accident made him go back to shoot Nanook and his family and turned out to be "the best thing that could have happened to Flaherty's career as a film maker" (Barsam, 129) After knowing

Nanook and his family so long, Flaherty's relationship with his "actors" became so natural that they could quietly and unself-consciously continue their lives before his camera. Also his philosophy was to engage their interest, understand their problems, obtain their cooperation, and then to make himself one of the group by agreeing to live and to suffer with them. This approach was very successful, which made the results look convincingly natural. We see how Nanook and his family live, their eating habits, sleeping arrangements, and hunting expeditions. It is about an ordinary man in circumstances which are ordinary to him, but which seem extraordinary to us. And this extraordinary Eskimo's daily life brought a larger theme -a struggle between a man and nature. This theme was later imitated by many American documentaries.

III. John Grierson

After Flaherty's documentaries such as Nanook of the North and Moana, this new form of film was rapidly developing in the British documentary movement during the 1930s to 1940s. John Grierson is the most responsible for this development. In 1924, John Grierson visited the United States and saw Flaherty's Nanook of the North and Eisenstein's Potemkin -the two most important seminal influences on documentary film. From these films, he saw the possibilities for a new form of film making. He was convinced that film was a serious medium capable of shaping public opinion. His goal was to make film a great social force. Later, Grierson played an important role in the Empire Marketing Board (E.M.B. Film Unit) which was established in 1928 by the British

government to support film making. This organization was originally charged with promoting "all the major researchers across the world which affect the production or preservation or transport of the British Empire's food supplies" (Grierson, "E.M.B. Film Unit") One of the first E.M.B. Film Unit produced films was Grierson's Drifters. Its underlying theme is the shift in the herring fishing industry from small, independent operation to a large, industrial effort. But its overall focus is on the men who brave the rough seas, do the hard work, and bring home the catch; their wonderful faces alone are enough to preserve the film's interest. It concerns a routine and supposedly insignificant activity - herring fishing -yet brings it alive, not only in terms of the physical process, but more important, in terms of the human drama involved in this vital part of the British economy. It demonstrates to the British -as Flaherty had demonstrated several years before - that "artistic vision can transform existing everyday material, through photography and editing, into a film of interest, quality, and drama." (Barsam, 42-43). After the success of Drifters, Grierson convinced E.M.B. Film Unit should be expanded. It began to grow with the purpose of creating good documentaries, which later contributed to the development of documentary films.

IV. Capturing the reality :Direct cinema and Cinema Verite

It is needless to say that catching the "reality" is the key of documentary. However, it is not easy to film reality. In front of a camera crew with huge equipment like cameras, lighting instruments, sound recorders, how much can

the subjects behave as naturally as they are in their everyday life? Once the subjects are aware of the camera's presence, they could modify their behavior. As Rabiger says, "Life was too often being staged for the camera and too seldom being caught as it happened"(22). However, this was to change with technological advances of a new handheld camera. The result was a revolution in the relationship of the camera to the subject. Now truly mobile and flexible, the camera and recorder became observers adapting to life as it unfolded. With this newly mobile camera, a new approach to capturing the reality evolved. This new approach was called "direct cinema."

The object of this "direct cinema" was to intrude as little as possible in order to capture the spontaneity and uninhibited flow of live events. Shooting was informally done without special lighting or evident preparations with waiting on the sidelines for events of significance to take place. Direct cinema works best when ongoing events consume the attention of participants. However, the more the camera gains visibility and priority, the less this works. Also the lack of lighting equipment could lessen the picture quality and the film aesthetics.

Another approach to capture reality is "cinema verite (film truth)" In cinema verite, the filmmaker does not try to lessen the camera's presence. Instead, the interaction between the subjects and the filmmaker is even encouraged. By getting involved with the subjects, the filmmaker tries to bring the reality to the surface and capture it. Though the concept of cinema verite was originated with

Jean Rouch in France, we can see the same method reflected earlier in Flaherty's Nanook of the North. In Barsam's Nonfiction film, he wrote:

But the Flaherty philosophy was to engage their interest, understand their problem, obtain their cooperation, and then make himself one of the group by agreeing to live and to suffer with them.(130)

Eric Barnouw described the difference between “direct cinema” and “cinema verite” in his book, Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film as follows:

The direct cinema documentarist took his camera to a situation of tension and waited hopefully for a crisis; the Rouch version of cinema verite tried to precipitate one. The direct cinema artist aspired to invisibility; the Rouch cinema verite artist was often an avowed participant. The direct cinema artist played the role of uninvolved bystander; the cinema verite artist espoused that of provocateur. Direct cinema found its truth in events available to the camera. Cinema verite was committed to a paradox: that artificial circumstances could bring hidden truth to the surface.(254-55)

Though the approach in direct cinema and cinema verite is different, the desire is the same, which is to break down the barriers between the filmmaker and the subject to capture reality as close as is possible.

V. The future of documentary

It is already known that new technology can affect documentary films. The technology will keep growing, and so do documentary films. As digital camera

technology further evolves, the camera and its medium for recording is getting smaller and lighter while even improving its picture quality. Non-linear editing systems make the complex editing of video and audio a lot easier and brings more quality to the work. The spread of cable television has brought audiences diversity in program content which was impossible when the national networks were the only channels to choose. The tendency of niche programming is even getting stronger with upcoming technology such as digital signals transmitted from a satellite system in space, which enable us to have more than 300 channels. The fusion of computer and television with fiber optic cables will bring us a new medium -an interactive TV, which will enable viewers to participate in the program. Technology changes the way of production and distribution which will also affect its content. However, the spirit of documentary is always the same as Rapul Rotha says in Documentary Film . "The documentary film reflects a profound respect for actuality and expresses both the externally visible world and interior world of those being filmed."(68)

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Purpose

There are two main purposes for this program. One : To introduce the world of street dancing to the masses since street dancing has not been taken seriously nor understood. Two : To inform the audience about alternative aspects of Japanese youth since American media coverage of Japanese people has often failed to introduce the life of young generations. This also serves to help break the stereotype of Japanese people created by the American media.

Audience

The target audience of this program is American young people age 15-25 who do not have much chance to know about Japanese people.

Communication Objectives

To demonstrate street dance culture in Japan and its values which are very different from Japanese traditional values.

Program Content

The 32 minute video program titled "Far East Coast is in da House! --street dancers in Japan" introduces hip hop /street dancing culture and its value in Japan. The opening attempts to catch the viewers' attention and invite them

into the story. The strong contrast between the traditional mainstream and the alternative new generation are made effectively by a montage along with the narration. The second section attempts to define what street dancing is. An interview of a street dancer who also had experience in so-called technical dance like classic ballet is introduced. By comparing street dancing and technical dance, one of the most important aspects of street dancing - individuality, is emphasized.

This section also introduces how this culture is practiced in clubs and streets. The third section demonstrates the dancers' involvement in hip hop culture as a whole incorporating music and fashion. Footage of two dancers going to a record store and a clothing store show their involvement and enjoyment of the culture. Their obsession with fashion is explained as pursuit of hipness which later leads dancers to Afro centric hair styles. While showing their styles and the process of their adaptation to the Afro centric hair style, the point is made that young people in Japan today are good at expressing themselves and clothing and hair styles are the tools of self expression. The fourth section focuses on the people who try to promote this culture. The section starts with a brief history of the street dance scene in Japan. Along with the history, a hip hop event organizer is introduced and explains his contributions to the scene. The latter part of the section introduces female dancers who teach younger people to bring more female dancers into the scene and promote this culture. The fifth section demonstrate how Japanese dancers have been influenced by American dancers. Interviews from both Japanese and American dancers help

to show their relationship. The sixth section demonstrates the process of preparing the performance which includes music production, choreography, and rehearsal. After the demonstration of the processes, dancers' feelings while performing is expressed through the interview of a dancer. The last section explains how great it is being a dancer through the interview of a dancer. He talks about his great moment of being one with the music. He also mentions how hip hop culture has positively affected his way of life and became more expressive without being rigidly controlled by other people's eye, which is very common in Japanese society. The program ends with a montage of dancers dancing to attempt to show their individual self-expression and to leave the strong and powerful impression to the viewers.

V. Program Format

Documentary format is used. Even though the objectivity is important issue in documentary, it is not important in this program since it is about culture. Cinema verite method is used to capture reality since the camera man has already known the subjects (dancers) personally.

VI. Program Elements

Montages, interviews, voice-over narrations, music, performance, B-roll, and character generated words.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The evaluation of the thesis was achieved by showing the documentary to a group of 10 members of the target audience. This group consisted of six Caucasians, two Asian Americans, and two African Americans. Six of them are male and four of them are female. Five are undergraduate students from Michigan State University. Two just graduated from high school. Three are graduate students at Michigan State University. Five have a background in video production. Questions about the program content and production values were created and asked after the subjects watched the program.

I. Program content evaluation

There are 9 questions about the program content. Below are questions asked to the focus group followed by a summary of their answers and an evaluation.

Q1. How street dancers are different from other technical dancers like ballet and jazz dancers

-Street dancers are not taught to dance. Originality allows them to express themselves.

-Express individuality. Not form specific

Evaluation

The first section of the program was meant to introduce street dancing to viewers. The most important point in the introduction is that individuality is a very important aspect in this dancing, which attracts Japanese youth who feel oppressed by Japanese tradition. The survey shows that this point was successfully conveyed to the viewers.

Q2. How is hip hop /street dancing culture treated In Japan?

- Street dancers often take it very seriously by incorporating it in all aspects of their lives, the way they dress, their music, their dancing, etc.
- It is an underground culture that is slowly becoming more mainstream.

Evaluation

The program also tried to show that street dancing is taken very seriously by dancers in Japan. This seriousness is shown by their involvement in hip hop culture, efforts to promote this culture, efforts to create performance, and the passion shown during interviews. Most viewers understood the serious involvement of the Japanese youth.

Q3. How has street dancing culturally affected Japanese youth?

- It has taught them to be more self-expressive
- It has motivated them and helped them express themselves.
- It has helped them to break out from social molds.
- Positively; put focus, energy into dancing /constructing direction, cross-over, going global.

Evaluation

Emergence of individualism is the most important theme in this project. The survey shows this theme was clearly presented.

Q4. Why do some Japanese youth get attracted so much by hip hop / street dancing culture?

- Because it is cool, it is fun. You can make friends.
- Outsiders find a community of like-minded people.
- It is rebellious yet a positive experience.

Evaluation

This question is broad and has many answers. But the main reason presented in this program was ; they found hip hop culture to be a stylistic medium to express themselves. This reason was understood by most viewers.

Q5. Did this program change your Impression about Japanese people? If so, how?

- Yes, I didn't know that street dancing was so popular.
- Yes, actually I was shocked because all I knew about Japanese people was from TV here. This program totally broke the stereotype of Japanese people I had.

Evaluation

The stronger reaction was received from people who had not gone to college and did not have much opportunity to know Japanese people. For those people,

their image about Japanese people was that they were hard-working and rigid.

They also did not have any idea about hip hop culture in Japan. This meant that exposure to hip hop culture in Japan had a more powerful impact.

Q6. Did this program change your impression about street dancing? If so, how?

-Yes, more global than realized

-yes, it is interesting

-it is deeper than I thought

Evaluation

Since the street dancing is not taken seriously by most people, this program successfully made people realized its deep meanings and values.

Q7. Please rank your general attentiveness while watching this program

High Above Average Average Below Average Low

7 people answered "High" and 3 people answered "Above Average".

Evaluation

This result shows that the program strongly kept viewers' attention.

Q8. Which of the following categories best describes your general enjoyment of this program?

High Above Average Average Below Average Low

8 people answered "High" and 2 people answered "Above Average"

Evaluation

It is clear that the viewers enjoyed the program very much.

Q9. What was the emotion right after you watched the whole program?

- impressed by dancers' abilities and performance
- I felt good.
- Excitement, I also felt inspired

Evaluation

This question was asked to see if the ending left a good impression of the whole show. Apparently it did.

II. Production evaluation

Questions about production elements were asked to 5 viewers who had video production background. The evaluation is made after analyzing all comments.

Interview contents

The contents were good and very informative.

Narration

All comments were highly positive. Narrator's voice and his expression fit the content of the program. However, one person commented that narration played too large a role to tell the story.

Quality of Image

Overall good. Good angle and good camera movements. But some of the footage did not have enough lighting, which lessened the quality. One person commented that more close up and medium shots of dancing shots were necessary.

Quality of sound

The music added to the flow of the program, helping to get from one scene to another. However, some parts of the timing of inserting voice overs to the background music was off.

Use of English voice overs for Japanese Interviews parts

It seems that the quality of the voice overs were a little lower than other production elements. Some worked better than others. The passion that the interviewees had in the original Japanese footage did not seem to be expressed well in English voice overs.

Pacing

Some people commented that it was good. Others commented that it could have been a little faster and shorter.

What one thing could have been Improved?

- It was clear that the main theme was the rise of individualism through street dancing culture. However, this theme was presented only by dancing footage. It could be more interesting if this theme was presented by other types of footage when dancers were not dancing.
- Even though each content was good, there were many places that I thought this was the ending. It didn't focus and build up one theme.
- Professional voice overs

Overall Impresslon, any other comment

- Amazement at finding out about this underground culture in Japan.
- I truly enjoyed the presentation. I was shocked to see that they danced and dressed like me an African American.
- I think the video was very entertaining. It also explains a lot about the hip hop dancing scene in Japan that most people wouldn't know how kids in the parts of the world appreciated hip hop culture. It also amazed me that the dancers are so good almost or as good as the original dancers.
- I was impressed overall. But, I still feel confused or jumbled with actual content. But the dancing is amazing.
- I would not change the content. However, there were few technical changes I would make.

III. Discussion

From the evaluations, discussion about several aspects are made for future improvement.

Use of English Voice overs for Japanese Interviews parts

The one thing that could improve the program most is the quality of the voice overs for the Japanese interview parts. Ideally, the voice overs in this program should be done by Japanese people who speak good English yet with some Japanese accent. Good expressive acting is also required. However, it was difficult to find those people especially because it is very hard for Japanese people to act well in their second language. Because of this, American people were used to record the voice overs. In addition to the fact that the voice overs with Japanese accent was not used, the voice overs could also be improved by making them sound as passionate as the original Japanese interviews.

Passionate voice overs could help demonstrate how Japanese dancers are seriously involved in the street dance culture. In addition to this, some of the elements in the original interviews were lost because of the way they were translated into English. The use of more casual language such as street language could work better to convey a more accurate image of the interviewees.

Use of narration

Another thing that could be improved is the use of narrator. One person from the focus group mentioned that the narration played too much role to tell the story. This happened because information that the narrator gave was originally given by dancers in interviews. Those were replaced to summarize the original comments for the purpose of shortening them and creating a smooth flow of the program.

Quality of Image

The quality of image might be improved by using more close up shots and medium shots of dancing footage. Because most of the dancing footage was provided by other sources, there was little control over this by the producer. This footage was originally meant to show the whole movement of the dancers for the possibility of the viewer's instructional use. Since this program is not meant to be instructional, the use of close up of the face, arms, legs and other parts of body would work to intensify the movement and its excitement.

Other matters

It was noticed that most information given by the interviews was rather more general than personal, which might make the viewers' emotional involvement weak. The lack of personal content also makes the program less dramatic. This may have happened because the program attempted to present too many

themes. Themes should be more focused so that more personal interviews can be used.

Despite these aspects, the viewers' overall attentiveness and enjoyment of the program were very high. The uniqueness of the subject, which is hip hop culture in Japan, and complex editing of several audio tracks and videos might have contributed to this result.

IV. Conclusion

The 32 minute documentary program "Far East Coast is in da House! -Street Dancers in Japan" effectively achieved its communication objective which is to demonstrate street dance culture in Japan and its values which are different from Japanese traditional values. It turned out to be very entertaining at the same time very informative and culturally interesting. There are some criticisms regarding both the content and the production which could be incorporated in documentary projects in the future.

Through this program, the misconception of hip hop culture and Japanese people can be modified. The audience would realize that there are people who get involved in hip hop culture in other parts of the world, which unites people through this global culture beyond the differences of race and language.

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