Perceptions Regarding Race and Inequality

- The children don’t believe they can professionally achieve the same as whites; they don’t hold high ambitions.
- The people are not welcome in the downtown stores.
- They don’t sell certain newspapers in the neighborhood because they don’t think they can afford the things in it.
- NYC was cutting back on the services that helped the poorest people.
- Outsiders see the neighborhood as “bad people” although most do whatever they can to keep their families safe and happy.
- Blacks and Hispanics are not welcome as first-class citizens and are asked to leave.
- Black and white women give birth on different floors of the hospital.
- Police won’t come to their buildings right away because they say they’re scared.
- People say that white people would be happy if minorities disappeared.
- The city painted murals of middle-class homes on the walls that face tourists and commuters.
- People dump their trash in the streets and the city put the dump right there.
- Radio announcer is openly racist on the air.
- The city reduced the number of case workers and building inspectors in the area so the ones left have more cases than they can handle.
- When black children are bused to white schools in white areas; white families vacate the area.
- The taxi drivers won’t go near the area.
- They pick the smartest black kids to go to white schools which takes away from the atmosphere of the black school.
- People believe the men in that area will not amount to anything – they will either be in the jail or work for the jail system.
Community Conditions

- Drug dealers/drug problems before and after Caldron.
- NYC owned much of the housing referred to in the book; they also placed families in these neighborhoods.
- Prostitution; asthmatic kids; HIV/AIDS; Addicts; Poorest people in NY.
- Housing conditions:
  - Rats and roaches infestation
  - No heat/air conditioning
  - Deteriorating/dangerous buildings
  - Overpopulated buildings
  - Fire
- Neighborhood:
  - No libraries open in the evenings
  - Abandoned people, cars and buildings
  - No community centers
  - Described as “deadliest blocks”
  - No banks/opportunities for loans
  - Many check cashing places
  - City incinerator, sewage, prison
  - Rats caused food places to close
  - Lack of adequate medical aid
  - Lack of police
- Emotional/mental condition
  - Depression
  - Hopelessness
  - Fear and anxiety
  - Hunger
  - Inability to obtain a good education
  - Stress of life conditions
  - No emotion towards death
- Community went from predominantly black to Hispanic.
Schools

- Classes are so overcrowded they had to hold the classes in bathrooms, coat closets, stairwells.
- Teachers are teaching life skills to stay alive.
- Trying to get into the goods you had to know how to pull strings.
- 200 students graduate out of 3000.
- At least 1000 are dismissed for bad attendance, violent behavior.
- Lots of kids are suffering from chronic depression, diseases.
- Kids talked about being in heaven rather than being on earth in the bad schools.
- Third segregated school in US.
- 7 out of 200 students do not qualify for free lunches.
- Barrels filled with rain, green fungus growing in corner of rooms.
- One white child in the public school.
- Standardized tests are unfair for the students because they're not qualified.
- 1970 – 400 physicians worked in public schools; 1993 – they were at 23 part-time
- 150 million was used to build Stuyvesant
- Mayor cut after-school programs; told high-school students they had to get by without public help.
- 80%+ students discharged before they were seniors.
- Students came back because they were hungry and needed lunch.
- Drug dealers stopped selling drugs while school was being dismissed.
- Stuyvesant students: 10-storey building, 12 science labs, five gyms, Olympic size swimming pool, theater, 430 IBM computers, 2-storey library, walls without graffiti.
- School was an abandoned skating rink without windows.
- 15 out of 54 teachers were certified.
- Lead paint was used in schools until 1980; officials notified in 1987.
- Brooklyn High principal allowed students to get paid to attend commencement if they didn’t drop out of school.
- 23,000 black men earned degrees from colleges and universities; 2.3 million black men and juveniles pass through the nation’s jail and prison systems.
Drugs

- Clinics where they change dirty needles for clean ones.
- Drug lords would stop selling drugs when school children got out.
- Drug addicted prostitutes started at 13.
- Drug dealers arrested.
- Drug lords and donations on holidays to poor.
- Sold drugs in parks with segregated areas for children.
- Stopped dealing when preacher was preaching in park.
- Even though drug lords tried to keep drugs from kids, kids knew much more about it they thought.
- AIDS took over community because so many were IV drug users.
- During certain warm days at picnics, drugs were sold all day.
- Crack and heroin were biggest drugs.
- Some stores actually had drug sales inside.
- Drug related violence and executions.
- Poorer people in the neighborhood were able to borrow money for an extra cost from drug lords.
- Children were afraid to go outside and play because of drug sales and use but there were people in hallway doing the same.
Health Care

- 27 AIDS patients receiving treatment from only one nurse once a month.
- Patient being told a room would be available in 2 hours but waited 6 for a room that was still not clean or prepared.
- Asthma is a leading sickness among kids.
- If you are poor, you will get inadequate health care.
- Local hospitals were denied accreditation more than once because of the staff's failure to monitor patients.
- In the neighborhood, there is a medical waste incinerator, used drug needles and other hazardous waste that is harmful to people in the community.
- Patients at hospitals wait days before ever being seen.
- Staff is overworked.
- Unsanitary health facilities.
- Hospital more concerned with payment and not treatment.
- Few neighborhood residents have private doctors.
- Charity does not produce change for the majority.
Government

- Tax cuts that only benefit the wealthy and hurt the poor,
- Reduction in programs:
  - Lead-poisoning prevention
  - Control of rats
  - Obtaining food stamps
  - AIDS
  - Job layoffs
- Spent millions on building incinerators, prisons, and painting murals, but couldn’t spend money on schools and living conditions.
- Mayor says they should take advantage of their opportunities but then he cuts jobs.
- Mayor wants to fingerprint welfare recipients so that they don’t file double applications.
- Deputies propose welfare recipients should wear “green uniforms” – like prisoners – and clean up trash in the streets.
- Improvement districts being called reinvented government at least south of 96th St.
- Midtown neighborhoods sanitation and other basic services are being purchased through private means and have been granted semi-governmental taxing power to raise money and spend it locally.
- Programs:
  - SSI – Federal program for sick and disabled people
  - Reduced /Free school lunches
  - Welfare
  - Aid to families with dependent children.
- Tax cuts include laying off or cutting back social services, elevator inspectors, hospital funds.
The Police

- The police get no respect like when the grandmother took the law in her own hands when her granddaughter was raped (p. 14).
- They are also untrustworthy in this community; even the children who are asked say they can’t trust the police.
- The police are depicted as unresponsive to calls for help. This also shows how they are scared, like the police who even said this, claiming they “were passing the buck” trying not to show up.
- They show themselves to be self-serving. They say that they don’t show up because it’s too dangerous and they don’t want to die and leave their families. Even though this is their job, they care more about themselves and not the people.
- The overall depiction of the police in this area is being scared, “like little boys.” They are afraid of doing their own jobs.
The Media

- Much of the media in NYC seems like they don't want to bother with the South Bronx. They want to focus on Manhattan and the rest of NYC and pretend like the area around S. Bronx doesn't exist. Many of the events that occur such as the little boy falling down the elevator shaft because it wasn't fixed should be heard (by the media and others) but isn't.
- Popular talk-show host speaks of minorities in a very degrading manner. He states, “They are not like you, and they are not like me. They are something apart. They are distinct. He wonders if there is “a factory” where they “drop those kids…what? Ten a minute?” (p. 41)
- Another radio talk-show host who broadcasts on the ABC affiliate in NYC refers to African blacks as “savages” and advocates eugenics in America. He wondered aloud, “how they multiply like that” and then answered, “It’s like maggots on a hot day. You look one minute and there are so many there…you look again and wow! They’ve tripled.” (p. 128)
- Women cited in the Times states: “I didn’t breed them…I don’t want to feed them.” (p. 128)
- Anzona woman speaks of Mexican children who enter the border illegally. This sentiment is like the number of talk-show hosts who scorn the children of Black and Hispanic people. (p. 129)
- Noted in the Times, “Even when black and latino children ride the bus or take the train to go to school in the white area, white families often vacate schools in their own neighborhood.