

## On the Aesthetics of Chinese Hip Hop: How Street Dance is Transformed by Traditional Chinese Culture into an Art

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### Abstract:

This article is about Chinese-style street dance: how it develops its own characteristics. In the first part, the distinguishing features of Chinese hip-hop are discussed briefly. The second part is about Chinese-style street dance: traditional Chinese culture absorbed hip-hop; therefore, the pervasive moral atmosphere of the *ethics-oriented society* penetrated it. The analysis of dance performances allows us to conclude that cultural fusion works as a basic method of Chinese-style street dance and that the concept of *aesthetic metaphysics* of the Chinese aesthetic tradition lays the foundations for Chinese-style street dance, especially its aesthetics. Thus, China is able to reinterpret its ancient culture in a modern way.

**Keywords:** Hip Hop, Street dance, Chinese Hip Hop, Chinese-style street dance, traditional Chinese culture, four arts of the Chinese scholar.

Through interpenetration things are spiritualized. When the artist reveals the reality concealed in things, he sets it free and, in turn, he liberates and purifies himself. This invisible process, fundamental to Chinese art, is the action of Tao. Maritain points out that there is a difference between Oriental and Occidental art: the former being intent on objectivity, the latter on subjectivity. However, at the root of their creative activity there is a common experience, without parallel in logical reason, by means of which objectivity and subjectivity are “obscurely grasped together.” It is the nondifferentiating awareness of creative intuition that gives his restatement of the basic principle of Chinese painting a fuller and richer meaning. “What does the first of the famous six canons of Hsieh Ho prescribe?—To have life-motion manifest the unique spiritual resonance that the artist catches in Things, inspired as he is by his communion with the spirit of the cosmos.”

*Chung – yuan Chang* (2011, 14)

Hip Hop is an American phenomenon that emerged from certain circumstances of the living conditions of the South Bronx of New York City. Everything began with the Cross Bronx Expressway that was finished in 1972 and had a huge impact on New York's citizens, because it allowed White residents to leave this area. The Black and Hispanic people were left behind in poverty and unemployment. Since life became a struggle, social ills as crime, drug, alcohol addictions and racism spread. However, some people searching for survival and psychological relief from an oppressed and impoverished environment responded to dehumanization by creating an urban art movement that was Hip Hop:

This means, therefore, that rather than a form of escapism from pressing matter of daily life, hip-hop is centric to this daily life, it plays a greater role for the individuals involved. It is only by doing so that hip-hop can be seen as a true abode, which houses desires, but which remains in the open: hip-hop is not in hiding, and it does not ask individuals to masquerade anything (Bailey 2014, 16).

The aim of this urban art movement is not descriptive. Its main task is to explain change as a necessity to people and inspire them to work hard for it:

As a postmodern critique, as a philosophical approach to the malaise of urban life, it offers real-world solutions for the disaffected. Beginning with the call to wake up, to rise up, to stand up, the best of hip-hop demands social change while, at the same time, it empowers agents of that change with knowledge both of the self and what is external to that self. Both can be changed, and hip-hop never tires of ringing the bells of revolution. For those who hear the call, the movement has emancipatory power; it is a movement that cuts to the core of what holds our generation, our century, our species back. It is a movement moving us in the right direction (Bailey 2014, 13).

Hip Hop defends people against violence that is everywhere. Therefore, Hip Hop has a therapeutic impact on people, since it helps them to cope with the harsh reality.

Hip Hop has an exact date as its beginning that is August 11, 1973, when DJ Kool Herc (Clive Campbell Hercules) played at his sister's birthday party in Bronx, at the Sedgwick Avenue. One year later, in 1974, DJ and MC Lovebug Starski began to refer to all the pre-existing elements such as DJing<sup>1</sup>, MCing<sup>2</sup>, Graffiti<sup>3</sup>, Rap music<sup>4</sup>, Hip-hop dance<sup>5</sup>, Knowledge<sup>6</sup>, as Hip Hop. However, the idea of using Hip Hop as an umbrella term was coined by Afrika Bambaataa, who was the member of the Hip Hop collective Zulu Nation. Since the term Hip Hop is lacking of a generally accepted by everyone in the world form of spelling, there is a need for an explanation of the word form that will be used in this text. Lawrence "Kris" aka "KRS One" Parker defined *Hiphop* as a collective consciousness, *Hip Hop* as culture and *hip hop* as products (Harris and Chaney 2018, 8). This article will be about Hip Hop as culture<sup>7</sup>.

Hip Hop has been discussed in different fields of study, such as theology (Radcliff 2018; Harris and Chaney 2018; Chaney 2018), cultural studies (Dingle 2018), the study of education (Marsh

2012), gender studies (Harris 2017; Gunn 2019; Kehrer 2022), arts (Scism 2008), film studies (Monteyne 2015), and philosophy (Hip Hop and Philosophy: Rhyme 2 Reason 2005; Bailey 2014).

The novelty of this article is that its aim is to examine Chinese Hip Hop, especially Chinese-style street dance, its philosophical implications. It contributes to the further development of Chinese-style street dance at a theoretical level and to a more accurate understanding of contemporary Chinese culture. It relieves us of our pejorative tone and prejudices against Hip Hop<sup>8</sup> and China. Therefore, the first part will be a brief description of basic information on Chinese Hip Hop, while the second part discusses the philosophical implications of the aesthetics of Chinese-style street dance.

As a source material, this text is based on books about Hip Hop, research articles, dissertations about Chinese Hip Hop, works of prominent scholars on Chinese Aesthetics (Li 2009; Lin 1967; Rowley 1989) and Chinese culture (Yijie 2022; Liang 2021). As illustrative material, selected videos of Youku<sup>9</sup>'s 'Street Dance of China' (in Chinese: 这! 就是街舞) will be used.

### Notes on Chinese Hip Hop

Hsieh Ho says [of the six techniques], 'First, creating a vital tone and atmosphere; second, building structure by brushwork; third, depicting the forms of things as they are; fourth, appropriate colouring; fifth, composition; and sixth, transcribing and copying.' This masterly summary of the six techniques is unsurpassable. However, while the last five can be learned, the vital tone and atmosphere is born with a person. It cannot be learned by attention to details, nor is it something to be acquired through years of practice. One must have an instinctive feel for it; this tone and atmosphere seems to come by itself.

*Lin Yutang* (1967, 82)

Hip Hop (in Chinese: 嘻哈) appeared in China at the end of the 1980s, however 1993 can be considered as its official beginning, because the first Hip Hop album 'China Rap' was released by the China Record Corporation. It evolved mostly underground thanks to the efforts of artists, who changed it in order to make it acceptable to the locals. From 2000 until 2013 it became more popular through online platforms and related events. From 2014 until now, Hip Hop in China can be characterized by independence and constant innovations instead of imitation.

Hip Hop has become a global art form rather than being only an exclusive American phenomenon. Therefore, there are differences between the American Hip Hop, the European Hip Hop and the Chinese Hip Hop: the first one is a reaction to social ills, the second is about positive values, such as social responsibility, culture and peace meanwhile the third one is peaceful with the aim of entertaining without aggression and rebellion that are replaced by emotional sincerity. It deals with culture, daily life, intimate emotions (love), food and everyday struggles. European cultural

values shape European Hip Hop and Chinese Hip Hop is formed by the values of Chinese Culture.

Some basic features of Hip Hop were reinterpreted within the Chinese cultural context. ‘Keep it real’ means ‘being authentic’. It refers to personal experience that forms part of the artist’s songs or dance, which their interviews must confirm in order to create a consistent and credible image. Originally, this classical definition meant that the hidden truths about Black people’s urban street life could finally be voiced, reflecting the artist’s personal attitude toward those truths and life itself. In Chinese Hip Hop, however, this notion is connected with self-expression. It is based more on knowledge about Hip Hop than on race. Artists use their own everyday experiences—for instance, talking about their jobs, co-workers, and the monotony of daily routine.

Rapping is a rhythmic speech with rhyme which is performed with music. It consists of content, rhythm and tone. In this action speech, prose, poetry and singing are blended together. It is connected with the African verbal tradition that has its origins in the Ancient Egyptian practices therefore it has already existed before Hip Hop. Originally, it was a method of storytelling that created and preserved oral history. As a part of Hip Hop it was firstly used by Anthony “DJ Hollywood” Holloway from Harlem in New York. Generally, rap is about inequality and racial issues. In China, there is no discrimination, therefore experiences of daily life are a common subject. What makes Chinese rap unique is the usage of local dialects.

Finally, the most important characteristic of Chinese Hip Hop is its positivity. Censorship bans Hip Hop only when it breaks the rules of Chinese culture. It means that promoting immorality (sex, violence, crime, drug, aggression, etc.) is prohibited. It is not connected with politics, but this is the effect of Chinese culture, its tradition and heritage. The spirit of Hip Hop culture in China is about happiness and freedom and Hip Hop artists don’t think that they are under pressure:

“Keep it real. If you can’t rap without using negative words, then you haven’t truly understood the meaning of hip-hop culture,” he<sup>10</sup> says. “Through my own personal feelings and experiences, I feel like the culture only brings about good things – peace and love!” (Wong 2018, 50).

## **The Art of Chinese Street Dance**

Let me make this clear: the great masterpieces of the past were created mostly by great scholars of high position, or by hermits living close to nature. Because they lived the lives of true men and sought relaxation in the arts, steeped themselves in them, this high thinking and elevation of spirit found expression in their paintings. The tone and atmosphere of the paintings was high because the character of the artist was high, and when the tone and atmosphere was high, the picture became full of life. As we say, such work is the top of the very best, and seems to capture the spirit of things. All paintings must have this rich, vital tone and atmosphere to be called a masterpiece.

*Lin Yutang* (1967, 82)

Dance is essential for the development of Chinese Hip Hop from the very beginning. It came earlier than Hip Hop music to China, which entered in 2000. Meanwhile, street dance was introduced by the American film *Breakin'* in 1984, which circulated among the youth in video formats. The position of street dance (in Chinese: 街舞) became stronger in the 1990s, because it had a great impact on Mainland China through South Korea and Japan. Since 2008, universities have been contributing to the further development of street dance, due to the fact that almost all of them created associations that established their connection with professionals who work in street dance studios. Street dance gained support from the government, since it can be considered a special type of cultivation: "Street dance is the dual cultivation of artistic aesthetics and physical quality. Students will seriously think about how to create new movements, the spirit of street dance will let them learn to respect their opponents and cultivate their noble character in the process of learning street dance" (Lin 2021, 30). It provides people with healthy content (for example, how to respect others), owing to the fact that in the process of practicing street dance they work on themselves. Today, street dancers in China are working on the creation of a theoretical framework for street dance in order to change it into a university discipline. It will allow them to cultivate professionals who will be able to completely rethink street dance and achieve the main goal, which is to make street dance an art: "We hope that China's street dance industry will see better development in the future and more professional street dancers will emerge. That way, street dance, as a form of art, can be better exploited in telling China's stories well" (Xinhua. China Focus).

Western culture is based on Christianity and customs inherited from Ancient Greeks and Romans. Therefore, its main features are the following: collective action, impulsiveness and religiosity. Collective action and religiosity were added by Christianity meanwhile impulsiveness came from the barbarians. Western people can be unaware of the sense of the collective as the foundation of their life:

Sense of the collective can refer to various situations, such as citizens' sense of their country, local people's sense of their neighborhood, religious people's sense of their religion, party members' sense of their party and commune members' sense of their commune (Liang 2021, 98).

Therefore, at the heart of the Western worldview there is an organic tension between the individual and the group. This tension is regulated by the concept of right. Chinese society is neither individualistic nor group centered. Chinese people organized their society according to ethical relations. Consequently, China is an "*ethics-oriented society*" (Liang 2021, 110-111). In this society people have mutual obligations that have to be fulfilled and affection (friendly sentiments) towards each other. Everyone takes responsibility for the other and is always ready to help. Therefore, there is no need of the concept of right. It is replaced by the notion of duty: "In an ethical system, human relationships prevail and morality and justice naturally follow. The laws in China are all codified on the basis of the concept of duty, rather than of the concept of rights" (Liang 2021, 115). Since interpersonal relationships are valued the most, everyone fulfills their duty, and only after they can

be granted their own rights by another person. There is no such idea that people naturally have rights when they are born. “Those who are ethics-oriented are in fact relationship-centered. It is only by cementing the relationship that a balance can be struck between intimate and distant relationships without favoring one over the other” (Liang 2021, 127). This is how Chinese society is kept in order for so long.

The ethical order is maintained by the etiquette culture: “Etiquette culture, however, expects people to act according to morality and when this morality is ubiquitous, it then becomes etiquette culture” (Liang 2021, 160). Etiquette culture requires motivation, self-awareness and introspection in order to attain to morality.

The other main quality of Chinese culture is its ability to absorb foreign cultures: “Today’s Chinese culture is actually formed on the basis of continuously absorbing the cultures of various nations, countries, and regions in the course of 5000–6000 years of development” (Yijie 2022, 125). During its history, China absorbed many different regional cultures that existed (Qi, Lu, Qin, Long, Jing, Chu, Wu, Yue, Ba, Shu). It also absorbed foreign cultures, such as Buddhist culture that was introduced in the early first century AD, Western culture since the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Between the two main periods there were also an impact of Nestorianism in the Tang Dynasty and Arkagun in the Yuan Dynasty, however this process was interrupted and never recommenced. Chinese culture is inclusive because of its philosophical approach to itself and other cultures:

The ideal goal of traditional Chinese culture is that “All things are nourished together without injuring one another,” which consists of the idea of “unidentical” and “harmony” in one sentence. This philosophy provides endless insights for the coexistence of diversified cultures (Yijie 2022, 28).

There is a need for an explanation of the difference between the notion of *traditional culture* and the notion of *cultural tradition*. Traditional culture is “established culture” (Yijie 2022, 283) with preserved past experiences that is “solidified and stipulative” (Yijie 2022, 283) and has material form. Cultural tradition means “the flow of established culture in real life, and it is an activity that is constantly changing” (Yijie 2022, 283-284).

Hip Hop and especially street dance was also absorbed and digested by traditional Chinese culture. Thanks to the “strong ethos of inclusiveness” (Mingyuan 2014, 41), that is a feature of Chinese culture, Hip Hop adopted Chinese style and became a component of Chinese culture. Therefore the pervasive moral atmosphere of traditional Chinese culture penetrated to Hip Hop and transformed it to an Art. It was possible because intelligence and ethics are always combined in Chinese culture. This will be observed in street dance through the analysis of selected videos of Youku’s “Street Dance of China”. I think that these two features of Chinese culture (the ability to absorb thanks to history and the pervasive moral atmosphere thanks to an “ethics-oriented society”) can be considered as the foundation or basis of Chinese-style street dance (in Chinese: 国风).

The choreographer and dancer of all performances in the selected videos is Ma Xiaolong (in

Chinese: 马晓龙 ; in English: Derek)<sup>11</sup> from Mainland China. His method is cultural fusion: when traditional Chinese culture and street dance are combined. He brought the four arts (in Chinese: 四藝) of the Ancient Chinese scholar-gentlemen<sup>12</sup> into the world of street dance. Two dances will be discussed due to limitations on article length.

In the dance work “Giving him a Guqin” (in Chinese: “授之以琴”)<sup>13</sup> the music is played on guqin, the storyline is a master-disciple relationship meanwhile tutting dance is performed. Tutting is a street dance style with geometric or angular body movements, especially with hands. The name originated from the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun, since it bears some resemblance to the Egyptian dance. Guqin (in Chinese: 古琴) is an Ancient Chinese seven stringed plucked musical instrument, that was invented by Shennong, who is one of the Three Divine Sovereigns (Fuxi, Nüwa, Huang Di), a cultural hero<sup>14</sup>. In history guqin occurred in the pre-Qin period, since it is documented by the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* and archaeology (Li 2024). Playing on guqin and studying its music in Ancient China was a privilege of the literati: “belonging by right to those whose studies are concentrated on literature and wisdom, i.e. the literati” (Gulik van 1940, 15). There are many regulations concerning where, when, with whom, how the guqin music can be played. All these detailed restrictions can be explained by the meaning of this instrument in Chinese culture: “The meaning of the Lute<sup>15</sup> is restraining the false and bringing back to the Right, in order to harmonize the heart of man” (Gulik van 1940, 76). All the parts of the instrument and its form, are also have connotations: “At present the length of the Lute is four feet and five inches, thus featuring the Four Seasons and the Five Elements. The seven strings symbolize the Seven Stars” (Gulik van 1940, 74). Playing on the lute is more than just an art, because it is a path to wisdom, therefore it cannot be taught to just anyone:

The Lute is the instrument of the Holy Sages: Superior Men therewith nurture the Essence of the Mean Harmony, cultivate their selves and regulate their nature. Playing the Lute must therefore be called a Way to wisdom and not one of the Arts. All who love the study of the Lute should wait till they meet (a pupil who is) a scholar of cultured taste and correct conduct: only then may they teach him the Lute (Gulik van 1940, 82).

It addresses the heavenly in man: “to make man return to his divine origin, to restrain his low passions, and make him revert to his heavenly nature” (Gulik van 1940, 40). The master-disciple relationship is special and different from the teacher-student relationship, because it is not only about knowledge, but about the special bond between two people, when both of them are aware of the fact that they are invaluable to each other:

The master does not enjoy the disciple’s esteem because he conveys something that is useful in any utilitarian respect. Nor is it a distinguishable attribute of his total self that he seeks to transfer to the disciple—to repeat, a specifiable skill or body of knowledge. What is significant for the disciple is the master’s total self, whose character and activity are unique and irreplaceable (Smith 2006, 149).

This is a deep bond between the two: “The master reads the confirmation of his calling in the eye of his disciple at the same time that the disciple hears destiny calling him through the master” (Smith 2006, 152). The master-disciple relationship is connected with the guqin, because without this the instrument cannot be mastered:

Students of the Lute should (first) hear the style which the masters of various schools follow while playing, (for once having chosen a master) it is necessary that one wholeheartedly likes his style, and follows his precepts sincerely; then teaching and learning shall be well regulated (Gulik van 1940, 83).

This is the implication of the first dance.

The choreographer likes playing weiqi, therefore he performed the work “Chess” (in Chinese: 棋)<sup>16</sup>. The second dance has three levels of meaning: the music, the dress and weiqi as a subject. All these three levels of meaning are combined with street dance. The song is an instrumental version of the theme song for *Chang'an Fantasy: Ghost Patrol of Ancient China*<sup>17</sup> played by Zi De Guqin Studio (in Chinese: 自得琴社)<sup>18</sup> on traditional Chinese instruments such as guqin, zheng, dizi and gu. This music is full of traditional Chinese elegance. The performer is dressed in black and at the end of the dance he uses a white stone. This is connected with weiqi, because these are its colors. In order to understand this performance, there is a need to comprehend the cultural significance of weiqi. The oral history preserved the commonly accepted legend that says Emperor Yao invented weiqi and taught it to his son (Moskowitz 2013, 34; Zuo and Mei 2021, 3). The name of the game briefly explains its aim:

Referred to as Go in the United States, Igo in Japan, and Baduk in Korea, the word Weiqi is made up of two Chinese characters; wei (to surround) and qi (logic game). The appellation “surrounding logic game” vividly evokes Weiqi’s primary goal, which is to try to take one’s opponent’s pieces by surrounding them while simultaneously accumulating additional points by encircling empty space on the board (Moskowitz 2013, 3).

Weiqi was included as one of the four arts during the Tang Dynasty (618-907 a.d.), because several emperors liked the game and made it popular. Historically, Chinese generals considered weiqi a philosophy of war, because during the game people are trained in military strategies. The main idea of weiqi’s philosophy of war is how to win without fighting (Moskowitz 2013, 42-44). This game embodies the core idea of Asian thinking because it is a very subtle game, in which before moving ahead the player thinks about repercussions.<sup>19</sup> Behind weiqi there is a special philosophy of relations and equality: “With weiqi every piece is equal. And it’s a bit like philosophical thought about equality. Every piece is equal until it is in relation with other pieces. [...] So weiqi is much closer to philosophical thought about relations”.<sup>20</sup> In Ancient times, playing weiqi was a very elegant activity that required elegant settings since it was a privilege of the wealthy aristocrats. In weiqi different philosophies are included: the above-mentioned philosophy of war, philosophy of relation/equality and a philosophy of cosmology. The last one can be explained by the following:

There's a lot of philosophy in the game. In Ancient China they called this spot on the board the axis of heaven. The rest is land. [...] They said (i.e.: Ancient Chinese) heaven is round and the Earth is square. This was the Ancients' scientific theory. So the Weiqi board represents the ancient theory that heaven is round and the Earth is square. White represents yang. Black represents yin. In China we call this yin and yang.<sup>21</sup>

All these implications inherited from Ancient Chinese culture are in combination with street dance in the dance work.

Chinese-style street dance is not only based on cultural fusion as its method, but also on the Chinese "*aesthetic metaphysics*" that is at the heart of the Chinese aesthetic tradition:

In short, it is clear that the Confucian-dominated Chinese traditions of philosophy, aesthetics, art, and literature, as well as ethics and government, which from their beginnings in the rites and music and Confucian humaneness went on to incorporate the influences of Daoism, Qu Yuan, and Chan Buddhism, are all founded on a certain "psychologism"—one that took Confucius' advice to Zai Wo, "Would you feel at ease? . . . If you really feel at ease, then do it," as the root of all political ethics and ideological consciousness. This psychologism cannot be the object of empirical study; rather, it is a philosophical proposition that takes emotion as the noumenon. From its ethical origins to the "realm of life," the entire stream of the history of Chinese thought has taken this type of sensuous psychology as the noumenon. The thing-in-itself is not, then, the spirit, nor is it a deity, nor morality or reason. Instead, it is the psychology of human nature in which emotion and rationality are blended. Thus, it can be both transcendent and immanent, both sensuous and beyond the senses. This is what we mean by aesthetic metaphysics (Li 2009, 219-221).

This forms the foundation of Chinese-style street dance and transforms it into an Art.

## Conclusion

Therefore a good artist derives from nature, not from any one person. A good student learns the spirit, and not the doctrines. A good master takes for his master not someone in the past, but the whole glorious creation.

*Lin Yutang* (1967, 126)

The novelty of this essay is in its attempt to examine Chinese-style street dance from the philosophical perspective. It can help to develop an understanding of Chinese-style street dance at a theoretical level that is essential for the creation of its theoretical framework, without which it cannot become a discipline at a university.

A brief description of Chinese Hip Hop allows the reader to notice the unique features of it, such as positivity and emotional sincerity. Instead of depicting aggression, violence or racism in order to inspire people to change something in the social environment, it functions as a form of self-

cultivation, when someone works on himself, in order to improve and become a better version of himself.

China became familiar with street dance before Hip Hop with all its components entered the country. Therefore, it occupies the central role. People are working on street dance, because they want to make it a profession, since only professionals are able to transform it into an Art through which Chinese culture will be better represented and comprehended internationally.

Since one of the main qualities of Chinese culture is the ability to absorb other cultures it did so with Hip Hop, therefore digested street dance also. Hip Hop adopted Chinese style and became a component of Chinese culture. After the penetration of the pervasive moral atmosphere of traditional Chinese culture that is preserved by an “*ethics-oriented society*” into Hip Hop and especially street dance, it became an Art with the classical definition<sup>22</sup>, not only an urban art movement. It was possible because intelligence and ethics are always combined in Chinese culture.

The analysis of two performances (“Giving him a Guqin” and “Chess”) that were choreographed by Ma Xiaolong (in Chinese: 马晓龙; in English: Derek) from Mainland China explains that cultural fusion as a method and the concept of “aesthetic metaphysics” lay the foundations for Chinese-style street dance.

It can be concluded that in Chinese-style street dance, China successfully achieves its goal:

Now the Chinese nation is on the eve of great rejuvenation, so we must position Chinese traditional culture appropriately and seriously explore the true spirit of our ancient culture, so as to contribute our excellent culture to today’s human society; we should seriously reflect on the defects of our own culture so as to better absorb the essence of other countries and cultures, and we should also interpret our traditional culture in a modern way under the general trend of modern social development, so that our country can be truly in the forefront of world cultural development and create a beautiful world with other countries and cultures (Yijie 2022, 295).

### **Endnotes:**

1. Sounds were manipulated in a way that percussive beats were isolated and combined with innovative breaks, because the musician was switching between two different records.
2. This is a poetic verbal action, a quick wordplay about the reality that was inspired by the oral tradition of Ancient African culture.
3. It is a type of art work that is done on the walls in public places (walls of buildings, trains or fences) with paint in a form of spray. It is signed by its author.
4. Rap is not interchangeable with Hip Hop, because rap is a part of Hip Hop. This is the result of the action, when vocals leads the DJ’s music. “In essence, hip-hop is a culture and rap is a form of music, a verbal form, within that culture” (Bailey 2014, 34).
5. The first dance type was inspired by the DJ’s music and then “b-boying” was created. Generally, people call this dance as breakdance, however this is an inappropriate term. “B-boying” has been used since ’70s and the word was coined by DJ Kool Herc, when he used “b-boy” instead of “break-boy”. Dancers themselves use “b-boy” and “b-girl” when they refer to themselves. They don’t like the term “breakdance” and “breakdancer”, because it lacks of the connotation of dedication that requires a lot

- of effort during a long period of time, that “b-boying” has: “From this perspective, b-boying and breakdancing do not represent different attitudes on the part of the observer, but on the part of the dancer. A breakdancer is someone who has learned the dance for mercenary reasons, while a b-boy has learned it through a commitment to the culture” (Schloss 2009, 61).
6. This element unites all other elements that were mentioned. It is about being selfconscious in order to achieve social change. This component is about spirituality that elevates Hip Hop above the materialism of American life. For more information read: (Reese 2019).
  7. As said by the authors of the article *It's "Hip Hop," Not "hip-hop"*: „We argued that Hip Hop is a culture by definition and as a result is considered a proper noun and must be capitalized. We challenged the use of a hyphen because members of Hip Hop often write “Hip Hop” without a hyphen” (Iglesias and Harris 2022, 125). Since the practitioners of Hip Hop use the word this way, then in my essay this form will be applied.
  8. Since Hip Hop generally used as a scapegoat for all social ills of urban life. However, Hip Hop is not the cause of social problems, but an art form that helps to overcome. In order to know more about the creation of the stereotypes about Hip Hop you should read: Scism 2008.
  9. This is a Chinese webpage that functions in China as Youtube in the world. The user creates his own profile, and after he can upload videos.
  10. This is the answer to a question about censorship and regulations in Hip Hop that is given by TT, who is a Chinese locker, a member of Shenzhen crew 'Wabble Streets' during his interview about Chinese Hip Hop and Street dance.
  11. For more information: “【ENG SUB】马晓龙回归《街舞4》，行走的艺术家音乐响起散发魅力！ | 这！就是街舞 第四季 Street Dance of China S4 | 优酷 YOUKU” Youtube video, 1:13, posted by “YOUKU-Get APP now” July 14, 2021. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gkPSCsiX-A> [Accessed at 7 September 2025], When street dance meets ancient China. CGTN. Culture. 12:40, 02-Oct-2025. Available at: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2025-10-02/When-street-dance-meets-ancient-China-1H8EcXyYrUA/p.html> [Accessed at 18 October 2025], Hello Dance. Baidu. Available at: <https://baike.baidu.com/item/Hello%20Dance/55766086> [Accessed at 9 January 2026].
  12. In order to become an Ancient Chinese scholar-gentlemen, someone must have outstanding achievements in four academic and artistic fields: guqin, go, calligraphy and painting. For more information, read: China Online Museum. Four Arts. Available at: <https://www.comuseum.com/culture/four-arts> [Accessed at 7 September 2025].
  13. You can watch the work here: “【舞台纯享】马晓龙和Zyko带来作品《授之以琴》，竟被全场公认是mvp？ | 这！就是街舞 第四季 Street Dance of China S4 | 优酷综艺 YOUKU SHOW” Youtube video, 4:44, posted by “YOUKU SHOW-Get APP now” September 19, 2021. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTitVOttxC8&list=RDxTitVOttxC8&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTitVOttxC8&list=RDxTitVOttxC8&start_radio=1) [Accessed at 7 September 2025].
  14. His other contribution is that he invented agriculture, Chinese medicine, market, the Zhaji Sacrificial Rite, farm tools and other musical instruments. For more information, please read: Yang and An 2005, 190-199.
  15. He translates guqin as lute because of its cultural connotation: “Here a few remarks may be added on the use of the word ‘Lute’ as a translation of the Chinese word ‘ch’in’. In selecting for oriental musical instruments equivalents in a western language one must choose between those which would suggest the outer form, and others of closer cultural reference. In the former respect ‘cither’ would seem most appropriate for the ch’in, but because of the unique position it occupies in Chinese culture the author has preferred to follow the latter way, adopting the word which since olden times in the west has been associated with all that is artistic and refined, and sung by poets. Therefore ‘ch’in’ is translated ‘Lute’, and the word ‘cither’ is kept for such instruments as the se and cheng, the construction of which, in any case, comes nearer that of the western cither” (Gulik van 1940, II).

16. You can watch it here: “舞台纯享：马晓龙国风舞蹈《棋》掀起热潮！各位队长给出极高评价！ | 这！就是街舞 第四季 Street Dance of China S4 | 优酷综艺 YOUKU SHOW” Youtube video, 5:10, posted by “YOUKU SHOW-Get APP now” August 29, 2021. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwmdjLr5PLA&list=RDFwmdjLr5PLA&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwmdjLr5PLA&list=RDFwmdjLr5PLA&start_radio=1) [Accessed at 7 September 2025].
17. You can listen to the song: “【古琴Guqin箏笛鼓】《长安幻世绘》器乐版主题曲 Chang'an fantasy—ghost patrol of ancient China唐代装束 Costumes of Tang Dynasty” YouTube video, 7:14, posted by “Zi De guqin Studio” October 17, 2019. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-8AOJbdsDQ&list=RDv-8AOJbdsDQ&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-8AOJbdsDQ&list=RDv-8AOJbdsDQ&start_radio=1) [Accessed at 9 January 2026].
18. They are young musicians, who perform folk songs on traditional musical instruments, meanwhile they are dressed in traditional Chinese costumes.
19. For more information watch “Weiqi Wonders: Conversations about the Game of Go in China” YouTube video, 50:29, The documentary was filmed by Moskowitz, Marc L., posted by “Marc L. Moskowitz” March 11, 2020. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Z3K9bkBWK8&t=777s> [Accessed at 24 October 2025], especially at the timestamp 45.30-46.10.
20. Ibid, at the timestamp 36.00-36.29.
21. Ibid, at the timestamp 33.25-34.00.
22. It means that it is poetic and picturesque at the same time, because it is natural: “Our idea of artistic beauty, however, lies more often in that which is natural and which has personality, than in the perfection of proportion, build and colouring, which was the Greek ideal. We have a saying that sounds somewhat paradoxical, - that a lady looks most beautiful when she is plainest – that is, when she is her simple, unaided, natural self” (Chiang 2022, 11).

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