

Chapter One

- 1.) How did the South Bronx become a "necropolis"?
- 2.) Consider the role each of the following elements (the words in **bold**) played in this transformation:
 - What was **urban renewal** and what were its designs?
 - What was the **Cross Bronx Expressway**, and what were some of the results of its construction?
 - In particular, what impact did the CBE have on the **migration** of people and communities within New York City?
 - How did this fairly large scale movement (or relocation) of people, especially people of color, in NYC revitalize **street gangs**?
 - What was "**benign neglect**," and what was the relationship between it, **deindustrialization**, and **unemployment**?
 - Who was **Daniel Patrick Moynihan**, what is the **Rand Corporation**, and what were their respective roles in "benign neglect"?

Chapter Two

- 1.) What role did Rastafarianism play in what Jeff Chang calls the "cultural turn" that took place during the 1960s and 1970s in Jamaica?
- 2.) What are some of the musical influences that Rastafarians contributed to Jamaican music in the postcolonial era?
- 3.) Who was Count Ossie, and how did he influence the development of postcolonial Jamaican culture—especially music?
- 4.) How did Rastafarians become increasingly drawn into Jamaican politics during the late 1960's and early 1970's?
- 5.) In what way(s) was the introduction of Jamaican roots music to a mainstream, worldwide audience a positive development for the artists who created it? In what ways was this introduction a negative development?
- 6.) How did Lee Scratch Perry foreshadow or contribute to musical developments in hip-hop culture?

Chapter Three

1.) Jeff Chang argues that the “life span of youth style in New York City” lasts “about five years.” How did the culture of youth gangs, which Chang says “returned to the Bronx around 1968” become transformed between that time and 1972? What was the result of this transformation? In particular, consider the following:

- Changes in the composition of gangs.
- Changes in the activities in which gangs and/or gang members participated.
- Changes in the relationships between gangs and/or members of rival gangs.
- Changes in the goals of black and brown youth as gangs lost their power and importance.

Chapter Four

1.) DJ Kool Herc stands as a convenient representation of the merger between the roots rebel culture of West Kingston, Jamaica and the youth culture in the South Bronx. Provide some specific examples from Herc’s experience that demonstrate the process by which these two cultural worlds were joined and transformed.

2.) What contribution(s) to hip-hop culture did Herc pioneer?

3.) How did Kool Herc and other early hip-hop DJs differentiate themselves from disco DJs?

4.) How did the development of hip-hop culture inform the transition of gangs into crews? How was the development of hip-hop culture informed by that transition? What, for example, does Jeff Chang mean when he writes about the emergence of a “new hierarchy of cool” in the Bronx?

5.) How and why was the style of youth culture that Kool Herc helped to inaugurate in 1972 beginning to change again by 1977?

Chapter Five

1.) Jeff Chang uses Afrika Bambaataa to represent the new styles of the mid to late 1970s in the Bronx the same way he used DJ Kool Herc to represent the early 1970s. How do the differences between Kool Herc and Afrika Bambaataa reflect the changing youth culture in the Bronx?

Consider the following:

- The relationship of each man to different communities/neighborhoods in the Bronx
- The relationship of each man to gangs/ crews
- The musical sensibilities/emphases of each man
- Their respective reasons for DJing
- Their respective styles as DJs

2.) What are some of the influences Jeff Chang mentions as having an impact on Bambaataa’s consciousness and his decision to leave the Black Spades and form the Universal Zulu Nation?

Chapter Six

1.) Jeff Chang argues that as new organizations like the Zulu Nation eroded the power and influence of street gangs, the youth culture in the Bronx increasingly turned on style. How did this new emphasis on style change each of the following:

- DJing/MCing
- B-boying
- Graffiti writing

Chapter Seven

1.) How did rap move beyond the “seven mile world” of the Bronx?

2.) What impact did the commercial success of the Sugar Hill Gang’s “Rapper’s Delight” have on rapping?

3.) What impact did New York City’s so-called war on graffiti have on graf writing and writers?

Chapter Eight

1.) How did graffiti move from trains and buildings to canvass and art galleries?

2.) During the early 1980s hip-hop culture was increasingly documented by and spread among white punk rockers, artists, and hipsters. What were the results of this collision of worlds for writers, rappers, DJs, and B-boys/B-girls?

3.) How was the early merger of punk rock and rap received by punk fans?

4.) Do you think that hip-hop’s “downtown advocates” acted out of a true appreciation of the artistry of black youth, or do you think they co-opted the creative energy of hip-hop culture for their own (financial) gain? Give specific examples to back up your position.

Chapter Nine

1.) Some people have commented that the unifying power of hip hop culture was responsible for the multiracial, multicultural “utopia” of the downtown club scene, especially in 1982. Do you agree? Be specific as to why you agree or disagree.

2.) The early 1980s were a time of rising unemployment and poverty, especially within African American communities. How did hip-hop culture begin to reflect these economic circumstances?

Chapter Ten

- 1.) how did hip-hop's move out of the Bronx into lower Manhattan, the other boroughs of New York City, and overseas impact the degree to which hip-hop culture and style were embraced by American popular culture and the corporations that control it? Was this geographic expansion a positive or negative development for hip-hop?
- 2.) How did the police and other city authorities respond as hip-hop moved from the Bronx into other areas of New York City?
- 3.) What impact did the emergence of crack cocaine have on black youth culture in the mid 1980s? How did the resulting social impact change rap music?