

*Taking Over*  
Written and Performed by Danny Hoch  
Directed by Tony Taccone  
January 21 – February 22, 2009  
Kirk Douglas Theatre

# Teaching Instructions



TARGET®



Center  
Theatre  
Group

L.A.'s Theatre Company

# How to Use the Discovery Guide

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## **Everyone writes the word Hip-Hop a different way.**

Some capitalize each H, some hyphenate, some take the whole thing lowercase. “Hip-Hop” seems like a movement or a creed, with capital letters and a bold identity; “hip hop” seems like a descriptor or adjective, with a more fluid character. This speaks to the variety of perspectives on what Hip-Hop is, and how it came to be. Because Hip-Hop is many things to many people, there is no singular truth. Instead, there are many stories and many experiences that collectively create the history of Hip-Hop.

This guide is designed to open conversations among your learners about multiple truths, be it through the eyes of immigrants developing an American identity, the history of Hip-Hop or the urgent debate over the ethics of gentrification. *Taking Over* addresses the multiple perspectives that one community expresses about the changing face of Brooklyn. Working through the exercises and projects in this guide will introduce students to the complexities of managing multiple perspectives at once to find the story buried within. The discussion prompts and readings are aimed at building a bridge between Danny Hoch’s piece and your students’ lives. Through the process they will become more adept participants in their own communities and more incisive observers of the stories they witness around them.

Because the ideas in *Taking Over* are multifaceted, we have provided you with a variety of information to support you as you work with your students through the guide.

**Rationale** and **Exercise** sections are intended to offer you context for the articles and workbook portions of the guide. Some of the exercises are simply recommended discussion prompts for unpacking the particularly knotty areas of understanding. Comprehensive details or links to websites concerning areas that are covered briefly within the guide can be found under the heading **More Information**.

**The Discovery Guide is a starting point.** Please adapt the material and extend the learning activities to meet the needs of your particular community of learners. Our hope is that the content is not merely useful, but also inspirational, and that you and your students will find joy in the process of learning through the multifaceted art of theatre.

**The Discovery Guide is not designed as an independent workbook.** It is a resource for learners to develop skills in critical thinking and cross-cultural empathy, which are essential in Theatre Arts and History-Social Sciences and other content areas. Oral discussion and writing prompts are designed so that students may relate key ideas to their personal experiences and the world around them. Teachers are expected to adapt or extend the prompts. Teachers may choose some prompts for small group discussion and others for the whole group.

## **SCOPE AND SEQUENCE OF THE LESSONS**

In order to provide a comprehensive and sequential unit of study, we suggest that students have the opportunity to explore the whole variety of lessons in the Discovery Guide.

## **The activities are designed for completion in sequence.**

Introduce the vocabulary before students encounter it in the reading. The activities and writing prompts on pages 4 through 11 are to be completed before the students see the production of *Taking Over*. The discussion and exercises on pages 12 through 15 are intended to stimulate reflection, analysis and further inquiry after students attend the play. The Internet links, films and books on page 16 will be useful throughout the process.

# How to Use the Discovery Guide

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## THE GOALS

Regardless of grade level, the unit is designed to teach enduring understandings that students will take with them for life. One set of these understandings is about the art of theatre. The other is drawn from the play's themes. Charted below are some essential questions that can be raised before, during and after students' experience at the performance to guide them toward the enduring understandings.

	THEATRE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS	SOCIAL AND LITERARY THEMES
Enduring Understandings	<p>There is a valid story and perspective within each individual that can be told through a unique voice.</p> <p>Communities in transition or struggle will resist oppression using the tools available to them.</p> <p>The aesthetic of an art movement is made up of each unique piece, assembled in a unified way.</p>	<p>Embracing diversity and fusion is a key element of being American.</p> <p>Change and progress frequently result in conflicting views of what the ideal future looks like.</p> <p>Persuasive rhetoric relies on the acknowledgement of and response to contrary viewpoints.</p>
Essential Questions	<p>Can someone retain their own perspective while embracing many diverse views?</p> <p>What makes sampling or fusion techniques such potent storytelling tools?</p> <p>How is an aesthetic constructed?</p>	<p>What are the primary elements that make up a community?</p> <p>Do ethical questions arise when a community structure begins to change?</p> <p>Is contemporary America made up of many different types of people collaborating, or many people from diverse backgrounds becoming one nationality?</p>

# How to Use the Discovery Guide

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## THE STANDARDS

Teachers should “bundle” one of the recommended theatre focus standards with a focus standard from another content area to help design their classes’ integrated units of study.

For instance, you might be able to “bundle” one of the recommended History-Social Sciences focus standards with a focus standard from Theatre Arts and another content area such as Language Arts to help design the classes’ integrated units of study.

## ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS

Literary Response and Analysis: Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.4 Determine characters’ traits by what the characters say about themselves in narration, dialogue, dramatic monologue and soliloquy. (9-10)

3.9 Explain how voice, persona and the choice of a narrator affect characterization and the tone, plot, and credibility of a text. (9-10)

3.3 Analyze the ways in which irony, tone, mood, the author’s style and the “sound” of language achieve specific rhetorical or aesthetic purposes or both. (11-12)

Writing Applications:

2.4 Write persuasive compositions. (9-10)

2.1 Write fictional, autobiographical or biographical narratives. (11-12)

Speaking Applications

2.3 Apply appropriate interviewing techniques. (9-10)

## HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE

Historical Literacy: Understand the reasons for continuity and change.

National Identity: Recognize that American society is and always has been pluralistic and multicultural, a single nation composed of individuals whose heritages encompass many different national and cultural backgrounds.

Understand the American creed as an ideology extolling equality and freedom. Recognize the status of women and minorities in different times in American history.

## THEATRE

Artistic Perception: Development of the Vocabulary of Theatre

1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as acting values, style, genre, design and theme, to describe theatrical experiences.

Creative Expression: Creation/Invention in Theatre

2.2 Write dialogues and scenes, applying basic dramatic structure: exposition, complication, conflict, crises, climax and resolution.

Historical and Cultural Context: Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre

3.2 Describe the ways in which playwrights reflect and influence their culture.

Aesthetic Valuing: Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theatre

4.2 Report on how a specific actor used drama to convey meaning in his or her performances.

# Before the Play



WELCOME TO TAKING OVER: Page 2



WELCOME TO TAKING OVER: Page 3

## READING AND EXERCISES

This section provides some background information about the three primary themes that arise in *Taking Over*: the nature of the Hip-Hop aesthetic, the process of gentrification in America and the nature and history of polycultural community structure.

### Pages 2-3: Welcome to *Taking Over*

**Exercise:** Read “Welcome to Taking Over.” Discuss what students expect this play to be like. How does the mix tape metaphor inform their expectations. What else in their lives might be described using this image?

**Exercise:** Look at the photo on page 3. Ask students to describe what they see and feel. (This picture was taken in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the setting for *Taking Over*.)

### Pages 4–5: Toward a Hip-Hoch Aesthetic

**Rationale:** *Taking Over* addresses community issues through the lens of Hip-Hop. In order to understand how the form of Danny Hoch’s performance informs the content of his piece, this section lays groundwork for understanding the complex aesthetic that defines Hip-Hop and broadening assumptions that Hip-Hop is simply another word for rap music.

**More Information:** Danny Hoch positions himself as a Hip-Hop theater artist, which means that *Taking Over* is a Hip-Hop piece. Much of the information in this article is sourced from Hoch’s

“Toward a Hip-Hop Aesthetic” (available at [www.dannyhoch.com/pdf/TowardsAHip-HopAesthetic.pdf](http://www.dannyhoch.com/pdf/TowardsAHip-HopAesthetic.pdf)), which discusses in more detail his view of the multi-disciplinary arts movement that he is participating in.

The use of “polycultural” in this guide versus the more familiar “multicultural” is an intentional alliance with the style that Hoch practices. The word multicultural recognizes that people of many different ethnic backgrounds may make up one singular community; “polycultural” assumes that not only do they co-exist, but act on and integrate with one another. Understanding that subtle difference will illuminate why all of Hoch’s characters are Hip-Hop, not just the ones who rap.

**Exercise:** Before the reading, ask the students to define Hip-Hop. Write their definition on the board. After reading “Toward a Hip-Hoch Aesthetic,” re-visit the definition. What are some things that could be Hip-Hop under the Discovery Guide definition that were not under the student version? Is slam poetry Hip-Hop? Could there be a type of food that is Hip-Hop? Do students want to change their definition? Discuss the idea that sampling is a common thread between Hip-Hop culture and polycultural communities. What are some examples of sampling in diverse places? Consider something like California Rolls in sushi restaurants, which takes elements from traditional Japanese culinary tradition and mixes it with the local tastes and available produce. Encourage students to come up with other examples.



# Before the Play



TAKING OVER: Page 6

## Page 6: *Taking Over*

**Rationale:** *Taking Over* assembles a cast of characters with vastly differing views on the changes taking place in Brooklyn. Danny Hoch manifests that cast through his own voice and body. Hoch becomes a medium for the voice of a community. His fundamental empathy for the stories that he portrays makes the discussion of the issues presented by the performance even more complex. Not all of his characters are likeable and few seem clearly right or wrong. By personifying them, Hoch makes his own perspective transparent and humanizes his characters. They become magnified facets of Hoch’s personality and mouthpieces for contrary arguments.

**Exercise:** Read the synopsis of *Taking Over*. Discuss the structure of the play. Why might Danny Hoch decide to embody all of the characters, rather than writing a play where other actors play each part? Is it strange for Hoch to play a woman or someone of a different race? Consider the way that may change how we perceive the character. Is this a type of reappropriation, or is it something different? From the synopsis, discuss whether or not the structure fits into the Hip-Hop aesthetic discussed earlier. Why or why not?

## Exercise: Who Was Here?

In thinking more critically about the way that neighborhoods change, it is important for your students to experience someone else’s perspective. A student’s view tends to be primarily informed by their school and home culture. Encourage your students to seek out an interview subject who will challenge their assumptions about their community. The questions listed are intended to be a jumping off point. Have them propose their additional questions in class to ensure that they are probing deeper into the questions of neighborhood identity, belonging and access. The additional questions will likely provoke the most interesting answers. Before they begin their interviews, review with your students good interview technique. Remind them that the key element of a successful interview is listening. Encourage them to wait even longer than seems necessary to ensure that their subject is finished talking. Often some of the most revealing responses occur when an interviewee is trying to fill a silence. An interview is not about having a balanced conversation. You already know what you think – focus on what *they* think. Remember to take notes.

# Before the Play

**Immigrant Domain**

"You know who spends all the money? It's tourists. They ain't tourists-tourists. I'm talkin' about the people that came here as tourists and then they stay here. I call them 'resident tourists.'" — Danny Hoch

"We'll have strong feelings about what makes a place home and how much it can change before a different culture is imposed. Communities have historically called urban renewal, beautification or revitalization a colonialist behavior because the rebuilding of a neighborhood often displaces the current residents. While processes for gentrification are always being combined and there are some who are displaced urban areas, decisions must be made regarding what gets built and how resources are targeted to an area. In what ways is gentrification, and how does it take a neighborhood out of the hands of the residents?"

The term gentrification is a relatively new one, coined in the 1960s. It usually happens like this: A disinvested urban area becomes desirable to groups like students and artists for its old streets and low rents. Artists tend to bring in galleries and wealthy art patrons, making the area more attractive to middle-income, young buyers for the "hip" character. As a neighborhood becomes more desirable, housing developers build fancy apartments and condominiums. Affluent residents attract high-end businesses and cafes, which push out longstanding businesses and push up property taxes and fees. Suddenly, the original residents find they can no longer afford to live in their own neighborhood. Often, they are forced to relocate to an area that is less expensive. In recent years, city regulations require that new developments retain some amount of low-income housing. The current regulations in Berkeley require a mix of new units for low to middle income residents.

This might seem a simple issue of an upper class taking funds from a working class that cannot defend itself. But this is not always the case. There are strong arguments on both sides. Positive outcomes of gentrification include increased safety, improved housing and more services. On the flip side, because the community living in the area changes, the original residents often don't benefit from revitalization. Many also say that the cultural flavor of the area is lost as the influx of new businesses catering to upper class tastes. Most of all, accounts and wealthy art patrons, making the area more attractive to middle-income, young buyers for the "hip" character. As a neighborhood becomes more desirable, housing developers build fancy apartments and condominiums. Affluent residents attract high-end businesses and cafes, which push out longstanding businesses and push up property taxes and fees. Suddenly, the original residents find they can no longer afford to live in their own neighborhood. Often, they are forced to relocate to an area that is less expensive. In recent years, city regulations require that new developments retain some amount of low-income housing. The current regulations in Berkeley require a mix of new units for low to middle income residents.

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**Vocabulary**  
gentrification: a kind of bias, especially one that is positive

an essential reading reference for Danny Hoch to address in a performance. Though people have researched the nature of urban renewal, the term is still unclear because of the complex nature of the question: whose quality of life has more value? If the gentrification benefits the poor, it is a gentrification. If a gentrification is a nation-wide trend, it is a gentrification. With the changing neighborhood identity, rates of income and gentrification went down. But in Long Beach points out, many residents have found that new homes made less sense than the old one, and much more expensive. The city continues to bring

"We're not allowed to maintain culture in the face of colonial attack. And essentially what gentrification is colonial attack. Neighborhoods that are gentrifying, they're under siege. By the middle class and the upper middle class and the rich." — Danny Hoch

Los Angeles is currently struggling with the mixed message of gentrification. From Park and Alhambra Village are becoming hotspots for artists — the first step in the process. Elsewhere is further along in its revitalization, with commercial property values becoming the norm. Class added combine are rising along the downtown downtown, and artists are being pushed out on the ground floor level. But then the gentrification in L.A. continues to be dependent on the fact of gentrification. The Los Angeles City Council passed a gentrification ordinance in 2015, which is meant to make it difficult and costly to convert residential blocks on 16th Street into condos. After down Street Boulevard will need blocks of gentrification development in areas that used to be predominantly working class. Mexican and Korean neighborhoods. We have yet to see exactly what the repercussions will be to the L.A. cultural identity as it becomes the new destination for "resident tourists."

8 (page 8)

IMMIGRANT DOMAIN: Page 8

## Page 8: Immigrant Domain

**Rationale:** Gentrification is a complex and contested issue; if it seems to have a bias toward people with more money or power, that's because it does. Gentrification does disenfranchise some people; for others, it improves their quality of life. The question is whether the end justifies the means. In order to begin answering that question, it's important to be able to empathetically view all sides of the argument. *Taking Over* will help your students to meet some of the characters on both sides of the fence. A better understanding of the facts of the process will allow your students the resources to draw their own conclusions.

Hoch's quote embedded between articles equating gentrification to colonialism is a potent statement. For some, colonization is a part of progress, with some inherent disadvantages but a positive outcome for the majority. For those not part of a privileged majority, the balance of benefit appears unacceptable.

**Exercise:** Read Danny Hoch's quote and the "Immigrant Domain" article after reviewing the definition of gentrification on page 5. Discuss the impact of gentrification from the perspective of the original residents of a community and of the people moving into a community. Make sure students understand what gentrification is and why it is happening. Review the timeline of events, placing particular emphasis on cause and effect relationships. Discuss how Los Angeles fits into

the gentrification argument. Ask students: Is this happening in your community? Where on the timeline do you think your city or neighborhood falls? Are there other places in Los Angeles that seem to fit some of the indicators for gentrification? Are you among the privileged, or the overtaken?

**Exercise: Revisit Hoch's quote on page 8** (reprinted here for reference):

**"We are not allowed to maintain culture in the face of colonial attack. And essentially what gentrification is colonial attack. Neighborhoods that are gentrifying, they're under siege. By the middle class and the upper middle class and the rich."**  
— Danny Hoch

**Colonialism:** *n.* The governance of one nation by a distant nation that often operates under different cultural and religious mores and has a differing ethnic makeup.

Define colonialism for your students, if it isn't a concept that has appeared in their previous class work. Britain's colonization of India, for example, led to compromise of national identity, changes in language and culture, and India's dependence on Britain for financial and social infrastructure. On the positive side, India's emerging unity as an independent nation is due in part to stability provided by Britain's presence. Discuss with them the analogy between gentrification and colonialism. Are there similar positive and negative outcomes (such as the subjugation of culture to a ruling class)? Is gentrification a colonial attack? Are gentrifying

# Before the Play

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neighborhoods under siege? There can be many differing stances on Hoch's view, so encourage your students to explore all aspects in discussion.

## **Additional Exercise:**

### **Gentrification Debate**

Prepare a debate based on the information presented. Have one team take the position that gentrification is good for a community and the other team take the opposing view. Both perspectives are entirely defensible. Renewing communities get better schools, become safer and property values rise. But the issue of displacement and rising costs is a significant one. Encourage them to use information gained from the guide and from discussions in their debate. Each team should get 2 minutes to make opening arguments, an opportunity to rebut the other side and an additional 2 minutes for closing remarks. Allow students 2 minutes with their team to discuss their closing remarks before they present them. For a more rigorous debate, allow time for research.

## **More Information:**

### **Rockefeller Drug Laws**

While *Taking Over* only mentions the Rockefeller Laws briefly, they are an excellent example of public policy supporting a racial and fiscal bias. Read the sidebar with your students to familiarize the class with the fundamental ideas presented in the laws. In addition to the information covered in the Guide, more in-depth analysis of the reasons for and impact of these laws can be found at the sites below.

<http://www.prdi.org/rocklawfact.html>

<http://www.drugpolicy.org/statebystate/newyork/rockefeller/>

### **Exercise: I Am Here**

In contrast to the *Who Was Here?* interview, this exercise asks students to return to their personal perspective while exploring ideas of belonging and community. Rather than asking themselves the same questions they asked their interview subject, this mapping project becomes a visual representation of their own domain. You may wish to select a single area for the whole class to map, or each student may choose their own; it might be the school, their neighborhood or the whole city. The outline doesn't have to be geographically accurate; what goes inside the box is what matters.

When approaching the exercise, begin by defining the words in the Key as a group. What does safety mean to your class? Is it a place where your friends go or a place where people look like you? What is out of place? Somewhere dangerous, or where different languages than your own are

spoken? Full access means that any time of the day or night, this location is open and safe for you, like your bedroom or a close family friend's house. Partial access means that you are comfortable there, but don't have total control over the space, like a classroom that you enjoy being in or the gym, if you play sports. No access means that when you are in that space, you don't feel like you have control over what happens there and you feel uncomfortable. For some students, this may be the Principal's office or a particular street that is unsafe for them.

Once everyone has completed their map, share with the class. Take note and discuss the differences between maps. Is it illuminating to realize that some people feel unsafe in your safe areas? Why do some students map large areas and others only local areas? Does having a car or the ability to get around easily make a difference?

If your class is interested in going deeper into visual representations of the community, you can break them into small groups and have them work on shared, large-format maps. When their perceived boundaries interact and overlap with other students', they will begin to develop a more communal understanding of the architecture of their neighborhood. Invite them to bring in music that seems connected to certain areas or found objects like flyers or ticket stubs that represent a particular place to add to their map. Have the groups present to the class the collage of the neighborhood as they see it.

# Before the Play

**The Battle for National Identity**



**Immigrant** A person who has moved from one country to another to live and work there. Immigrants are people who have moved from one country to another to live and work there. Immigrants are people who have moved from one country to another to live and work there.

**Salad bowl** A metaphor for a multicultural society in which different cultural groups remain distinct but coexist. A salad bowl is a metaphor for a multicultural society in which different cultural groups remain distinct but coexist.

**Melting pot** A metaphor for a multicultural society in which different cultural groups blend together. A melting pot is a metaphor for a multicultural society in which different cultural groups blend together.

**Vocabulary**

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THE BATTLE FOR NATIONAL IDENTITY:  
Page 10

## Page 10:

### The Battle for National Identity

**Rationale:** In order to fully understand why culturally diverse communities are particularly susceptible to the drawbacks of gentrification, it's important to discuss the polycultural nation that America is, and how it came to define itself that way. Unfortunately, we have not always been as respectful of cultural differences as we are now, and we still have a way to go before we have perfected that goal. This article discusses the continuum of integration that the United States Civil Rights policy is traveling.

The salad bowl and melting pot are illuminating metaphors for our own internal struggle with what makes up an American. The characters in *Taking Over* are very much a salad bowl – remaining distinct within the larger framework of New York. There are first- and second-generation

immigrants represented, coming from positions of affluence and access (such as Franque) or looking for opportunity (like the Dispatcher) to improve their life.

**Exercise:** Read “The Battle for National Identity.” Explore how the idea of the melting pot might have begun. Is there a relationship between the “melting” idea and the decision to structure America as a series of united states? Is the idea of the United States more a melting pot or salad bowl in the first place? Discuss with your class the historic examples of inclusion and exclusion.

Unpack the idea of unequal access as it relates to contemporary society. Are there communities that still don't have full protection under the law? Is there still a gender bias in the workplace in America? Are certain classes or races still not encouraged to pursue certain careers? Are marriage laws for gay couples a civil rights issue? What about immigration laws for illegal family members of American citizens?

**Additional Exercise:** Ask students: Is your neighborhood a melting pot or a salad bowl? Do all of the houses look the same from the outside? When you walk down the street, do you hear many different kinds of music blending together? Think about the kinds of food available in walking distance from your school. Is it mostly mom-and-pop ethnic eateries? Mostly convenience food like McDonalds? Or is it mainly diners and cafés serving modern American fare like hamburgers and pie? What do these observations say about your area?

Stephen Colbert from Comedy Central's *Colbert Report* made up the term “Lunchables” to refer to areas with no integration, where each element is sealed off from the others. Most areas aren't simply a salad bowl or a melting pot. As a class, come up with a new metaphor for your community identity.

**Exercise: Taking Sides** This critical writing exercise is meant to help your students draw their own conclusions from the ideas presented thus far. Encourage them to draw on their interview, their own mapping exercise and the discussions that you've had in class when considering the stance that they will take. Use the worksheet “Crafting a Persuasive Argument” (included) to help them develop their essay in a way that anticipates and defends against rebuttals. There are any number of valid viewpoints on the issue of gentrification. Help your students understand how to clearly defend their position by integrating an understanding of multiple perspectives into their essay.

# After the Play

The worksheet is titled "Response to the Play" and is labeled as an "Exercise". It contains five questions, each followed by several lines of space for writing:

- 1. Did the play change your mind about anything? How?
- 2. Do you think that Hach is fair to everyone represented in the play? Does he have to be? Explain.
- 3. Why does Hach place himself at the end of the show?
- 4. What is Hach's opinion of gentrification? How do you know?
- 5. What makes Taking Over Hip-Hop Heated? (Or why isn't it?)

RESPONSE TO THE PLAY: Page 12

## Page 12: After the Play

**Rationale:** These short answer prompts are designed to allow your students to process *Taking Over* through critical thinking. While the experience of liking or not liking a play is always valid, this section will help them process the issues presented in the performance through style, structure and story in an analytical way.

### Exercise: Response to the Play

These response questions target the primary ideas in this guide. Questions 1 and 2 investigate techniques in rhetoric and the power of empathy – when students have their minds changed, is it because of the information presented, the way it's presented or both? Questions 3 and 4 have to do with identifying the author's perspective within the work by thinking about how he places himself within it, literally and through his opinions. Finally,

Question 5 returns to the issue of style. From all of our exploration of Hip-Hop aesthetics, are your students able to identify the Hip-Hop elements present in the show? Before discussing the play as a group, give them some time, either as homework directly after the performance or the next day in class, to fill out their answers. Once they are complete, have a discussion with your group. There are many different answers that are valid, as long as the students can substantiate them with what they saw in the performance.

For reference, below is a review of characters:

**ROBERT** begins and ends the show. Views himself as the original, authentic Williamsburg American immigrant. At a Williamsburg Community Day, Robert lays out his vision of what makes an appropriate Williamsburg resident and pleads with all of the hip, rich people moving into the neighborhood to find somewhere else to live.

**FRANCQUE**, a real estate broker for high end luxury lofts in Brooklyn. Francque is an immigrant himself, from France.

**MARION**, a long-time Williamsburg resident babysitting kids and chatting with a friend about the changes in her neighborhood. She recounts an experience of taking expensive croissants from a café without anyone noticing. She perceives herself as having become invisible to the new people moving into town.

**KIKO**, another Williamsburg native chatting with a local film crew, trying to fit in. While not invisible, Kiko's overtures clearly make the P.A. uncomfortable.

**STUART**, a housing developer profiting from the revitalization of Williamsburg. He sees himself as a realist, making money off of inevitable change.

**EL DISPATCHER** speaking primarily in Spanish, El Dispatcher bounces between talking to his taxis in machismo slang, and admonishing his Americanized children to speak English so that no one thinks that they're immigrants.

**KAITLIN**, a stereotypical affluent suburban refugee, selling cute kitsch bags and shirts on the streets of Williamsburg. She complains of being oppressed by her rich Michigan parents and brags about dating a Dominican to give herself more credibility as a New Yorker.

**LAUNCH MISSILES CRITICAL**, a Hip-Hop MC rapping an aggressive message of revolution, clearly overwhelmed by the changing environment around him. As part of his agreement with Galapagos Art Space where he's performing, he has to make announcements for the upcoming week of hip, gentrified programming.

**DANNY** as himself, talking about his experience of watching Williamsburg change so drastically. He recalls witnessing someone stabbed in the neighborhood that recently has become a hot spot for things like organic vegetables.



# After the Play

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## **Additional Exercise**

Throughout the guide, there are four different quotes that deal with what Hip-Hop artists perceive as the purpose of the movement. Identify all four with your students. They are:

“The selection of experiences, memories, and the entire scope of a person’s being come into play in the creation of the self. We do not just pick one record at a time. Our inner DJs are like a multiarmed being, our records are infinitely grooved, and the sounds of our lives captured and mixed, remixed...”  
— robert karimi, pg. 3

“The Hip-Hop generation is working inside and outside ‘the system’ in the arts, politics, business, education and activism...Part of Hip-Hop wants to be accepted, and part of it does not.”  
— Danny Hoch, pg. 5

“Hip hop is blues filtered through a century of experience and a thousand miles of asphalt.”  
— William Jelani Cobb, pg. 13

“Hip-hop is folklore is gospel is order is *ocha* in orbit, no bulls—t, no doubt. That’s what I think it is. I think it’s spirituality. I think it’s truth. But mostly, it’s a folkloric medium enjoyed by billions of people all over the planet that is rooted in the idea of movement.”  
— Marc Bamuthi Joseph, pg. 15

As a class, discuss the similarities and differences among the quotes. Why are there so many different perspectives? Try to come up with your own definition of Hip-Hop.

**Exercise:** After the students have seen the play, have them write a letter using one or more of the following elements of writing: narrative, descriptive, expository, response to literature or persuasive.

**Mail their responses to:**  
**Center Theatre Group Education**  
**601 West Temple Street**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90012**