myth making is often a part of music marketing, and Japanese hip-hop is no exception. On the introductory track of his 1997 album, the rapper ECD evokes “the beginning of the legend” by reciting the names of the seminal New York City DJs Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash as well as the rappers KRS-1 and Rakim. It was, he intones, “a revolution, scratching two records and making one music” (hitotsu no ongaku). He then describes the arrival of hip-hop in Japan as a flying spark (tobihii) that traveled from the Bronx across the ocean to light a fire.¹ This image of a flying spark is important, for it reminds us that although popular music styles travel on the winds of global capitalism, they ultimately burn or die out on local fuel.

One of the challenges in understanding the shape of cultural forms in the contemporary world is to analyze the influence of enormous media conglomerates. To what extent do they guide the uses and meanings of popular culture in everyday life? What other actors and social spaces are key to grasping local appropriations of global styles? The story of hip-hop in Japan — how it was introduced, how it evolved — offers clues as to the dynamic interaction between culture and economics in the twenty-first century.

Japanese hip-hop and other versions around the world are interesting in part because they help us understand the significance of what seems to be an emerging global popular culture. The idea that the boundaries of nation, culture, and language are becoming more permeable and that “flows” need to be given more analytical attention has surfaced in a number of important ways (Appadurai 1996; During 1997; Featherstone and Lash 1995; Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Television shows such as Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? and Big Brother
spawn copycat versions in different national settings. Hollywood films are reaching broader, more international audiences, MTV is beaming its images around the world, and geographically diverse urban youth are adopting the clothing and stance of foreign stars thanks to such new modes of communication. But at the same time, Japanese hip-hop has some intriguing local features. In its lyrics there are no guns, no misogyny, and little violence. Beer is the most common drug mentioned, and when other drugs are present the sentiment tends to be “marijuana good, amphetamines bad.” Not a single Japanese rap lyric mentions crack cocaine. Japanese MCs engage in much of the same kind of boasting one might find elsewhere—“I’m the number one rapper”—but the language is Japanese, as are the images of schools, television, and daily life that pepper the songs. Moreover, hip-hop appears in its various aspects, from extensive graffiti walls in Yokohama, to breakdancers in Tokyo public parks, to DJ shows on television. The focus of this essay is on the Japanese rap music scene, but it is important to recognize that there is a range of local takes on what hip-hop is and should be.

At the same time, it would be a mistake to ignore the interactions between foreign centers of production and the local forms. Japanese hip-hop artists and club DJs follow the trends in the United States very closely, adopting the music that they like the best, playing it in the clubs, and producing their own work in that context. One of the interesting aspects of the Tokyo hip-hop club scene is that East Coast styles—with their faster tempos, sharper rhythms and textures, and often more lyrically dense songs—tend to be more popular than the West Coast, often more mellow, G-funk style, with its slower tempos, more minimal bass lines, and sampled textures in an R&B vein. Some Japanese DJs suggest that this is because Tokyo is more like New York (subways, high population density, no beach) than Los Angeles. Some also point out that Japanese pop music, at least in the 1990s, tended to have a fairly quick tempo, and thus an East Coast style was more amenable to the clubbers’ ears. It is also significant that New York is regarded as hip-hop’s historical place of origin, so Tokyo fans and artists tend to view that area as producing the more authentic style. The prominence of New York artists in Japan, as compared to the United States where West Coast artists tend to sell more albums, points to one of the local aspects of the market and the fans. This also shows how foreign styles are used by Japanese listeners to define what Japan (or Tokyo) means to them. In this sense, hip-hop in Japan is part of a “global culture” because it cannot be understood solely in local terms.

There is, however, a wide-ranging debate about how one should interpret the significance of such forms. Connections arising from technologies of communication are what some analysts highlight. Scott Lash and John Urry,
for example, argue that the structural basis of society must be reconceived because social structures that are national in scope are being displaced by global information and communication structures (Lash and Urry 1994: 6). Distinctiveness of new forms in local areas is emphasized by others. Daniel Miller (1995: 2) notes that although mass-consumption goods are commonly viewed as subsuming and suppressing cultural difference, in fact the opposite might be true. He argues that an “unprecedented diversity created by differential consumption” creates new forms of difference, which should be treated “not as continuity, or even syncretism with prior traditions, but as quite novel forms, which arise through the contemporary exploration of new possibilities” (Miller 1995: 3). This contrast between the standardizing or linking-up aspect of globalization and its diversifying or hybridization aspect is a key theoretical dilemma examined in more detail below.

In this chapter, I explore the history and current scene of Japanese rap music, from its origins in the early 1980s via seminal films to today’s expression in all-night hip-hop clubs in Tokyo and its gradual appearance in mainstream pop. My aim is to show what an ethnographic perspective on Japanese hip-hop can tell us about the interaction between a global cultural form and local appropriations. I argue that Japanese hip-hop needs to be understood not as some disembodied flow of culture from one locale to another, but rather in terms of cultural production that is animated through the local scene and the national market. Local musicians and record companies are both involved in the production of music, but their orientations are somewhat different. The role of record companies is largely one of choosing among the musicians already out there and selecting from songs they have already produced. As I will discuss later, record companies’ interest or neglect depends heavily on the appearance of crossover hits, especially those songs that sell over a million singles. In this case, the crossover is from a small core of committed fans to a larger, more mainstream mass of consumers. The primary orientation of Japanese DJs and rappers, however, is toward all-night hip-hop clubs, which they call the “actual site” (genba) of the scene. As discussed later, it is in the clubs that musicians hone their musical styles and lyrics in front of discriminating live audiences. Both the commercial pop market and the sweaty nightclubs are central to understanding the production of Japanese hip-hop. My emphasis is on cultural production, because in some ways the idea of “flows” gives the wrong impression. One could consider hip-hop as being like water, flowing underground before emerging into more visible mainstreams on the surface. But in other ways hip-hop does not flow unchanged from one locale to the next, as the variety of examples in this volume make clear. Instead, I would em-
phalyze the flame metaphor, because it is the spark and the local fuel together that make the fire burn with its own particular range of colors.

**JAPAN, GLOBALIZATION, AND MUSIC**

The significance of Japanese hip-hop relies in part on how we analyze the link between cultural forms and economic power in an age of globalization. Fredric Jameson (1998) notes that evaluations of globalization tend to differ dramatically depending on whether one begins with a cultural or an economic frame of reference. If you focus on the cultural contents of global communication, he argues, “you will slowly emerge into a postmodern celebration of difference and differentiation: suddenly all the cultures around the world are placed in tolerant contact with each other in a kind of immense cultural pluralism which it would be very difficult not to welcome” (Jameson 1998: 56–57). If, on the other hand, you emphasize an economic perspective, “what comes to the fore is increasing identity (rather than difference): the rapid assimilation of hitherto autonomous national markets and productive zones into a single sphere . . . a picture of standardization on an unparalleled new scale” (1998: 57). The distinction could not be more stark, and it highlights both the excitement and the anxieties associated with globalization.

Is hip-hop in Japan merely “global noise” drowning out local song? Or is Japanese hip-hop an example of a vibrant hybridity of contemporary culture — global noise from the periphery shouting back? Jameson argues that the importance of any given region hinges on the vitality of its cultural products: “fresh cultural production and innovation — and this means in the area of mass consumed culture — are the crucial index of the centrality of a given area and not its wealth or productive power” (1999: 67). Although this formulation raises some thorny questions (for example, what is “fresh”?), it does focus our attention on the key issue of how we should relate local cultural production to the economic setting.²

The Japanese market is instructive for a number of reasons. Japan is the second-largest recorded-music market in the world, and sales are dominated by Japanese artists. With a population of 126 million people and per capita spending slightly higher than in the United States, 1997 sales of recorded music in Japan totaled ¥588 billion (U.S. $6.8 billion) (RIAJ 1999: 23). This is a little over half the size of the U.S. market.³ Although Western artists are quite popular, Japanese artists dominate the market in a ratio of three to one. It was not always this way. From the end of World War II until 1967, Western records outsold Japanese albums (Kawabata 1991). But from 1968 on, Japanese artists have outsold their Western counterparts. Year by

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2 A History of Japanese Hip-Hop : 225
year, Japanese musicians have steadily increased their market share such that in 1998, Japanese artists accounted for 77.5 percent of sales (RIAJ 1999: 7). Japan’s vibrant and at least semiautonomous national market supports a wide range of local artists.

Japan is also instructive because of its frequently cited proclivity to adopt and adapt foreign cultural forms. Certainly the Japanese have a long history of appropriating foreign ideas, objects, and systems to suit their needs. The writing system, for example, was imported from China in the eighth century. Roland Robertson (1992: 177–78) argues that the syncretism of Japanese religion, namely the importation of Buddhism and its linkage with indigenous Shinto forms, has given Japan a privileged role in the current round of globalization. Arjun Appadurai (1996: 37) notes that “the Japanese are notoriously hospitable to ideas and are stereotyped as inclined to export (all) and import (some) goods, but they are also notoriously closed to immigration.” One could point to other historical examples of Japanese adaptation to ideas from the outside. In the late nineteenth century, after two hundred years of isolation imposed by the military government, Japan entered a rapid phase of appropriating Western traits from clothing styles to educational institutions to military tactics. After World War II, the Allied occupation forces also introduced a variety of Western ideas and institutions to Japan, not to mention a wide range of music and dance styles.

Despite these examples, it is dangerous to assert a propensity to appropriate foreign things as inherent in Japan’s national character, as if Japanese of all times and circumstances have essentially the same openness to borrowing and syncretism. During the Meiji Restoration of the late nineteenth century, Japanese borrowed from the West to catch up to European colonial powers. After the devastation of World War II, the introduction of Western ideas offered a contrast to the wartime, militarist, and nativist ideology of the nation-state. In postwar Japan, the central dynamic is one of a highly advanced consumer society within the world’s second-largest economy. Too often Japan is characterized by broad generalizations—for instance, that it is a nation of imitators, not innovators. We need a clearer sense of the specific dynamics of cultural imports; music offers a useful case study.

Western music styles have been incorporated locally at least since the beginning of the twentieth century, when marching bands and French chansons could be heard in Japan. In the postwar period, various styles have served as a backdrop for youth culture, including jazz in the 1950s, folk in the 1960s, rock in the 1970s, and teen idols in the 1980s (Hosokawa et al. 1991). A clear trend is that foreign styles are initially consumed as foreign, but gradually the local appropriations come to dominate the market. Japan’s folk
music scene of the 1960s, for example, began with Japanese groups singing Peter, Paul, and Mary songs in English. Over time Japanese artists began using the music of the West, but writing Japanese lyrics with pointed social critiques. Nakagawa Gorō’s 1961 “Jukensei Burūsu” (Exam-Student Blues), for example, is a lament about the exam-oriented educational system, set to the tune of a Bob Dylan song. Today, some hip-hop artists liken their music to Japanese folk of the 1960s in that they are the voice of youth disenchanted by the dominant ideologies of what came to be known as “new middle-class” Japan.

Yet for the most part, the political pointedness of Japan’s folk music of the 1960s is absent from today’s hip-hop. When folk music was on the rise, Japan was subject to political unrest related to students’ mistrust of the U.S.-Japan security arrangements. The country was also in the midst of spectacular economic growth, increasing urbanization, declining birthrate, and a growing number of households of nuclear, not extended, families. In the mid-1970s the oil crisis and a sharp fluctuation in exchange rates led to a more uncertain period of adjustment. In the 1980s Japan emerged even stronger as an economic superpower, and today’s young rappers spent their early years in this time of the bubble economy. From the early 1990s to the beginning of 2000, Japan’s economy has been caught in a recession, and so the current generation of high school and college graduates is facing relatively bleak employment prospects as unemployment, especially among the young, continues to rise. This uncertain economic environment is part of the context of contemporary Japanese hip-hop. Songs by K Dub Shine, for example, consistently criticize the “heartless commercialism” of wealthy Japan. While these broader political economic trends are important to keep in mind, in many ways more personal social dynamics were more important for understanding the first imports of hip-hop.

*The First Spark: A Breakdance Boom*

One of the interesting features of hip-hop in Japan is that it came via breakdance. A common characterization of hip-hop in both U.S. and Japanese music magazines is to describe hip-hop culture as composed of four main elements: rap, DJing, breakdancing, and graffiti. Since rap albums have become more commercially successful, relatively speaking, than DJing, breakdancing, or graffiti, one might assume that flows along channels of global capitalism would be guided by record companies. Not so in Japan, at least not at first. There breakdancing was the first aspect of hip-hop to experience a “boom” (*buumu*), as fads are called in Japan. Over time DJing, rap, and graffiti appeared, in roughly that order. This is a reminder that trans-
national flows of popular culture are not driven solely by media companies’ profit margins, but rather by a more complex interaction between foreign and local scenes.

The seminal moment for breakdancing in Japan was 1983, when *Wild Style*, a low-budget film featuring the first generation of U.S. rappers, DJs, and breakdancers, was shown in Tokyo theaters. Performers who appeared in the movie, such as the breakdance team Rock Steady Crew, came to Japan at the same time and performed in Tokyo discos and department stores. ECD, now a key figure as rapper and producer, recalls one of these shows: “Actually, when I saw those guys, I didn’t really understand what the rappers and DJs were doing. In terms of what left a lasting impact, I can’t remember a thing except the breakdancing” (Fujita 1996: 9). Films conveyed the exuberant athleticism of breakdancing that mesmerized a range of Japanese youth, mostly boys. Another hip-hopper, Crazy-A, relates being reluctantly dragged by his girlfriend to see the movie *Flashdance* but then spellbound by the breakdance scene. Now the leader of the hip-hop outfit Rock Steady Crew Japan, Crazy-A believes that the appeal of breakdancing is its combination of aggressive showmanship without the violence of fighting. It is a dance form where one competes in a very masculine way.

These aspects of breakdance as competition and performance point to the need to develop teams in a place where people will watch. Tokyo in the 1980s had just the spot. Yoyogi Park, between the youth shopping districts of Shibuya and Harajuku in Tokyo, is a gathering point for all manner of youthful fans and performers, and it provided a central meeting point for Japanese breakdancers as well. Crazy-A had heard that breakers were gathering on Sundays on a street called Hokoten, an abbreviation of a word meaning “pedestrian paradise.” There, every Sunday, traffic was stopped while diverse bands and dancers gathered to perform outdoors. When Crazy-A went to see, however, “there was only this older guy who had a big Disco Robo [boom box] playing rap music.” He continues: “But as time went on, people like me gradually gathered there to listen to the music. Once there were about three or four of us, we gradually started to adopt the posture (soburi), and move to the rhythm. More people would come by, and I’d ask if anyone knew where there was dancing going on, but no one was doing it. Then I suggested that maybe we should start, the four of us, and from the next week on, every week, we danced. At first we did it with a radio cassette and cardboard laid out on the ground. Sometimes there was a turntable and PA [public address] system. It was like a block party, a natural phenomenon [shizen genshō]. And then people like B-Fresh started up too” (interview by the author 1997). That began in the winter of 1984. By the next year, Crazy-A
was dancing on television on a weekly music show and also as a back-up dancer for a teen idol. This exposure, along with another movie, called *Breakdance*, released in 1985, is credited with initiating the first of several breakdancing booms. DJ Krush, something of a cult figure in Japan and abroad, also started out playing on Hokoten backing up B-Fresh, the first Japanese rap group to record with a major label.7

These early breakers learned primarily from movies and videos and then practiced outdoors with friends. I would stress that the effect of the films must be understood in the context of the weekly practices in the park. In other words, the breakdancing boom did not emerge simply because of the films, but because people who had seen the films also found places to meet and perform together. Interestingly, it seems that breakdancing in New York City owes a debt to movies from East Asia. According to Crazy Legs, a leader of RSC, “The only place I’d say we learned moves from, which was universal for a lot of dancers, was karate flicks on Forty-second Street, ’cause those movies are filmed the best, you could see the movement of the whole body” (Fernando 1994). A striking feature of global flows of popular culture, then, is that dance—movement of the body—moves easily across linguistic and cultural boundaries, and that movies and videos are a primary channel for this exchange. Nevertheless, breakdance also illustrates how media may convey images, practices, and ideas, but the social value of these imports depends on having a group of people get together and work on them. Hokoten, the pedestrian paradise, attracted both interested participants and curious onlookers in a way that generates the feedback between performer and audience critical to developing a new style. Another important space for the development of Japanese hip-hop were all-night dance clubs.

**CLUBS: DISCO INFERNO**

During the 1980s and the early days of hip-hop in Japan, discos were the trendiest spots for the in crowd. The first rap hit, “Rappers Delight,” by the Sugar Hill Gang, is usually cited as the start of hip-hop history, and the song traveled even to Tokyo discos that year (Egaitu 1997). As the 1980s progressed, rappers and DJs became more active in the club scene. As MC Bell of B-Fresh puts it:

When you talk about Japanese hip hop, you definitely have to recognize that there are two streams. One is that of Itō Seiko and Tiny Punx, what might be called the classy [oshare] style that started with the people who frequented clubs. The other stream started with Hokoten (“pedestrian paradise”) in Harajuku. At Harajuku’s Hokoten, it started with break danc-
ing. If you consider that hip-hop culture developed in stages, the first way we [B-Fresh] took up hip hop was breakdance. (Bell and Cake-K 1998)

Clubs were the primary focus for musicians, and a variety of groups crossed over from other genres. Takagi Kan came over from punk, Chikada Haruo had already released several rock albums before he adopted the moniker President BPM and formed the band Vibrastone, and so on. The idea of clubs as “classy” locales is a reference to the new breed of conspicuous consumers known as the shinjinrui, who were twentysomething urbanites enamored of foreign brand-name items. They were symbolic of the wealth and ephemeral consumption of the 1980s bubble economy.

Two trends in the Tokyo club scene in the mid- to late 1980s are worth highlighting. As the decade progressed, people could get more timely access to U.S. music, and this contributed to an increasing compartmentalization of separate scenes. New songs and new artists were becoming known more quickly as Japanese fans, at least in Tokyo, were able to learn of the latest trends more or less immediately. In other words, mass culture was becoming more widely diffused, more quickly, another example of what David Harvey (1990) calls time-space compression. On the other hand, a growing depth of media exchange was occurring as well, gradually changing the equation for those wishing to be up to date. More specialized forums for hip-hop gradually appeared. In 1986 a club called Hip Hop opened in Shibuya and was the first space devoted solely to the genre. DJ Yutaka, who splits his time between Tokyo and Los Angeles and who works with Ice-T, was a regular there. That same year a Yokohama radio station began airing the “scratch mix” of the hip-hop DJ collective MID (Egaitsu 1997). In 1987 a television comedy show featured rappers giving the weather report. Specialty magazines began covering hip-hop in greater detail as well, which meant that there was also a deepening compartmentalization of the hip-hop scene as more and more media options became available. From 1988 to 1992 the scene picked up energy in part from a growing number of club events that featured contests for rappers, DJs, and breakdancers. Some were sponsored by companies selling DJ equipment (e.g., Vestax). The DJ Underground Contest, first held in 1988, featured many of the prominent artists of today. Major Force, a hip-hop and dance-music label founded by Takagi Kan and others, began producing albums in 1988. In 1989 ECD started the Check Your Mic contest, which continued off and on for five years; a live album was even produced. That same year a flood of U.S. artists traveled to Japan to perform, including the Jungle Brothers, 45 King, and De La Soul. After
Public Enemy's show, which featured armed security guards pretending to spray the audience with machine-gun fire, Japanese rap groups began to include motionless, silent, brooding “security” to their onstage shows, a practice laughed about today. The Little Bird Nation, led by the wordplay rappers Scha Dara Parr, coalesced in 1990, as did Zingi (DJ Bass, Dohzi-T, Zingi, etc.), a brash and noisy group of hip-hop artists whose name refers to a gang’s moral code. The year 1990 also saw a second breakdancing boom when Bobby Brown visited Japan. A year later the television show Dance yochien (Dance Tournament) spread the excitement of breakdancing further.

This dual process, whereby big clubs became more specialized and television broadcast aspects of hip-hop music and dance, points to some underlying mechanisms in the spread of a new style. In his study of the growth of sugar consumption in Britain, Sidney Mintz (1985) traced the complex linkages between slavery, trade, and household habits. Two important concepts he used for analyzing changes in consumption habits are extensification and intensification. Extensification refers to the process whereby a broader range of people gain access to a given commodity. Sugar gradually changed from a luxury for the elite to a staple for the masses. With popular music, extensification comes through expanded media coverage in television and through the appearance of hit songs. Intensification is the process by which a taste becomes more important—for example, through a ritual such as taking one’s daily tea with sugar. In the case of Japanese rap, movies, videos, and live performances were key means by which hip-hop was experienced with sufficient extensiveness to encourage emulation. But above all, for the style to develop locally, years of intensive back-and-forth circulation between would-be rappers and their audiences led to the emergence of diverse families of rap groups within the club scene.

Although the club scene was developing during the 1980s, record companies gave only a lukewarm reception to up-and-coming Japanese rappers, in part because of a deep-seated skepticism about whether the Japanese language could be used for rap music. It is this issue I turn to next.

**Language: The Impossible Wall**

Language is a key variable for understanding Japanese hip-hop and for transnational exchanges more generally. When we consider cultural globalization, we need to examine what actually moves across the cultural divide, because that is how to get a sense of what kind of divide it is. In Japan the lyrical content of U.S. rap songs is to a large degree unappreciated, though the flow of the rapper’s voice is dissected and analyzed in quite fine detail.
The attraction is more the “grain of the voice,” as Barthes says (1990: 293), than the meaning of the words. The puns, the slang, the sly references and often even the main ideas are lost on most Japanese listeners. A DJ friend, wondering about the lyrics of one of his favorite songs, was shocked to learn that “We love smokin’ that chronic” refers to marijuana. Although Japanese releases of U.S. hip-hop albums often include translations of the lyrics, my experience interviewing clubbers and Japanese rappers indicates that not a lot of attention is paid to the subtleties of U.S. rappers’ words. In contrast, there is intense discussion and analysis of the samples that make up the music track. There is even a book that describes the source of the original samples used in a variety of so-called Shibuya-style musicians’ albums, such as those of Scha Dara Parr (Murata 1997). Thus, one of the effects of language differences is to make the importance of U.S. hip-hop albums depend largely on the music rather than the lyrics.

Language differences were also viewed as a major hurdle for Japanese rappers to overcome. The period between 1992 and 1994 is regarded as an ice age (hyōgaki) for Japanese rap, and few albums were released. For one thing, record companies were fairly unenthusiastic about the genre, which had failed to produce any big hits. But they were also skeptical because they viewed the Japanese language as inherently deficient for producing the rhythm and rhyme that characterizes rap vocals. Japanese, in contrast to English, is an unaccented language; that is, each syllable in a word receives the same amount of stress. Rappers must artificially add stress to certain syllables to give the rap lyrics the necessary rhythmic punctuation. This makes it “sound” like English. Rhyming is difficult because of the grammatical structure, which places the verb at the end of the sentence: the limited number of verb endings makes it difficult to create striking rhymes. This was the story I heard from Japanese rappers and from record-company people during preliminary fieldwork in the summer of 1994. Microphone Pager, a group whose members include the rappers Muro and Twigy, even referred to this language difference as “the impossible wall” and, rhyming with the English phrase “got it goin’ on,” exhorted Japanese to cross over it (fukanō na kabe nori koerō). By the summer of 1996, when I began a year and a half of extended fieldwork in Tokyo, this deficiency of the language was seldom talked about, and the relationship between the recording industry and Japanese rappers had changed markedly. Why? One reason was that a range of new releases showed that it was possible to use the Japanese language to produce a rap rhythm. What convinced record companies to take another look at the genre, however, was the appearance of several million-selling Japanese rap hits.
Crossover Hits 1: The East End X Yuri Phenomenon

In 1994, the rap trio Scha Dara Parr teamed up with the guitarist-songwriter Ozawa Kenji to produce the first million-selling rap hit, a mellow funk song called “Kon’ya wa būgi bakku” (Boogie Back Tonight) that was an anthem to hanging out with friends and flirting with women in clubs.¹⁰ Music magazines heralded this as evidence of the establishment of a bona-fide rap scene because it was now capable of producing hits. Then in the summer of 1995, East End X Yuri (the “X” is read “plus”) produced a couple of million-selling hit songs (“Da Yo Ne!” and “Maicca”), both of which capitalized on using teenage slang combined with a carefree attitude toward everything from school to love affairs.¹¹ These commercial successes prompted a wave of publicity in music magazines, and the term “J-rap” was coined to represent the up-and-coming new genre. Major record companies began to show interest in a variety of hip-hop groups that had been languishing on independent labels. It is important to note that most of these groups had been performing for years when the major labels finally decided to record and promote their new work. Record companies did not create new acts; rather, they showed new interest in the hopes of cashing in on a new wave of interest. Groups that emphasized a more playful approach—“party rap”—were signed to several major companies. EDU was one of these groups, and they benefited from a vastly increased budget for promoting their work and for a weekly live event in a Harajuku club.

Not all rappers were enthusiastic about the J-rap boom. For some hip-hop groups, East End X Yuri’s success meant that the sickening commercialism of Japanese pop culture had invaded even hip-hop. They viewed people like Yuri as posers who forsook the oppositional stance at the root of hip-hop culture in favor of a superficial pop song with a distinctive rap style. Party-rap groups countered that lighthearted rap was much more appropriate to Japanese teens than the preachy, self-important boasting of underground groups. The two perspectives built on each other as the fan base for party rap as opposed to underground hip-hop diverged. On television, East End X Yuri performed on the Japanese national network NHK’s year-end musical extravaganza in 1995. Meanwhile, the underground hip-hop collective Kaminari held to a tougher, more abrasive ethic, performing to packed clubs and eventually moving to Club Citta in Kawasaki, a venue holding over a thousand b-boys and b-girls for their semiregular event, called Onidamari (literally, “devils’ gathering”).

The composition of the fans for the two styles was almost completely different as well. The split in the scene is portrayed most starkly by a pair of outdoor concerts held only a week apart in July 1996. The first, Thumpin'
Camp, was organized by ECD and featured over thirty artists from the underground scene. The sellout crowd of 4,000 was roughly 80 percent male. The fashion, gestures, and atmosphere emphasized building an authentic hip-hop culture in Japan, which was defined largely by an oppositional stance to mainstream culture. K Dub Shine, for example, called on the audience to yell loudly enough to disturb the then scandal-ridden Ministry of Health. The next week, Scha Dara Parr and friends held the Dai LB Matsuri (Big Little Bird Festival) in the same outdoor amphitheater in a downtown Tokyo park. They too had a sellout crowd, but here the audience was 80 percent female, and the atmosphere was one of a playful romp with rap lyrics and style. Spoofs of popular Japanese television programs as part of the show exemplified a more sympathetic attitude toward mainstream popular culture. There seemed to be little overlap between the audiences of the two events.

Although the distinction between party rap and underground hip-hop is a recurring theme in the Japanese scene, the energy of the debate waned in the latter half of the 1990s. The J-rap boom had subsided significantly by mid-1997, when subsequent releases by East End X Yuri failed to live up to the high expectations held by their record company. Shortly thereafter Yuri and East End went their separate ways. Meanwhile, many of the groups signed to major labels were also let go, including EDU and Cake-K, who were also more closely aligned with the party rap style. On the other hand, so-called underground groups gradually became more established, if not in mainstream pop, at least in terms of building up a core of fans. Hip-hop music continued to be produced, but the main venues returned to being all-night dance clubs. In many ways, it is this setting that most helps us understand the particulars of Japanese hip-hop production.

*The Club as “Actual Site”: A Visit to Harlem (the One in Tokyo)*

*Dokō ga riaru?*  
Where is the “real”?  

*Sore wa genba*  
In the clubs  

*Tsumari koko ni aru*  
In other words, right here  
—Rhymester13

In the spring of 1999, when I returned for a brief research trip, the flagship for the Japanese hip-hop scene was a club called Harlem. Nestled in the love-hotel area of Shibuya, a shopping district of Tokyo targeted at youth, Harlem was the largest hip-hop club in Tokyo, attracting upward of 1,000 people on a busy Friday or Saturday night. Incidentally, if you want to find the happening hip-hop shows, a good method is to check the flyers posted at
Manhattan Records, not far from Shibuya's main thoroughfare, and look for shows featuring popular club acts such as Rhymester, Zeebra, DJ Kensei, and DJ Krush. The flyers also have maps to the clubs, which is useful because there is no sign out in front of Harlem; a well-dressed bouncer with long hair is the only indication that a club is inside. It seems there are always a couple of clubbers out front talking on their tiny cell phones (it is too loud inside to use them). If we were going to a club, we would probably meet at around midnight, since the main action seldom gets started before 1:00 A.M., just after the trains stop running for the night. At the door, we head up the stairs, past a table filled with flyers advertising upcoming hip-hop events at Harlem and elsewhere. We pay our ¥3,000 each (around $30, which may seem expensive, but it is only about half again as much as a movie ticket), and move into the circulating and sweaty mass inside.

The first thing you notice is the booming bass coming from the enormous speakers. It literally thuds through your body, massaging your bones. The records are mostly U.S. hip-hop tunes, both classics and more recent releases, mixed in with an array of Japanese rap songs as well. On the wall behind the DJ stage, Bruce Lee videos and Japanese animé provide a backdrop of violence and mayhem, but on the dance floor a detached coolness pervades the space. The clubbers dancing are split between couples and same-sex groups, with quite a bit of circulating and flirting going on. A Japanese MC occasionally shouts out encouragement to the audience to get riled up. DJ Master Key may be showing off his scratch technique, and a group of breakdancers may be holding an impromptu battle on the dance floor. There are an additional bar and dance area upstairs, as well as a VIP lounge where rappers and DJs of diverse groups will meet, gossip, and network. The live show will begin around 1:30 A.M., but in the meantime, people are circulating, flirting, and exchanging news and views in an environment of play heightened by loud music, alcohol, and cigarettes. There are usually more women than men, about a sixty-forty split. A few gaijin (foreigners) linger about, but for the most part the place is by Japanese for Japanese, a space where they can be b-boys and b-girls to their hearts' content, until they go back to school or their mindless service jobs the next day.

Clubs are regarded by musicians, promoters, and fans alike as the actual site (genba) of the Japanese rap music scene, where one finds the most devoted and most critical fans, where professionalism in performance is gauged most heavily, and where the health of the scene is on display. They all agree that you cannot understand Japanese hip-hop unless you spend time in the clubs. Thanks to the huge sound (dekai oto), the physical intimacy of performers and audience, and the loosening effect of alcohol, clubs are a space

*A History of Japanese Hip-Hop* : 235
where an ideal hip-hop world can be given free play, precisely because it is such a circumscribed location. The word *genba* is made up of the kanji characters “to appear” and “place,” thus meaning “the place where something happens”—a crime, an accident, a job site, or, in this case, hip-hop itself. Clubs represent a kind of crossroads, where foreign and local music mix and are remixed and where fans, musicians, and media and industry people keep in touch with each other.

Clubs are central sites in part because they tell us about the pleasures of rap music in Japan, a pleasure that arises even when the lyrics of U.S. rappers (and often those of Japanese rappers too) cannot be understood. Because club kids play while almost everyone else sleeps, the clubber’s experience is defined by the sense of moving against the stream in time and space, yet residing within the confines of a larger mainstream. It is analogous, perhaps, to the way a personal CD player eliminates the sound of the endless “be careful” announcements at Japanese train stations, though the train doors open and close at the same time for everyone. Moreover, club events encourage a heightened emotional intensity that becomes associated with the music. Ideally, one gets caught up in the drama of the show, and the excitement of the audience compounds the energy in the space. A key word is *moriagaru*, which means “to get thrilled” and has the connotation of emotion piling up on emotion. Emile Durkheim speaks of the effect of religious thought bringing about heightened mental activity, which he calls “effervescence,” in terms that could easily apply to a hip-hop club: “Vital energies are overexcited, passions more active, sensations stronger; there are even some that are produced only at this moment. A man does not recognize himself; he feels himself transformed and consequently he transforms the environment which surrounds him” (Durkheim 1993: 99). It is analogous to Durkheim’s notion of the sacred in being “something added to and above the real” (99).

Clubs, by analogy, are b-boy heaven. At home, his parents ridicule his hair and his clothes. His sister hates his music. His teachers tell him to study more. But in the club, the time spent reading music magazines, listening to music, and scouring record store bins pays off as a form of cultural capital, a way of communicating among friends and acquaintances who may not live in the same area or work the same kinds of jobs.

How do the rappers speak to their fans? There is a wide range of hip-hop styles for almost every taste. Zebra, arguably the most gifted stage presence on the Japanese hip-hop scene, offers an energetic hardcore style filled with references to sex and marijuana and lyrics with intriguing bilingual rhymes. The group Rhymester, which formed when the members were students at prestigious Waseda University, are notable for a wry sense of humor, jabbing
fun at Japanese society and even their own fans. Buddha Brand presents a mellow funk mix of Japanese sprinkled with English slang, an outgrowth of their early years of performing in New York City. Some groups, such as You the Rock and Shakkazombie, have exciting stage shows, while others, such as Rino and K-Dub Shine, put forth a cooler, more restrained style. EDU offers an upbeat show focusing on relationships and emotions, while TAK the Rhymehead gives cerebral rhymes in a lilting delivery on subjects like the homeless and teens’ amphetamine abuse. Dassen 3, one of the few groups from Osaka, combine their regional slang with humorous stories. Scha Dara Parr is recognized for its clever wordplay and smooth tracks. DJ Krush is arguably the most innovative instrumentalist of the Tokyo scene, his spacey compositions often featuring a distinctive brassy snare drum. This range of artists is a reminder that clubs are not only important for making listeners feel a close connection to the music, but are also sites for learning and experimentation.

Since the late 1980s there have been numerous contests for DJs, breakdancers, and rappers where the unsigned can hype their stuff. Clubs offer more informal means of education and testing as well. At most hip-hop club events, you will find DJ acolytes huddled around the booth, trying to read the names of groups on spinning albums, studying scratch tricks, and learning new transition techniques. On the dance floor at some point in the evening, three or four breakdancers are likely to begin an impromptu battle while a circle of onlookers judges with enthusiastic “oohs” or pained silence. After rap shows, there are usually freestyle sessions where a microphone or two is passed around the stage and newcomer rappers can step up and try out some new lines or, better yet, improvise. Indeed, there was something of an improvisation (sokkyō) boom in 1995, as rappers competed to perform the best “top of the head” rhymes.

Clubs also help us understand the way different styles within Japanese rap music emerged. The social organization of the Japanese hip-hop scene is best characterized as loose groups of “families” (famirii) who come together regularly at different club events. A family is a collection of rap groups, usually headed by one of the more famous Tokyo acts, with a number of protégés. These families arise primarily from the club scene and are the key to understanding stylistic differences between groups. In 1988 the DJ Underground contest featured in one show many of the groups (or earlier incarnations thereof) that are popular today: DJ Krush, Scha Dara Parr, Rhymester, Cake-K (of B-Fresh), and Gaku (of East End) (Egaitu 1997). By the late 1990s each of these groups had built up a following of its own, organized separate club events, and amassed a group of like-minded performers, so that dis-
tinctive styles have gradually coalesced around the central artists. There are strong affinities among groups that perform regularly together and marked differences between the different collectives. The Little Bird Nation (with Scha Dara Parr), Kaminari (with You the Rock and Rino), the Funky Grammar Unit (with Rhymester and East End), and Kitchens (with EDU and NowNow) are all good examples of this, and they have each developed fairly separate groups of fans as well. Groups that perform together often have met at live shows, and it is common for younger artists to credit certain freestyle sessions as opening the door to later collaborations with more established groups.

This brings us back to Daniel Miller’s insight that consumption be viewed not merely as a kind of syncretism with prior traditions, but rather as new forms. The variety of Japanese rap styles militates against an interpretation that the domestication of rap has involved a melding of “Japanese culture” with “hip-hop culture.” Instead, we need to understand how specific social spaces, first Yoyogi Park and later the clubs, helped create networks of people. Thus, the kinds of communication these spaces have facilitated and the trajectories of different rap groups give us the key to understanding the kind of mixing involved. Some of the social interaction in clubs does arise out of very Japanese styles of behavior, such as respect for seniors, attitudes toward drinking, and ritual greetings. Age-graded hierarchies can often be read off from the order of microphone passing during freestyle battles. I know of at least one group that disbanded because one member demanded more respectful treatment since he was older. Getting drunk is in general positively evaluated, and acting cool (i.e., being drunk though seeming not drunk) is generally frowned on as acting cold. Hip-hop practices—rap music at high volume, the clothes, the music videos showing, and the performances themselves—are not regarded as excluding Japanese rituals. At an event I attended in January 1997, rappers and DJs in their Nike sneakers, baggy jeans, and oversized hockey shirts were going around the club giving the traditional New Year’s greeting—“Congratulations on the new year; I humbly request your benevolence this year too”—without even a hint of irony. Japanese hip-hop is a collage of appropriations, experimentations, and refusals. Clubs are the settings that provide the critical link between the current array of styles and the history of media exchange.

One of the main points about clubs is that they help us understand the setting in which the production and consumption of hip-hop in Japan reach their most intense expressions. By identifying sites like these, where people build relationships and loose communities of friends, we can situate mass commodities in the situations and social relationships that make them
meaningful. Taken out of this context, Japanese rap music often strikes listeners both in Japan and in the United States, as merely imitative. Indeed, this discourse of imitation and authenticity is an interesting topic, one that I explore elsewhere (Condry 2000). Significantly, the pleasures of clubbing make questions of authenticity meaningless. As Rock-Tee, a DJ and music producer, puts it, "We don't care that people say we're just imitators. Our fans understand, and that's all that matters" (interview by author 1999). Given the loud sound and enclosed spaces of clubbing, I would argue that this understanding is less intellectual than visceral. Not surprisingly, record companies and music magazines also pay closer attention to those artists that can move the crowd.

_Crossovers Hits 2: The Japanese R&B Boom_

In the late 1990s, local hip-hop found another path into more mainstream pop music thanks to a Japanese R&B boom. Sparked by female artists such as Misia and Utada Hikaru and groups such as Double and Sugar Soul, this "new R&B" is characterized by melodic music and attractive young women singers. The music tends to be bass heavy with an emphasis on the rhythms, and always with a token DJ scratch solo. As these singers and groups produced hit songs, they often recorded remix versions with Japanese rappers accompanying them. Zeebra appeared with Misia and Sugar Soul, Rhymester with Double, Muro with Misia, and so on. One of the intriguing contrasts with the earlier J-rap boom that began with East End X Yuri and Scha Dara Parr is that the more recent artists hail from the underground scene as opposed to the party-rap world.

Even so, music magazines that focus on the club scene emphasize a sharp boundary between the dubious pop _market_ and the authenticity that characterizes the club _scene_. In an article describing a then-forthcoming release by the rapper Zeebra, a writer for _Remix_ magazine contrasts the flighty fad of Japanese R&B with what he calls the "mature foundation" of hip-hop. "Now that it seems the so-called Japanese R & B/ melody-oriented songs are starting to fade, we've reached the stage where there will be some natural weeding out. . . . But there's no worry about that for Japanese hip-hop, because the scene itself is supported by people choosing the authentic over the fake. Now more than ever, true ability and originality will distinguish those artists who preserve 'realness'" (riarusu) (Kinoshita 2000: 14–15). This distinction between mere fads and "true ability" is just one of the many ways that musicians and music writers keep some distance between the fast-changing market and the more enduring club scene.

One of the interesting features of the new R&B boom is that it has brought
a variety of the underground hip-hop artists into the national market spotlight. In the mid-1990s it was the lighthearted, feel-good party rap of Scha Dara Parr and East End X Yuri that created the first big break for Japanese hip-hop. In the late 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium, it is the resolutely masculine, outsider, tough-guy stance of Zeebra, Muro, and Rhymester that has provided a striking contrast to the melodic and feminine world of Japanese R&B. As the writer above points out, the R&B boom, like all fads, will lose energy, but it has provided a way for Japanese hip-hop to gain exposure to a much wider audience than it has seen since the mid-1990s.

In the end, it is a range of mechanisms at work that produces the expansion of foreign-based styles in Japan. Hit songs may extend the popularity of Japanese rap music, but the evolution of different styles is better understood in terms of the clubs where, out of the interactions between performers and fans, various styles emerge. Paul Gilroy points to the importance of rethinking our mapping of cultures. The notion of diaspora is in many ways more flexible and revealing than the metaphor of cultural flows. The idea of diaspora reminds us that it is the artists, writers, and consumers together who produce a new cultural phenomenon, and that no solid (or fluid) object itself actually flows. As Gilroy puts it, “Critical space/time cartography of the diaspora needs therefore to be readjusted so that the dynamics of dispersal and local autonomy can be shown alongside the unforeseen detours and circuits which mark the new journeys and new arrivals that, in turn, release new political and cultural possibilities” (1993: 86). Japan’s hip-hoppers are part of this dispersal and local autonomy. They redefine and reshape hip-hop. For now, it is primarily for Japanese consumption, though it seems likely that transnational crossovers will also become more frequent in the future, as the Ricky Martin phenomenon suggests. Such crossovers may even, like hits in Japan, spark record companies’ interest in experimenting with foreign artists.

Part of this cartography involves understanding the place of Shibuya in Tokyo in the world of Japanese youth culture. Japanese hip-hop is best characterized as youth music that focuses on the importance of young people’s “speaking out,” in a society that stresses seniority, and of questioning, in various ways, the hyperconsumerism of Japanese culture. In other foreign locales, rap music is also associated with the places of youth, but, more often, youth marginalized by class and ethnicity. In France it is the public housing projects for immigrants from the colonial empire that provides the home base for many rappers (Prévos 1997). In Italy, community centers originally set up by the Communist Party nurtured early Italian rap and en-
couraged political tendencies in the music (Mitchell 1997). In Australia, the western suburbs of Sydney, with its migrant communities, are analogous to U.S. ghettos and are seen as the historic center of local hip-hop culture (Mitchell 1997). Ural, in this volume, shows how Basque separatists turned the oppositional stance of a group like Public Enemy to their own ends.

The contrast is stark. In Japan, too, hip-hop is associated with place, but not any kind of marginalized residential neighborhood or region. On the contrary, Japanese hip-hop is generally associated with Shibuya, a trendy shopping district in Tokyo where many of the key nightspots and record stores are located. Shibuya is the epicenter for youth culture in Japan in many ways. Japan, like France but unlike the United States, is a nation with a single metropole. Partly this is a matter of density: the metropolitan region of Tokyo is home to roughly 40 percent of the nation's 126 million people. This concentration of people provides a critical mass for all kinds of extremely specialized youth movements such that people commute to play. The park with the "pedestrian paradise" where the first breakdancers congregated is typical of the kind of gathering place that brings enough people together so that something can happen. Above all, however, probably the main reason youth go to Shibuya is to shop. From enormous department stores to tiny boutiques, the range of choices is stunning. For music, the area is probably one of the best places in the world to find both new and rare items. Record stores such as Manhattan, Cisco, and DMR (Dance Music Records) that specialize in hip-hop LPs stock the latest U.S. releases as well as those of the few Japanese artists that make it to vinyl. It is not just the availability of goods that makes the area the epicenter of the latest fads. Print and television aimed at teens use the area to identify new trends in fashion, language, and music by interviewing and photographing youth on the street. Again we see the different levels between mass markets and more focused scenes that are both part of the mechanism explaining the spread and significance of popular culture.

CONCLUSION

*My hero is Stevie Wonder. He is a god. But when I watch kabuki, I feel like I'm in a foreign country.*

— Como-Lee, a Japanese hip-hop producer

Many in the first generation of Japanese hip-hoppers were first exposed to the style in 1983 by watching the movie *Wild Style*, a homage to graffiti artists, rappers, and breakdancers in the Bronx. Over time a growing number of U.S. rap artists toured Japan, and record stores expanded their stock.
of the genre. By the mid-1990s a vibrant local scene was characterized by a diverse range of styles from unabashedly commercial to resolutely hardcore. One of the intriguing features of Japanese hip-hop is the way that crossover hits have influenced the relationship between the Japanese market and the underground scene. In 1994–95 there were three million-selling singles in the J-rap mode, sparking a fierce debate about the meaning of hip-hop in Japan. In the late 1990s the rise of Japanese R&B led to a very different kind of tension between the underground artists and the pop-music world. For many urban youth, hip-hop is the defining style of the era. In the 1970s the paradigm of high-school cool was long hair and a blistering solo on lead guitar. Today trendsetters are more likely to sport “dread” hair and show off their scratch techniques with two turntables and a mixer.

There is no reason to think that the transmission of cultural forms across national boundaries is likely to slow down. The capitalist logic of entertainment industries is to seek larger and larger markets. The general rule of information-based industries is that it is expensive to produce the original (e.g., a master tape for a CD) but inexpensive to reproduce subsequent copies. Hence, the larger the market, the greater the return, with increasing (not diminishing) returns as the scale grows. Japanese hip-hop musicians, however, are adamant about distinguishing between the market and the scene, not because they are completely separate worlds, but because they represent different orientations in defining the meaning of music. Record companies naturally focus on the market and respond to crossover hits with increased signings and production. But the musicians themselves produce the music with a focus on the clubs and a desire to get attention among a more focused group of fans and fellow musicians. For Japanese hip-hop at least, the local production of styles continues as a kind of craft industry focused in the all-night clubs. Only a few of the artists are making a living by music alone, but they continue working as best they can. The anxieties expressed by Jameson that from an economic perspective media conglomerates have monopoly control, thus creating extensive standardization, are accurate in the sense that record company monopolies do very much determine the kinds of music we can get access to on CD. On the other hand, there is a rich variety of cultural production that never sees the light of day. For these artists, the key factor is the crossover hit that brings a style and group of artists out of obscurity into the buzz of the style of the day. This happened in 1994–95 with three million-selling singles. It has also been happening to some extent at the turn of the new century thanks to the current Japanese R&B boom, though with a more underground style.
One goal of this chapter is to show how we must relate the economic to the cultural in order to understand the expansion of cultural forms across national boundaries. Music is an example of commodified culture where the style is related to specific social spaces and to a larger economic market. As we have seen, Japanese hip-hop is not driven solely by media companies, but neither is it immune to their influence. Similarly, despite declarations in music magazines of “keeping it real,” Japanese rappers are not simply artists working out their rhymes alone in their apartment buildings, but also entrepreneurs trying to expand their network of fans. Thus, the example of hip-hop is intriguing for the insight it offers into changes in cultural forms. Clearly there is some currency in the idea that cultural forms are becoming increasingly deterritorialized, while people’s connection to place is in ways growing more tenuous (Appadurai 1996). Japanese hip-hop fans are plugged into a wide-ranging scene that includes Tokyo club events and the latest album releases and interviews from New York City, while they also use streams of cultural capital in their everyday lives that are more geographically constrained, usually limited to travel by car or train or to telephone communication.

Although the Japanese are stereotyped as imitators, not innovators, the distinction is difficult to define in any rigorous way. To read into all uses of rap and hip-hop in Japan a traditional mode of borrowing is to blur the specificity of what is going on. Japanese hip-hop is both derivative and innovative; trying to define it as one or the other misses the point. Both the history of Japanese rap music and the location of the clubs as the “actual site” give us some clues to the pressures on artists to create certain styles of music. In addition, changes in media technology are creating a situation in which popular culture spreads more widely than ever before. Pop musicians, whether Western stars such as Celine Dion or Japanese pop groups such as Mister Children, are selling unprecedented numbers of albums. One scholar explains the rapid increase in the number of million-selling albums in 1990s Japan as resulting from new CD technology that makes it more accessible to a broader segment of the population (Aso 1997). This extensification is accompanied by a kind of intensification as well. As a Sony Records representative put it, “In the 1980s, we had reggae, punk, rap—really all kinds of underground things in the clubs . . . but with kids nowadays, they choose one thing—computers, anime, reggae, hip-hop—and go deeply into that” (interview by the author 1997). Understanding the social role of popular culture means moving back and forth between the style’s constellation of meanings, understood in the practitioners’ own terms, and the larger social
economic context. For hip-hop in Japan, the movement between street dance, club scene, and pop market provides touchstones for understanding the globalization of popular culture more generally.

Finally, the path hip-hop has taken in Japan points to the distinctive role anthropology can play in understanding global media. Films were important initially for bringing the style to Japan, but so was Yoyogi Park, where spatially dispersed people with similar interests could come together to build a scene. Similarly, the tension between the music market and the club scene plays out in different ways depending on the presence or absence of hit songs. The point is that anthropology draws us to the social spaces, local meanings, and interpersonal relations that animate popular culture. The interaction between global flows and local settings is somewhat complex, but by unraveling the mechanisms we can get a clearer picture of the potential effects of global media products. Most important, we need to move beyond an overly simplistic dichotomy between the cultural and the economic aspects of globalization to explore instead how each affects the other.

NOTES

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2. Obviously, Jameson is aware of the pitfalls in trying to define what would be “authentic” local production (authentic for whom? according to whom? etc.). Even so, the notion of “fresh” in many ways merely reproduces the problem of how to distinguish real versus imitation, or, in another, related dimension, local versus foreign, by transposing it into an opposition between fresh versus derivative. His formulation is useful, however, because it so accurately captures an ongoing concern in evaluating the power of media giants: do they, the artists, or the consumers control? I would argue that it is not only the features of the cultural product (e.g., a song) that need to be understood, but also the broader circumstances of production as well.

3. According to the Recording Industry Association in Japan, in 1997 per capita spending on music was $53.84 in Japan (pop. 126 million) and in the United States, $44.67 (pop. 267 million). U.S. recorded-music sales in 1997 totaled $11.9 billion (RIAJ 1999: 23).
4. For an excellent and concise overview of postwar Japan's history, see Allinson 1997.

5. *Wild Style*, originally released in 1982, was written, directed, and produced by Charlie Ahearn. A video of *Wild Style* with Japanese subtitles was rereleased in September 1996 through the record company Vortex (MLK-001). It also had a brief run as a midnight show at Parco Department store in Shibuya around the same time.

6. In the winter of 1997 live bands were banned from playing at Hokoten, but the area continues to provide a gathering place for such groups as the so-called rock 'n' rollers, who come every Sunday, wearing jeans and leather jackets and boots and sporting greased-back Elvis hairdos, and do a kind of twist to U.S. rock of the 1950s and 1960s. Female fans of the band X-Japan also gather nearby and engage in “costume play” (*kosu pure*), wearing lacy wedding-style gowns (white, black, or red), black lipstick and eye make-up, and colored, tormented hair.

7. The album is B-Fresh, *Brown-Eyed Soul* (1991, King Records, K-CP-110). This B-Fresh did not include DJ Krush but consisted of the two rappers Cake-K and MC Bell, as well as DJ Beat.

8. In particular, the Japanese language lacks stress accents. This means that each syllable in a word receives the same amount of stress. Japanese does, however, have tonal accents. A rising tone, for example, can indicate a question, as in the difference between “yes?” and “yes.” Accent in this sense should not be confused with dialect. The Japanese language has a wide range of regional variations (dialects), which might also be called accents.


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DISCOGRAPHY


