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Krip-Hop Nation: Community-Based Education at the Intersection of Blackness & Disability

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts  
in Anthropology

by

Leroy Franklin Moore

2024

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## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Krip-Hop Nation: Community-Based Education at the Intersection of Blackness & Disability

by

Leroy Franklin Moore

Master of Arts in Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2024

Professor H. Samy Alim, Co-Chair

Professor Norma Mendoza-Denton, Co-Chair

This MA thesis is situated at the crossroads of Hip-Hop Studies, Black Studies, and Disability Studies and deepens the conversation between these fields at this important juncture in 2023 when we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of Hip Hop and UCLA's historic establishment of the first Disability Studies major in the state of California. Against this backdrop, I explore various pedagogical theories, including Cultural Relevant Pedagogy, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, and DisCrit-Disability Studies, as well as community-based approaches like, Poor Magazine's Poverty Scholarship and Poor People-Led Theory. I synthesize these theoretical approaches in order to present what I am referring to as "Krip-Hop Community-Based Learning/Pedagogy" for and with the disabled community locally and globally. Krip-Hop Nation is a worldwide network of Hip-Hop artists and other musicians with disabilities who produce music and poetry from the perspective of racialized minorities with disabilities in Hip Hop. Krip-Hop Nation takes disability culture seriously and argues that these cultural approaches should be used to reach disabled students, particularly those in special education.

These artists not only transform Hip-Hop Culture and language, but they also have the goal of raising public consciousness about the struggles faced by those who occupy racialized, disabled bodies and who struggle against the intersectional oppressions of racism and ableism, including “Black ableism.” I conclude with some implications for establishing local and global independent institutions dedicated to cultural and political education that address this intersectional struggle in sites like Berkeley, Tanzania, South Africa and beyond.

The thesis of Leroy Franklin Moore is approved.

Justin Peyton Dunnivant

Norma Mendoza-Denton, Committee Co-Chair

H. Samy Alim, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2024

## Dedication

This Master's thesis is dedicated to my family, sister, Melissa Moore, all my nieces and nephews. I know my mother and father are happy in heaven. Krip-Hop Nation's members worldwide, thank you for the love. Black/Brown/White disabled youth, make your own rules and take Krip-Hop to new stages! OMG Emily A. Nusbaum, I couldn't have done this without you! My Bay Area and Poor Magazine's family always have my back! Thank you Kelvin Sauls & DJ Quad for welcoming me to LA and supporting the dream of Krip-Hop Institute. Erick Matus, we did it! To my committee members, H. Samy Alim, Justin Dunnivant, and Norma Mendoza-Denton, the UCLA Hip Hop Initiative and the Hip Hop Studies Working Group, Cheryl L. Keyes and Scot Brown.

Thanks for always holding me down, Erick. A list of names that helped me get here: Stephanie Keeney Parks, it's all your fault, hahahaha. Lisa "Tiny" Gray-Garcia. Amy Hosa, Chris & Mr. G. Susan Schweik. Lateef McLeod. Kevin Powell. CB Smith-Dahl. Juju Angeles. Naru Kwiina. Maya Naimah. Mitch Jeserich. And so many more but you know who you are, thank you!

I miss you, Rob DA Noize Temple! Krip-Hop for life and beyond. I know you are looking over me and Krip-Hop Nation!

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## **Kripping The Kirriculum from The Roots**

*All this talk, pedagogies and books  
Using rhymes and hooks  
Can't grow if you don't get to the roots  
Hip-Hop are the leaves of this tree*

*Teachers want to see pride  
They might have to feel uncomfortable at times  
Have to deal with their own racism & ableism  
Because we know that most teachers are White*

*All this talk pedagogies and books  
Using rhymes and hooks  
Can't grow if you don't get to the roots  
Hip-Hop are the leaves of this tree*

*Way before the birth of an industry  
When the circus were not animals but humans  
Behind bars and in cages  
Don't try to control the student's rage*

*Let them feel their ancestors anger  
That lead to a lot of creative answers  
How they made a career  
The moans of the Blues let them hear*

*Talk about Black respectability politics  
That pushed out Black disabled men  
From the church to the streets, it's no trick  
This is only the beginning and there's no end*

*You can't go pass Jazz  
Way before Bluegrass  
Al Hibbler marching with MLK Jr  
Protest music in another era*

*Young, old don't care about your age  
Everybody was hip in the Jazz age  
People thought Rahsaan Roland Kirk was a freak  
So he rap it in Freaks For The Festival*

*This poem is for my peoples  
No textbooks field trip to a freakshow  
This is the original Crip walk so let's go  
Tookie told me the truth*

*I can't & don't stand for the pledge of allegiance  
Give me Colin Kaepernick  
And F coons like Jay Z  
Can't make it to last letter in the alphabet, put me to sleep zzzz*

*Let's get back to the subject*

*Kripping The Kirriculum  
Evicting all White women  
From special education*

*This is my creation  
Kripping PE Fight the Power  
To Fight Black Ableism  
Got read of the White gaze  
But Black people why r you still in a haze*

*What Black disabled man can't be the teacher  
All of you are internalize haters  
We don't need the White man  
He played the old game, divide and conquer*

*Got us hypnotize  
It's not a surprise  
When the pain becomes a 9 to 5  
Even after Covid back to the old times*

*No not trump's old time  
While Apple kicks us into virtual future  
Mother Nature was healing during Covid  
No need for college campus everything is on zoom*

*Welcome to Kripdome  
Once again  
Kripping PE's Welcome to the Terrordome  
Krip-Hop is not your friend*

*Give out grades  
And you all flunk  
You just got punk  
Still in a haze it's called Krip-Hop funk*

*From the roots  
Stumping with our steal braces  
In our steel toe boots  
Mace in your face*

*Can't truss it  
Watch your step  
King Kunta with one foot  
Got a bone to pick*

*Krip-Hop class  
Taught by Mr. Glass  
Looking sharp  
While he kills your ass*

*Leroy, why you went dark  
I learn by swimming with sharks  
You, put me off of Norah's arch*

*It's what you did to me from the start*

## **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

The most significant theorist in the area of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (hereafter CRP) is Gloria Ladson-Billings. In her 2021 book, *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Asking a Different Question*, Ladson-Billings writes about the origins of CRP (Ladson-Billings p. 84, 2021).

I credited my academic success to the teachers who supported my home culture while simultaneously exposing me to the mainstream culture. What did these teachers know and how did they do this? This was what I wanted to know. Could we document the pedagogical expertise of teachers who were successful with developing this bicultural perspective? More specifically, could I find those teachers capable of developing what King (2005) called a “relevant Black personality?” I did not realize it at the time, but I was asking a fundamentally different kind of question. Instead of constantly asking what was wrong with poor, Black children, I wanted to know what was “right” with poor, Black children and what happens in classrooms where teachers help them succeed on a regular basis (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

CRP as outlined by Ladson-Billings includes three major components: academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. As CRP is widely misread through the lens of “uncritical multicultural education,” it is worth quoting Ladson-Billings at length:

Academic achievement or student learning refers to the knowledge, skills, and intellectual dispositions that students acquire as a result of their schooling experiences... Cultural competence addresses the ability for students to be well

grounded in their home culture(s) and fluent in at least one additional culture. Grounding in the home culture includes knowledge of the history, traditions, values, and language of the home culture(s). For many urban students fluency in another culture typically refers to being able to access the dominant culture, but it does not mean relinquishing or denigrating one's home culture. Developing facilities in both cultures helps to create a bicultural student who is comfortable in multiple contexts. Sociopolitical consciousness or critical consciousness refers to the ability of students to offer thoughtful critique about what they are learning in school and what they are experiencing in society. (Billings p. 84 2021)

However, as Ladson-Billings argued, one of the unfortunate results of how her research was taken up was the notion of teachers "as heroic isolates, or the teacher as savior and charismatic maverick without exploring the complexities of teaching and nuanced intellectual work that undergirds pedagogical practices" (Ladson-Billings, 2011, page 29).

As many in the field of education have argued, CRP was a necessary intervention in pedagogical theory because most scholars did not take into account how dominant, White institutional education was failing youth of color by ignoring their cultural backgrounds and strengths, their families and communities, and judging them by White supremacist norms. CRP continues to be necessary because, as Billings has written, we need diverse teachers to build upon students' diverse skills and provide true educational equity (Ladson-Billings, 2011).

Gloria Ladson-Billings' CRP, as well as Geneva Gay's "culturally responsive pedagogy" (2010) insisted that teachers needed to learn and incorporate youth, family, and community culture in their classrooms to radically change the eurocentric, top-down way of creating

curriculum and teaching. They were proposing pedagogical theory that focused on strengths rather than deficits, and they viewed diversity in thought, culture, and traits as positive assets.

### **From Culturally Relevant Pedagogy to Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy**

This shift of thinking and teaching in educational institutions led to Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim 2014). Paris and Alim (2017) view their work as building on decades of asset-based pedagogical research including CRP (Ladson-Billings, 2021) and Culturally Responsive (Gay and Hammond, 2014) and Linguistically-informed Pedagogy (Hollie, 2011). Paris (2012) coined the term, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, to re-examine the purpose of schooling in pluralistic societies (Alim & Paris, 2017). Alim and Paris define CSP as:

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, CPS, seeks to perpetuate and foster-to sustain- linguistic, literate and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation. CSP positions dynamic cultural dexterity as a necessary good, and sees the outcome of learning as additive rather than subtractive, as remaining whole rather than framed as broken, as critically enriching strengths rather than replacing deficits. Culturally sustaining pedagogy exists wherever education sustains the lifeways of communities who have been and continue to be damaged and erased through schooling. (Alim & Paris 2017 p.1)

In the 2020 *Handbook of Cultural Foundations of Learning*, they extend their articulation by taking a more critical stance and focusing in deeper on the connection to communities and the idea that CSP is about centering and sustaining those communities:

Culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) is a critical framework for centering and sustaining Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Asian and Pacific Islander communities as

these memberships necessarily intersect with gender and sexuality, dis/ability, class, language, land and more. First and foremost, CSP explicitly names whiteness (including white normativity, white racism and ideologies of white supremacy) as the problem, and thus, decentering whiteness and recentering communities is our point of departure. In the context of the United States and other nation-states living out the legacies and contemporary realities of genocide, enslavement, apartheid, occupation and various forms of colonialism, CSP recognizes that the purpose of state-sanctioned schooling has always been to forward the largely assimilationist and often violent white imperialist project. In the context of deeply entrenched, structural racial and economic inequalities, CSP is necessarily and fundamentally a critical, anti-racist, anti-colonial framework that rejects the white settler capitalist gaze and the kindred cisheteropatriarchal, English-monolingual, ableist, classist, xenophobic and other hegemonic gazes. (Alim, Paris & Wong, 2020, p. 261).

Both Paris and Alim have extensive experience researching the language varieties of People of Color, especially Black and Brown communities and youth culture. Looking at youth cultures, Alim (2004, 2006) highlights Hip-Hop culture in particular, building on Geneva Smitherman, the mother of Black language scholarship, and her book that has helped shape the field of Black Language, *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*. As Alim (2006, p. 8) wrote:

Black linguists have long been concerned with issues of social justice and social change. Long before the “Ebonics controversy” caught the media’s attention,

Black linguists (Bailey 1969, Smitherman 1981, Taylor 1985, Rickford and Rickford 1995, Baugh 1999) have been committed to the educational welfare of Black American students. They have joined forces with many Black American educational researchers who view BL as a resource to be utilized rather than a problem to be eradicated (Lee 1993, Ball 1995, Perry and Delpit 1998, LeMoine 1999).

Alim goes on to a really important point: “Many Black linguists approach the study of BL as more than merely an academic pursuit. In fact, linguistics is often seen as a direct means to quantify and reverse the myriad social injustices facing Blacks in America, including educational, economic, and political subordination (Alim 2006, p.8).” Relying on Baugh’s (2003) work on “linguistic profiling,” Alim also addressed the racial identification and discrimination of individuals or groups of people based on their speech and/or writing. He also shows how Hip Hop artists have resisted dominant culture’s linguistic racism (Kroskrity, 2020) by theorizing “language as power, that is, the view that language is the revolution, a powerful discourse in and of itself. (Alim, 2006 p.10).

Alim’s early work on critical Hip Hop language pedagogies (Alim, 2004, 2007) demonstrates how teachers can make use of Hip Hop’s linguistic inventiveness and innovativeness in the classroom. Alim (2007, p. 17) not only extends “who counts” as teachers to include “those who teach in the homes, mosques, churches, streets, and other community sites of learning,” but he also critically examines the construction of knowledge and expertise in education:

What is knowledge? When, where, and how is knowledge (de)valued? Who are the producers and consumers of knowledge, and what types of knowledge do we

produce and consume? What are the relationships between language, culture, reality, power, and knowledge? From the perspective of the Hip Hop Nation Speech Community (HHNSC), what does it mean to “know the ledge,” or to “do the knowledge,” to understand that “knowledge reigns supreme”? It is notable that the HHNSC’s constructions of knowledge all beg the question, Knowledge for what, to what end, for what purpose? By interrogating the construct of knowledge, we are attempting to uncover and understand the educational ideologies of the present generation of Hip Hop youth. (Alim, p.17, 2007)

By raising these questions, Alim reframes the concept of knowledge from the perspective of the Hip Hop Nation, encouraging researchers to explore community ideologies of education as a necessary part of the pedagogical process. He goes on to talk more about Black language and Hip-Hop culture:

Subsequently, scholars have taken on research agendas that aim to “bridge” the out-of-school language and literacy practices of Black students with classroom practice (Ball, 2000; Dyson, 2003; Foster, 2001; Lee, 1993), while others have examined the inventive and innovative language and literacy events of Black youth involved in Hip Hop Culture (Alim, 2004b, 2004c), spoken-word poetry (Fisher, 2003), and other verbal activities (Mahiri & Sutton, 1996; Richardson, 2003, 2006), as well as the relationship between literacy and popular culture, more generally (Duncan-Andrade, 2005). (Alim, p. 16, 2007)

When taken together with Alim’s (2004) research on combating “linguistic supremacy” and the research on linguistic profiling that impacts the lives of people of color, this can be

applied to people with speech disabilities who are often seen as less than, poor, drunk and so on, and how the Krip-Hop Nation combats these ideologies, as I will show later.

Ladson-Billings (2014) also recognizes the importance of Hip-Hop culture, as she sought to expand her pedagogical theory. In the introduction, 3rd edition of her 2022 book, *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, she explains that in her early work, she did not look closely enough at youth cultures. In her chapter with Django Paris and H. Samy Alim, “Where the Beat Drops”: Culturally Relevant and Culturally Sustaining Hip Hop Pedagogies, Ladson-Billings, highlights youth culture from cell phones to texting and Hip-Hop culture, thus remixing CRP with Hip-Hop pedagogy, referencing the work of Alim, Marc Lamont Hill, Chris Emdin, Bettina Love.

Building upon Ladson-Billings, Paris and Alim (2017) asked the age-old question, “What is the purpose of schooling?”, especially for Black and Brown people living in a country that has a long history of discrimination, domination, and systemic racism in schools that continue to, as W.E.B. Du Bois (1903) once wrote, defining Black people as “a problem.” Alim and Paris (2017) reference what Toni Morrison referred to as “the White Gaze.” According to Malik Pitchford:

The white gaze is omnipresent. It occurs when people view Black creations under the scope of white ethnocentrism, which involves the idea of looking at one’s own culture as the highest standard of “good” culture. Popular music critics and old plantation overseers both share this socio-cultural lens. This select outlook relates race in real time and represents the relationship between the Black experience and its context in America. An overseer sees a Black woman as a vehicle to carry out white supremacy. They believe the ability to decide the cultural/political worth of

a Black person is warranted by the matter of their own white existence.

(Pitchford, p. online, 2023)

Following Toni Morrison, Alim and Paris imagine a society and schools free from the White gaze. As they put it, CSP is challenging W.E.B Du Bois' (1965) Double Consciousness, “this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of the other, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (Alim & Paris, p.2, 2017). They raise several important questions that emerge once schools move beyond “the White gaze” and ask us to imagine educational spaces where this gaze wasn’t the dominant one:

What would liberating ourselves from this gaze and the educational expectations it forwards mean for our abilities to envision new and recover community rooted forms of teaching and learning? What if indeed the goal of teaching and learning with youth of color was not ultimately to see how closely students could perform White middle class norms, but rather was to explore, honor, extend, and, at times, problematize their cultural practices and investments? (Alim & Paris p. 3, 2017)

As I will show below, CPS articulates with the work of Krip-Hop Nation, especially when Paris and Alim turn CSP inward reflexively to work on self and communities outside of educational institutions. Alim critiqued some Hip-Hop pedagogies for not addressing issues like sexism and homophobia and questioned early Hip-Hop pedagogies and how they were implemented, urging us to “pay attention to both the liberatory and non-liberatory currents within these practices.” (Alim and Paris, 2017, p.11). Alim continued with several caveats:

Many Hip Hop pedagogies, from Alim’s critical Hip Hop language pedagogies (2004) to Emdin’s work on Hip Hop and science education (2010), for example, argue for the use of rap battles—improvised verbal duels—in classroom learning.

Yet few take up the fact that the Hip Hop battle can sometimes be a masculinist space that excludes young women, queer youth, and young men of color who do not identify as Black (even as young women, queer youth, and youth who are not Black continue to “roc the mic”). CSP must contend with the possibility that Hip Hop pedagogies that utilize rap battles (as one among many examples of Hip Hop pedagogical practices) may seemingly serve the needs of many students of color, particularly young, able-bodied, cis hetero men, but may unwittingly reproduce forms of exclusion in our classrooms and communities. (For example, the field rarely produces gendered analyses of classroom participation when using Hip Hop.) (Alim and Paris, 2017, page 11)

The way that CSPs are attuned to race, gender, sexuality, and disability, for example, constantly pushes us to consider who is included and who is excluded in the project of justice. This next section will consider Hip-Hop Pedagogies within this tradition of theorizing pedagogies for Black students and other students of color.

### **Hip-Hop & Hip-Hop Pedagogies**

Colleges across the country, including UCLA, Harvard, Duke, and New York University, to name a few, have long been offering hip-hop-focused courses. As is well-documented, early on Hip-Hop was shunned by many, including the music industry, local New York dance clubs to radio stations, MTV, record companies and, yes, educational institutions. The common refrain one would hear about Hip Hop was that it was a “fad,” or that it “wouldn’t last.” Now fifty years later Hip-Hop has a long history beyond just music.

As I wrote in the previous section, Ladson-Billings’ CRP (1995) opened the door of educational institutions to youth culture, including Hip-Hop culture. We will look at early Hip-

Hop scholars who produced writings and political Hip-Hop organizations that were the building blocks of Hip-Hop culture, thus Hip Hop Pedagogy in educational settings, aka higher education. I will discuss the birth of Hip-Hop culture and how it was used as community-based art, expression, and education long before it was popularized by media and educational institutions.

Steven Hager's September 21, 1982 article in the *Village Voice*, "Afrika Bambaataa's Hip Hop," is still one of the most important newspaper articles in Hip-Hop because it was the first time the term "Hip Hop" appeared in print. *Village Voice* went on to hire black journalists who wrote on Hip-Hop like the late Greg Tate, Kevin Powell, Joan Morgan, and many more. *Village Voice* was not the only publication that gave Hip-Hop a place to write about this new culture and gave space to early Hip-Hop journalists who helped to create early Hip-Hop journalism. *The Source* magazine was formed in 1988 to promote solely Hip-Hop and later *Vibe Magazine* was established in 1993. All of this work created terms and a new industry called Hip-Hop journalism and books like *Nation Conscious Rap: The Hip Hop Vision* (Spady & Eure, 1991), *The Vibe History of Hip-Hop* by Alan Light (1999), *When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost* by Joan Morgan (1999) and *And It Don't Stop: The Best American Hip-Hop Journalism of the Last 25 Years* by Raquel Cepeda (2004).

Beyond Hip-Hop journalism, political organizations also helped push to make Hip-Hop get more attention in higher education, such as Hip-Hop Congress, which is a network of individuals and organizations that are driving the necessary transformation of the world by uplifting culture for the creative development of artists and young people through education, civic engagement, and equitable resource exchange amongst other organizations like Hip-Hop Caucus. Hip Hop Caucus is a national, non-profit organization in the United States, which aims

to promote political activism for young U.S. voters using hip-hop music and culture. Of course, early Hip-Hop books, textbooks like *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* by Tricia Rose (1994), *Spectacular Vernaculars* by Russell Potter (1995), *Prophets of the Hood: The Politics and Poetics of Hip Hop* by Imani Perry (2004), *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader* by Mark Anthony Neal and Murray Forman (2004), *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* by Jeff Chang, (2005), and *Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life: Hip-Hop Pedagogy and the Politics of Identity* by Marc Lamont Hill (2009), among many other important works.

All of the above laid the foundation for scholars to develop Hip-Hop pedagogies for the study of Hip-Hop and Hip-Hop culture and seeing Hip-Hop culturally, politically, and historically, not only in the US but globally. Hip-Hop and Hip-Hop culture had to fight from the beginning just to be taken seriously, and educational institutions remain a place where you always have to prove yourself, your field, and answer questions about the importance and relevance of Hip Hop.

A major scholar in the field of Hip-Hop pedagogy is Marc Lamont Hill. Writing in his now classic text, *Beats, Rhymes & Classroom Life* (2009), he argued for the need for Hip-Hop Based Education as follows:

Given the salience of hip-hop culture in the lives of many urban American youth, the educational community has begun to pay considerable attention to the pedagogical possibilities of hip-hop culture within formal schooling contexts.

Drawing from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical traditions, researchers and practitioners have effectively demonstrated the variety of ways that educational contexts are enhanced when hip-hop and other forms of popular culture become a

part of the formal school curriculum. In particular, scholars have shown how the elements of hip-hop culture-rap music, turntablism, break dancing, graffiti culture, fashion, and language- can be used within classrooms to improve student motivation, teach critical media literacy, foster critical consciousness, and transmit disciplinary knowledge. These foci and approaches, along with others, collectively comprise the field of study that I refer to as Hip-Hop-Based Education (HHBE). (Hill 2009; p. 10).

In the *Freedom Moves Hip Hop Knowledges, Pedagogies, and Futures*, Hill breaks down his years of research, teaching, and writing about Hip-Hop pedagogy and how CRP was central to his work. Importantly for this thesis, Hill describes how silences are important. For example, he discusses the silence around Foxy Brown's disability in 2005 after she "went deaf" and how Hip-Hop, the culture, and the industry, did not deal with it. Hill further argued that future work in Hip-Hop pedagogy should address disability (2009, 288):

We need to spend more time making sense of not just what Hip Hop means but *how* it means. That means the processes by which Hip Hop comes to take up meaning. That means that we can't just do a textual analysis of a lyric. We could do that all day but I'm interested in the political economy of Hip Hop, the circulation and consumption of Hip Hop, the way in which texts come to arrive in the places that they arrive. I also want to unpack Hip Hop not just for questionable gender politics, hypermasculinity, or violence. I want us to think about what it means to think about Hip Hop through a queer lens, for example. What would it mean to make sense of Nicki Minaj's Roman character, not just as a kind of performance or as a kind of carnivalesque figure but also as a kind of reimagining

the boundaries of gender performance. What would it mean to look at this through different lenses, such as political economy, queer theory, or disability studies?

(Hill, p. 288, 2009)

In the Krip Hop Nation section below, I will take up Hill's challenge and show what Hip-Hop might look like when we "krip Hip Hop," or examine it with the Krip-Hop Nation's lens focused on the intersecting oppressions of racism and ableism. I will also show how Krip-Hop Nation has continued to shape Hip Hop Studies, as the new third edition of *That's the Joint!: The Hip Hop Studies Reader* (Neal & Forman, 2023) contains an entire section on disability and Hip-Hop. This next section highlights the community-based learning approaches that Krip-Hop utilizes to make these impactful changes in scholarship and communities.

### **Community-Based Learning/Place-Based Learning**

Education takes place everywhere, in the home, at activist meetings, in Hip-Hop cyphers and study groups, and sometimes college students come back to the community and work with the community while still in classes. For centuries, Black people have spearheaded education for liberation, saving themselves and radically transforming America, leading them all to a more just society. We must not forget that educational institutions were not always welcoming to certain communities like Black people and disabled people were not allowed to go to school.

Community-based learning/pedagogy has always been one way for oppressed communities to pass on the knowledge necessary for survival in societies hostile to Black and disabled people. As we learned from Ladson-Billings, Paris, Alim, and Hill, all have written and argued to open up educational institutions to not only youth culture but also to go deeper into community-based learning. All argue that educational institutions need to be more deeply

connected to their students' communities and their lives outside of the classroom if they truly want to understand, make use of, and sustain youth cultures and their communities.

In using the term, "Community Based-Learning," I draw upon scholarship in progressive education, namely the work of John Dewey, whose ideas on education emphasize the need to learn by doing. Dewey believed that human beings learn through a "hands-on" approach and thus must interact with their environments. As Sanoff (2007) argues, Dewey's vision for education "also underlies the contemporary service-learning movement that education must center on society's most pressing problems, that it engages students in community service and prepare them for lifelong commitment to civic involvement" (see Salama & Wilkinson p.1,2007).

Over the decades, scholars have written about the ways that community-based learning relates to asset-based pedagogical theories. Farnsworth (2010), for example, has written about how community-based learning (CBL) supports culturally responsive teaching (Zeichner & Melnick, 1996):

In CBL, pre-service teachers attend community events and often volunteer in the community in some capacity; an emphasis is placed on the diverse cultural practices, beliefs, and ways of interacting with members of the local school community (Moll & Gonzales, 2004; Moll & Vallez-Ibanez, 1992). Ideally, the experience informs culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000) and the development of teachers who "walk the road" (Cochran-Smith, 2004) of teaching for social justice. (Farnsworth, p.1481, 2010) .

As I will detail later, one example of community-based learning that captures Krip-Hop Nation's work is Cristina Santamaria Graf's (2022) concept of "Family As Faculty," where she described the concept from the perspective of healthcare and special education as an approach

“derived from family-centered healthcare models and adapted for special education teacher education programs to assist in changing preservice special education teachers’ (PSETs) deficit perspectives of families to more culturally responsive, asset-based ones” and to emphasize “family voices and provide multiple opportunities for PSETs to collaborate with and learn from families.” (Graf, 2022 p.315). Graff went beyond conventional research methods in many ways like having stipends for parents, co-authoring the study with participants, and making sure that the environment they met in was family-friendly.

The Disability-Centered Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies Project, a conceptual framework and pedagogical application integrating Disability Critical Race Theory and culturally sustaining pedagogies in teacher education (Kulkarni, et al , p.1, 2023), is another recent example of community scholars working alongside academic scholars as equals in the process, where community scholars like myself and others are involved in a project aimed to address these critical inequities by co-constructing intentional, responsive, and accessible curriculum for teachers and future teachers. Kulkarni, et al. (2023) note that academic research usually relies on the perspectives of “scholars and professionals, despite the importance of community-engaged pedagogies and learning approaches,” and argue for the need for collaboration between scholars and communities. Beyond that, they argue that the “knowledge of disabled activists, poverty scholars, and community scholars in partnership with educational professionals” needs to be centered in order to avoid the ableist lenses of traditional scholarship.

Poverty scholars, they write, are “the people usually silenced: incarcerated, criminalized, displaced, homeless, disabled, marginalized, sorted, separated, and extinguished (p. 22), who are told their knowledge, speech, languages, art, experiences, and solutions are not valid or legitimate by linguistic domination and formal institutions of learning (Gray-Garcia et al.,

2019).” In particular, the DCCSP project focuses on the exclusion of disabled communities and justice workers, even in academic spaces, and “(re)centered disability, race, language, and class markers through accessible, virtual professional learning opportunities for current and future teachers led by disabled community activists (DCCSP Website, 2020) (Kulkarni, et al, p.2, 2023).”

On Poor Magazine’s website it goes in deep about their views of education that led them to create Decolonize Academy. “As poor people of color in a society that was built off of us but not for us, we feel that it is essential to provide quality, relevant and realistic education to our Black, Brown, Indigenous & disabled youth in poverty, age 0-18, that will develop them into leaders, enhance their unique gifts, and uplift them to greatness to ultimately decolonize. This is a no-tuition school run by low income families. We teach relevant, conscious, arts and science-based education, including subjects like: poverty journalism, math, reading, cooking, animal care, revolutionary art, and danza azteca. Our teachers are poverty skolaz, Decolonize Academy graduates, Homefulness residents, POOR Magazine family, our ancestors and mama earth.”

Poverty scholarship is lived experience outside of institutional education avenues for a great deal of your life and realizing that not only living, but the knowledge that comes from going through systems to get what society says you need like housing, food, transportation etc., makes you a scholar where you can pass it onto others in the community, peer-to-peer. A disability-centered example of poverty scholarship is the Independent Living Movement in the early 1970s, especially in the East Bay (Berkeley and Oakland), where seasoned disabled activists teach new disabled people how to advocate to get their needs met. This was and still is called peer support.

As I wrote in the beginning of this thesis, as a Black disabled activist, I have been trying to center disability in Black social movements, art, music and traditions of radical thought. Broadening back out to Community-Based Learning, I want to focus below on two different ways of organizing and educating, the Black Panther Party, BPP, and Poor Magazine, each of which have informed the work of Krip-Hop. An elder Black Panther from Oakland, Francis Moore, who is also a key member of Poor Magazine, told me in a 2020 interview: “In 1969, the BPP began Liberation Schools, started as an after school program, in storefronts, churches, and homes out of a recognition of public schools’ failure to properly educate Black children.”

Lisa “Tiny” Gray Garcia defined Poverty Scholarship in Poor Magazine’s 2009 book, *Poverty Scholarship: Poor People-Led Theory, Art, Words, and Tears Across Mama Earth*, as follows:

Poverty scholars are and the concept of Poverty Scholarship called “at-risk” and/or learning-disabled and/or speakers of an “invalid” tongue such as Ebonics or pidgin. Our writing is called mediocre and our research is deemed invalid. We are only deemed important as the subject of other people’s research... Poverty scholars are ‘the people usually silenced: incarcerated, criminalized, displaced, homeless, disabled, marginalized, sorted, separated, and extinguished’ (p. 22) who are told their knowledge, speech, languages, art, experiences, and solutions are not valid or legitimate by linguistic domination and formal institutions of learning (Gray-Garcia et al., 2019). Poverty skolaz’ schools are everywhere. Our teachings are essential, haphazard and immediate, fluid and static. We are your mama, your cousin, your elders, your corner-store owner, and your recycler. Our research is based on our lives and our experiences; our solutions come from our

vast knowledge of what works and what can work. Our visions are based on the dreams of our ancestors, our elders, and our youth. Our languages are many (albeit mostly of the colonizers' tongues, while we strive to move back to our indigenous, pre-colonized complex forms of communication). (Garcia, p.22-23, 2019)

Once again, Poverty scholarship is lived experience outside of institutional education avenues for a great deal of your life and realizing that not only living, but the knowledge that comes from going through systems to get what society says you need like housing, food, transportation, etc., makes you a scholar where you can pass it onto others in the community, peer-to-peer. A disability-centered example of poverty scholarship is the Independent Living Movement in the early 1970s, especially in the East Bay (Berkeley and Oakland), where seasoned disabled activists teach new disabled people how to advocate to get their needs met. This was and still is called peer support.

Poor Magazine, like the Black Panther Party, have/had their own liberation school and their work and my work and life are in the spirit of Walter Rodney's "Guerrilla Intellectual" and Cedric Robinson's "School beyond the school" in the Black Radical Tradition. Benjamin and Springer (2019) explained: "Walter Rodney's groundings pedagogy is a methodology meant to exemplify and amplify existing traditions of building on literal groundings in the community, its specific people and families, and social issues, its economy, its actuality; but also its traditions, its knowledge and wisdom and stories, ways of resolving problems, and ways of seeing the world." (Benjamin & Springer p.211, 2019). These pedagogies of the Black Radical Tradition resonate with what Alim & Haupt (2017, p. 261) refer to as "organic forms of CSP," those forms

already existing in communities that served as ways to survive and thrive, even in the most dire conditions and circumstances.

Over time through my engagement with Poor Magazine (as a founding member), Poor has learned and incorporated Krip-Hop Nation's politics and early Disability Justice theory in their Poverty Scholarship and other projects, like Never Call the Police which grew out of years of working with poor Black and Brown parents whose disabled loved ones were killed by police. The intersection of poverty and disability is nothing new, but what was new in the early 1990s was the recognition that a huge segment of people living in poverty are disabled, and they have their own answers and should be listened to when it comes to their lives. Community-Based Learning grows out of the work of community organizations like Poor Magazine, the Black Panther Party's survival programs, and even early disability organizations like Independent Living Centers who believe in peer-to-peer advocacy. All of these approaches have informed Krip-Hop pedagogy.

### **Disability and Its Intersections**

Disability Studies, like Hip-Hop Studies, grows out of community movements. In particular, the disability rights movement of the late 1960s and early 70s in the US created organizations that represented and fought for people with disabilities. At the same time, we must put "disability" into a historical, political, and artistic context. Before the disability rights movement, non-disabled people, and even professionals like social workers and doctors, used to view disability as a "tragedy" or something "to overcome", and their language reflected that with terms like "cripple," "lame," "handicapped," and "retarded." The disability arts/culture movement, of which Krip-Hop is a part, and the broader Disability Justice Movement has been working to transform these perceptions and ableist language practices. Up until then, many

disabled scholars and activists routinely listed the four main models of disability, i.e., how dominant society views disability through “religious/moral,” “charity,” “medical,” or “social” lenses. (Retif & Letsosa, p.1, 2018).

Not until the late 1960s and 1970s was there an organized disability movement when people with disabilities had power to name themselves (Beaudry, 2016). Importantly, this movement reframed the “problem” away from “impaired” individuals and focused its lens on the social problems of exclusion and oppression. Beaudry (2016) described the social model of disability and the academic scholars who came up with the social model of disability as follows: “The ‘social model’ of disability took off in the seventies, propelled by disability activists and later theorized by Vic Finkelstein (1980) and Michael Oliver (1990), among others. The social model was a reaction to the individual “medical model,” which conceptualized disability as a tragedy or problem localized in an individual body or mind, the definition and solution of which were to be provided by medical experts.” Beaudry continued, highlighting the reframing of the problem as one of oppression: “The social model thus defines impairments as defective limbs or mechanisms in the body, and ‘disability’ as the exclusion from which impaired people suffered. This exclusion is the real problem; it is caused by a social failure to make proper inclusivist arrangements rather than by individual biological dysfunctions.” (Beaudry p.211, 2016)

Beyond these models, Black disability activists have often re-framed the conversation from one about “individual disabilities” to one about “disability culture,” a linguistic move that helped focus less on “shame” and adopted the discourses of “pride.” One of those activists is Steven E. Brown, who I refer to as “the Father of Disability Culture.” While writing this thesis, I received a message on November, 11th, 2023, that Steven E. Brown had passed away. Brown was a historian, retired Professor and Disabilities Scholar, at the Center on Disability Studies

(CDS), University of Hawai'i; and Co-Founder of the Institute on Disability Culture. Brown (2003) described disability culture as follows:

People with disabilities have forged a group identity. We share a common history of oppression and a common bond of resilience. We generate art, music, literature, and other expressions of our lives and our culture, infused from our experience of disability. Most importantly, we are proud of ourselves as people with disabilities. We claim our disabilities with pride as part of our identity. We are who we are: we are people with disabilities. (Brown 2003, p. 80-81).

From my 2013 interview with Brown<sup>1</sup>, I called him “the Father of Disability Culture” because he was one of the first people to talk about, write about, and organize around the idea of disability culture from music, including Hip-Hop, dance, visual art, poetry, etc., not only in the U.S., but internationally. In 1994, he and his wife, Lillian Gonzales Brown, established the Institute on Disability Culture that has been promoting pride in the history, activities, and cultural identity of individuals with disabilities throughout the world. Importantly for this thesis, Brown created the University of Hawai'i Center on Disability Studies online course entitled: “Disability History and Culture: From Homer to Hip Hop,” one of the first college courses that not only included Krip-Hop Nation but offered a broad range of music history with an activist disability focus.

Brown's work coincided with the movement for Disability Studies. Disability Studies emerged in the 1980s primarily in the US, the UK, and Canada. In 1986, the Section for the Study of Chronic Illness, Impairment, and Disability of the Social Science Association (United States) was renamed the Society for Disability Studies. The first U.S. disabilities studies program

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<sup>1</sup> Link to interview [here](#).

emerged in 1994 at Syracuse University. The first edition of the Disabilities Studies Reader (one of the first collections of academic papers related to disability studies) was published in 1997. Despite much resistance to the idea of “disability studies,” which was often seen as “threatening” and viewed as a fad (“disability chic”), the field grew rapidly over the next ten years (Davis, 1999).

As with many other academic fields, Black disability studies scholars and activists began to critique disability studies for being “too White” and not adopting the critical lens of racialization, thus erasing the lives and experiences of Black and other disabled people. Bell (2006, p. 275) argued that disability studies has historically failed “to engage issues of race and ethnicity in a substantive capacity, thereby entrenching whiteness as its constitutive underpinning” and thereby further disenfranchised Black people and others with disabilities. According to Bell, if the field refused to engage race it should then be renamed “*White Disability Studies*.” In his posthumously published anthology, *Blackness and Disability: Critical Examinations and Cultural Interventions* (2012), he further critiqued disability studies as a “white discipline” that ignored the racial dimensions of studying disability.

Bell, and other scholars of color in Disability Studies, have inspired others to theorize and create new pedagogies like DisCrit, which combines Disability Studies (DS) and Critical Race Theory (CRT), and focuses on the intersectional oppressions of race, gender, and disability (Annamma, et al., 2018). The roots of DisCrit lie in Black and critical race feminist scholarship and activism. As Annamma, et al. (2018), write:

Take, for example, Anna Julia Cooper, author of *A Voice from the South: By a Black Woman of the South* (1892/1988), and educator, principal, activist, and scholar can be traced through an academic line Coopers book and other

publications have been recognized as one of first articulations of Black feminism as it substantively explored what it meant to be a Black woman in America. A century later, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) further revealed how the law subjugated Black women as they could neither claim discrimination based on race (because Black men were being promoted) nor gender (because White women were also being promoted). Crenshaw (1991) noted how interlocking forms of oppressions created unique barriers for Black women and frustrated their ability to claim legal remedy either as women or as persons of color. In her foundational articulation of Black feminism, Patricia Hill Collins (1990) drew from intellectual ancestors such as Angela Davis, Nikki Giovanni, Lorraine Hansberry, bell hooks, Zora Neale Hurston, June Jordan, Audre Lorde, Sojourner Truth, and Alice Walker to illustrate how knowledge claims emerging from Black women's intersectional positioning provided a unique reading on the workings of power, which she identified as a matrix of domination. (p. 47)

Annamma et al. (2018) also frames DisCrit as based on the work of disabled activists and artists who have continued to push for more just institutions and societies and have recognized the rich histories of disabled ancestors, particularly women and people of color. She cites artist and activists like Patti Berne, Anita Cameron, Mia Mingus, Alice Wong, and myself as “naming how interlocking systems of oppression have affected the lives of disabled people of color” and creating essential organizations led by disabled people of color, such as Sins Invalid and Krip-Hop Nation, and developed significant concepts such as Disability Justice and Access Intimacy.” These artists and activists “have pushed intersectional coalitions to let disabled people of color lead as authors of their own lives and solution producers to the inequities they face... we owe

our evolution in thinking to the knowledge generated from these multiple communities.  
(Annamma, et al., 2018, p. 50).

I have leaned towards the academic work of Dr. Tommy J. Curry, who is the author of the groundbreaking book, *The Man-Not: Race, Class, Genre, and the Dilemmas of Black Manhood* (2017) and has written about Black men with disabilities also Dr. Tamari Kitossa who invited me to co-write a chapter, “A Krip-Hop Theory of Disabled Black Men: Challenging the disabling of Black America.” Kitossa also resists the killing and erasure through the arts and self-empowerment in his 2022 book, *Appealing Because He Is Appalling: Black Masculinities, Colonialism, and Erotic Racism*, and theorizes how the Black community can rethink disability. From the perspective of a Krip-Hop theory of disabilities, we think PTSS is important for helping us to think about disabilities differently in the African American context. Rather than disabilities being seen as a sign of a moral stigma (Goffman, 1963) or a signifier of the projected anxieties and fears that able-bodied people project onto people with disabilities, a Krip-Hop theory says that African Americans should place disabilities at the heart of our economic, cultural, social, and political life (Moore & Kitossa, 2021, p.214-215).

Because of the work of the late Christopher Bell, disabled activists and artists, and now DisCrit, more Black disabled people are pursuing graduate degrees and more scholarly writings are being produced by Black disabled scholars, such as Dennis Tyler’s 2022 book, *Disabilities of the Color Line: Redressing Anti Blackness from Slavery to the Present*, Terry Rowden’s 2009 book, *The Songs of Blind Folk: African American Musicians and the Cultures of Blindness* and the new *Black Disability Politics* by Sami Schalk. Still today, Disability Studies as a program of study in U.S. universities is still struggling to be fully implemented in California, with UCLA just recently becoming the first university in California to offer a disability studies major in 2023

(Sharp, 2023). The work of Krip-Hop Nation builds upon the work of these scholars, artists, and activists of color in the context of this emergent moment in disability studies and the movement for racial justice.

### **Krip-Hop Nation’s Community-Based Education/Pedagogy**

In the beginning of this thesis and in the section entitled “Community-Based Learning/Place-Based Learning,” I wrote that throughout my fifty-six years on this earth one of my main goals inside and outside of academia is to connect my two communities—the Black community and the disabled community—in the project of disability justice. Beyond Hip-Hop and disability there are many perspectives, movements, radical thinking, arts, music and literature of both my communities that need so much research, writing and artistic skills to connect them. Despite the growing body of literature on being Black and disabled, there is still a lack of papers, books, media and art on black disabled issues and perspectives in Black history, Black social and political movements, and Black cultural, music and artistic movements. Krip-Hop Nation emerged from this lack, this need.

As a graduate student, I’m still working from this need. The following questions haunt me. Can Black disabled people add to The Black Radical Tradition from Harriet Tubman to Elias Hill to Cecil Ivory to Brad Lomax to Fannie Lou Hamer to Al Hibbler to Blues disabled musicians to the real Jim Crow to internationally like Margret Hill in London to Shelly Black in South Africa to the Black disabled movement in Brazil today? How do we learn and “Krip” the Black radical tradition? First, we must come together and shake off this ableism and so much more than rebuild ourselves in what our Black disabled ancestors left us and continue to build our own communities, futures, art, music and politics in a radical way! Of course we must define

the Black Radical Tradition, then try to “Krip” it, or redefine it from a Black disability perspective.

After years upon years of researching, reading, sometimes interviewing participants and major figures in Black movements, Black cultural movements, Black studies, Black thinkers, disability movements, disabled culture movements, Disability studies, disabled leaders and Black disabled movements in the U.S. and internationally, and being involved in some of these movements, I have of course realize in 2024 Black and disabled communities have been separated in the past and today including cultural expression like in music, visual arts, literature, dance to movements like Black Arts Movement to the recent explosion of disability cultural movement.

To be fair, Black disabled people and Black parents have tried over and over again to get the disability movement to recognize their advocacy, how racism in the movement impacts the growth and use of disability terminology, philosophies, culture, histories, studies and arts to advocate and uplift Black disabled stories through histories like the models of disability to independent living philosophy and more. However, only very recently, a small group of Black disabled scholars, artists, authors and professors are connecting Black disabled people, movements and arts to Black movements, especially for here Black radical thinking, arts beyond the well-known Black Panther Party involvement in the 1977 San Francisco 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

What are we missing by overlooking other Black disabled people who played a part in Black Power Movement, Black Arts Movement, Black Radical Tradition up to Hip-Hop and applying what came out to these Black movements to Black disabled life? One of the biggest obstacles to answering these questions is what I call, “Black ableism,” a concept that I have been

writing about for years (Moore 2024). Black ableism is a form of discrimination and social prejudice, specifically against Black people with disabilities, perpetrated by non-disabled Black individuals. I coined this concept, addressing the unique historical and cultural context of ableism within the Black community, tracing its roots to slavery and the subsequent internalization of negative perceptions of disability.

Since the 1980s, I have worked in both my disability and Black community. Most of my activism and cultural work has been aimed at changing my communities based on my identity as a disabled Black man. My work has mostly opened avenues in the disability community, including non-profits by utilizing cultural events, research books/literature and disability studies. In the mid-1990s, after feeling used and discriminated against by dominant disability nonprofits, I founded Disability Advocates of Minorities Organization (DAMO), which was active for four years. DAMO was established for people of color with disabilities and the greater Black community. Upon evaluation of DAMO, I realized I have been running away from my Black community because of open wounds unknowingly inflicted by them through forms of Black ableism.

As we know, terminology and the power of defining language are really important. Most often new terminology comes from the streets. Often academia adopts this language therefore giving legitimacy to the work of disabled folks without acknowledging their work. Many professions already claim and determine how people with disabilities should live their lives, through language, terminology, bureaucracies, and policies, including the medical industry and fields like rehabilitation and special education. Until we take it back, redefine it, politicize it, and sometimes change it all together, our work will continue to belong to others.

Although the term Ableism has been defined by disability advocates from the dominant culture, if you put Black in front of anything coming out of disability, it must first be stripped down and then reshaped in the experiences, histories and words from the Black disabled experience. By now, we must know that the Black disabled experience in America has different roots than our White disabled counterparts. Because of the need of Black disabled people to heal our wounds inflicted by our Black community, one by one or collectively, it is imperative that we tell our stories and define new terminology, definitions, art, music, political views, and provide education and resources for our Black community. Many Black disabled people have had these same thoughts.

According to a Black disabled lawyer educator and organizer, Talila Lewis's working definition of ableism is: "A system of assigning value to people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, productivity, desirability, intelligence, excellence, and fitness. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in eugenics, anti-Blackness, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. This systemic oppression leads to people and society determining people's value based on their culture, age, language, appearance, religion, birth or living place, "health/wellness", and/or their ability to satisfactorily re/produce, "excel" and "behave." You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism." (Lewis, 2022)

If we view this definition from the perspective of the Black experience reaching back from the capture and shipping of slaves to the teaching of disability and our bodies, almost everything we have done has helped shape Black ableism toward Black disabled people. Due to the lack of awareness of race and racism that continues to exist in the disability rights movement, it is not surprising that the Black community has not made steps to recognize their own ableism.

I have defined Black ableism as: Discrimination and social prejudice against Black people with disabilities or who are perceived to have disabilities from Black non-disabled people as far back as slavery. For example, slave owners used disability as a reason to devalue a slave because of what he/she could contribute to the plantation. And as we, a new people emerged out of slavery and saw by the slave master's example that disability meant devalued. Therefore slaves internalized disability was a sin, something that needs to be healed using the outdated Religious Model of Disability mixed with The Tragedy/Charity Model of disability that says the following: The idea that disability is essentially a test of faith or even salvation in nature. If the person does not experience the physical healing of their disability, he or she is regarded as having a lack of faith in God. Mix with depicting disabled people as victims of circumstance, deserving of pity (Moore, 2024).

Unchallenged Black ableism not only holds the Black community from advancing the project of justice for all its members, but it also makes the Black community hurtful and irrelevant for the Black disabled people and their families. Black Ableism can cause many deep-rooted problems in a Black disabled person. The problems are as broad as low self-esteem, to trying to reach the unreachable, also known as overcoming or hiding their disability, to most importantly, not having a community. Ableism, like racism, manifests from individual to institutional, where it corrupts Black institutions.

Black ableism can only be eradicated by stripping what the Black community has been taught about disability through the lens of oppression and then rebuilding. This rebuilding process must be conducted by coordinated teams of Black disabled people and family members who have had a presence in both the disability and Black communities. Also, part of the formula includes individuals who have held on to their identity politics and have a disability vision and

reality for the Black community. In other words, individuals who have a deep-rooted love of their community and are willing to risk exposing their pain to help the Black community have an understanding of disability from a race and culture perspective. This process will be a long-term commitment to healing and detailing the historical significance of disability to present-day issues, including Black ableism. For Black disabled people and our families the rebuilding will lead to a path of Black disabled empowerment and a commonality with our Black community. The Black community will be all the richer by embracing their disabled sisters and brothers from a historical, political, participatory and cultural way of life.

In an effort to address Black ableism and build a community for Black disabled artists, I first put a spotlight on disabled Hip-Hop artists in the early 2000s when I co-produced and co-hosted a three-part series on what was dubbed “Krip-Hop” for a Berkeley, California, radio station. The series appeared on KPFA’s Pushing Limits program, which focuses on news, arts, and culture from the disabled community. The series was so well-received that I shortly thereafter founded the Krip Hop Nation for disabled Hip-Hop musicians and other artists like poets, visual artists, and journalists. Then I found Keith Jones on Myspace and Rob Da Noize Temple online who put out a challenge to musicians with disabilities. I first met Rob in his own Brooklyn, NY, home studio and laid down the first track of Krip-Hop back in the early 2000’s. I made him an early co-founder. At the 2004 Democratic National Convention, I met Keith Jones face to face, and made him the other co-founder of Krip-Hop Nation.

Krip-Hop’s mission is to educate the music, media industries, and general public about the talents, history, rights, and marketability of Hip-Hop artists and other musicians with disabilities from Blues to Hip-Hop internationally. Our bi-line is “Krip-Hop is More Than Music.” Krip-Hop Nation’s main objective is to spread awareness about the history, arts, the

discrimination and intersecting oppressions facing musicians with disabilities along with getting the musical talents of hip-hop artists with disabilities into the hands of media outlets, educators, and hip-hop, disabled and race scholars, youth, journalists and hip-hop conference coordinators. Krip-Hop Nation artists have put out CDs, held conferences, and spoken on issues from police brutality against people with disabilities (in our film, *Where Is Hope: The Art of Murder Explores Police Brutality Against People with Disabilities*) and the murder of two victims with disabilities and the story of the loved ones left behind. Krip-Hop Nation's community-based education has many avenues i.e. internet magazine columns, workshops, performances, Internet radio shows, publications, and our famous mixtape series, to name a few. All report on the latest news about musicians with disabilities with a strong view of political and cultural pride of all of our identities. Krip-Hop Nation has put out the first of its kind events and music projects and documentary films for example 2009 UC Berkeley event entitled: "Diversifying Hip-Hop: Krip-Hop Homo-Hop<sup>2</sup>."

Krip-Hop Nation has several tenets, outlined below.

- 1) *Committing to using non-ableist and other oppressive language in lyrics and everyday discourse*

Hip-Hop and other music genres have used ableist language that was in the hands of others like slave masters, doctors, the church, politicians, scientists, bureaucrats, lawmakers, etc., before the disability rights movement. These hurtful terms like cripple, crazy, useless, retarded, imbecile were baked into institutions, policies, and society as a whole, even today, that created periods of harmful movements like the ugly laws, eugenics, and continue separate and unequal institutions like segregated schools, large warehouse institutions, etc., before the parents

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<sup>2</sup> Information about the film is [here](#).

movement then the Disability Rights Movement of the late sixties and seventies changed that with activism, organizations that pushed for civil rights laws, like the Individual Disability Education Act of 1973 and Rehabilitation Law of 1975. Almost at the same time, in the mid to late 1970s, Hip-Hop was on the streets of New York. While both Hip-Hop and the Disability Rights Movement grew up during the same time periods, their leadership hasn't fully connected or embraced one another.

In short, because of this separation of both the disability rights movement and Hip-Hop movement, the ableism found in some segments of the Black community and the racism found in some disabled communities, Hip-Hop remains largely ableist and still uses "the charity model" of disability. Even as the movement celebrates Hip Hop's 50th anniversary, so to speak, Hip-Hop in 2023-2024 still does not adequately address health disabilities like diabetes, sickle cell anemia, etc. Only very recently, in large part because of Black women artists, Hip-Hop has just begun to be open about mental health disabilities and challenges.

Because the Krip-Hop Nation grew out of disability justice and poverty scholarship, as well as the inventive, poetic use of language in the Hip Hop verbal arts, we learned from our disabled ancestors to play with language, to not only flip what was viewed as negative but to also correct Hip-Hop on this language/history.

## *2) Building coalitions among marginalized communities.*

As someone who experiences multiple forms of oppression, I have always been surprised by how oppressed people can oppress others, but of course, we have seen in Hip-Hop how women were/are marginalized within the culture. With the goal of building coalitions among marginalized communities, Krip-Hop Nation's first public event back in 2009 was "Diversifying Hip-Hop: Krip-Hop & Homo-Hop" at the University of California at Berkeley (Lauby, 2009).

In brief, Krip-Hop Nation focuses on critiquing systems and building communities and solidarities across groups, particularly those who are multiply marginalized.

*3) Using our talents to advocate for and teach about not only ourselves but about the intersecting oppressions of race, poverty, and disability and how to transform them.*

Building upon the social model of disability, we need to focus our efforts on critiquing systems of oppression. People with disabilities are not the problem; the exclusionary, racist, ableist system is. We, people with disabilities, get caught up in systems that can cut off our growth, like penalties of social security benefits. COVID and state violence taught us that systems need radical change. Just like the birth of Hip-Hop shook up the music industry and the community in New York, then nationally and internationally. Krip-Hop Nation is doing the same for people with disability, first in the Bay Area and then internationally with chapters worldwide with new terminology and political viewpoints all through spoken word, visual arts, beats, dance and of course Hip-Hop. Our goal is to help people all over the world transform these systems of oppression.

*4) Challenging mainstream & other media about the ableist ways they frame disability.*

The power of media discourse to shape our perspectives and worldviews is strong. As a child, seeing the Black opera story, Porgy and Bess, changed my life. However, before seeing Porgy, I did not see myself represented in the media. That guided me to question media representations and to use my activism in media from my early days at Poor Magazine and my first couple of published articles in Black newspapers like *The Amsterdam Newspaper* in the late 1980s and in the *San Francisco Bayview Newspaper*. Now, with the internet and social media platforms the power is back in the community's hands, especially people with disabilities. It is our responsibility to correct historical narratives and ableist writings and put ourselves back into

the story because we have been there since the beginning. In the beginning of Hip-Hop, for example, there were disabled Hip-Hop artists like Kase2, who was a graffiti artist with one arm, and in the 1980s, rapper MF Grimm survived a shooting and came back as a wheelchair user. We need to fight this erasure and continue to challenge mainstream media's ableism.

*5) Increasing awareness about voices and social justice issues missing in popular culture.*

While exposing and challenging the erasure of folks with disabilities, Krip-Hop Nation has a history of highlighting our voices and providing pathways for more of us to be seen and heard. As an example at the intersections of race, gender, and disability, Krip-Hop Nation's "GenderKrip Planet" was an evening of performance celebrating the Krip-Hop mixtape release that took place on Saturday, March 30, 2019 at 7 PM-10 PM at La Peña Cultural Center 3105 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, California 94705. The video by CB Smith-Dahl and captioning by Cheryl Green documented the live performance event (music, poetry, skits, dancing, speaking to our ancestors and more) of Disabled Women, Femmes and Warriors with headliner AJ420. At that time, we celebrated the release of *Hell Y'all Ain't Talmbout: A Krip-Hop Anthology of Women, Femmes, and Warriors*<sup>3</sup>.

Historically, Krip-Hop Nation put out the first ever Hip-Hop album in 2011 then in 2015 a documentary film directed by Emmitt Thrower. The album was entitled, Krip Hop Nation – Broken Bodies, P.B.P., Police Brutality Profiling Mixtape (2011)<sup>4</sup> and the film documentary was entitled, *Where Is Hope: The Art of Murder* (2015). *Where Is Hope: The Art of Murder*<sup>5</sup>, chronicles disabled victims murdered by police as well as the activists/artists who are fighting to end police brutality against people with disabilities. The work of many disabled activists and

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<sup>3</sup> [GenderKrip Planet](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Police Brutality Profiling Mixtape](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Where is Hope? The Art of Murder](#)

artists/activists are explored around this issue, especially involving disabled people of color. Notably, Director Emmitt H Thrower, is a retired NY City cop turned artist/filmmaker.

People with disabilities have faced police brutality and profiling, but to-date, there has been very little cultural work/music on this critical issue. In the 80s and 90s, I became very active on this issue, wrote articles, poetry, organized forums and attended hearings with other community activists like Idriss Staneley Foundation, ISArC, Poor Magazine, Cop Watch and others. Krip-Hop Nation and LA's 5th Battalion produced one of the first Hip-Hop Mixtape CDs by artists with disabilities rapping and speaking about stories of police brutality/profiling against us as people with disabilities back in 2011. Artists have come from all over the US and UK and Germany in a diverse pool with their own tracks for this mixtape CD. Produced by Krip-Hop Nation and 5th Battalion and promoted by all artists for educational use only. Thanks to DJ Qua of 5th Battalion, UK Hustle, all the artists, ISArC, Cop Watch, October 22nd Coalition, Poor Magazine, San Francisco Bayview Newspaper for the support, and Emmitt Thrower who did a film documentary on this issue thus following the process of producing this Mixtape.

*6) Recognizing our disabled ancestors, knowing that we are building on what they left us.*

Krip-Hop Nation looks at disabled artists/musicians from slavery who were separated in the dozens on the slave boats to disabled entertainers in early freak shows as a foundation to build upon, knowing that there were always Black disabled artists sometimes under extreme oppression who performed to make a living aka playing Blues on street corners down south. Krip-Hop books like *Black Disabled Ancestors*, *Black Disabled Art History 101 (2017)*, and *Krip-Hop Graphic Novel Issue #1(2019)* have been used in classrooms from grade school to college. These books will be part of the library in the upcoming Krip-Hop Institutes in Los Angeles and Cape Town.

We need to support academic writings on the links between Black music from the Blues to Hip-Hop and disability history as well as contemporary issues that explore Hip Hop's ableism and its potential transformation. We need research that critically listens, views, and analyzes certain Hip-Hop movements like Hyphy and Crunk, plus certain music videos that address disability in one form or another, like Phife Dawg's "Dear Dilla," Bushwick Bill's "Size Ain't Shit," and Pharoahe Monch's "Still Standing," to name a few.

Krip-Hop also honors our Hip Hop ancestors, even as we push them to consider disability. We continue to produce community-based pedagogy through the arts well into 2024. Hip-Hop turned in 2023, so Krip-Hop Nation has honored one of our favorite Hip-Hop groups, Public Enemy (PE) by remixing five songs from PE's pro Black 1990 album, *Fear of a Black Planet* from a Krip-Hop perspective with beats by my nephew, Sasha Bernstien. The album is entitled *Fear of a Black Disabled Man: Public Enemy n a Krip-Hop Remix – EP*<sup>6</sup>. Krip-Hop Nation has mixed Disability Justice/Krip-Hop politics in Public Enemy's pro-Black messages of the six songs. As the founder of Krip-Hop Nation, I had an extraordinary opportunity to be a UCLA graduate student in the UCLA Hip-Hop Initiative, where Chuck D served as the inaugural Artist-in-Residence and co-taught a course with H. Samy Alim, Samuel Lamontagne, and Tabia Shawel.

This is my attempt to pay respect to one of my favorite Hip-Hop groups aka Public Enemy and at the same time to introduce Black disabled Krip-Hop political lyrics. Songs include: 1. *Intro: PE Krip-Hop Remix*, 2. *Fight the Power Krip it to Fight Black Ableism*, 3. *Fear of A Black Planet Krip it to Fear of A Black Disabled Man*, 4. *Welcome to the Terrordome krip it*

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<sup>6</sup> [EP link](#)

*into Welcome to Kripdome, 5. Burn Hollywood Burn krip it into Krip Hollywood Limp, 6. Brothers Gonna Work It Out Krip it to Krip-Brotherhood*<sup>7</sup>.

*7) Increasing disability solidarity and collaboration around the world.*

Disability is one of the largest minority groups worldwide. Krip-Hop Nation breaks out from an “I” story to a “we” story connecting with disabled people around the world through music, art, and politics. Disability movements happen around the world in different time periods. Our international work continues to increase voices that are missing in popular culture like we, Krip-Hop Nation, Disability Justice Culture Club & the Longmore Institute on Disability Presented on May 28th/2020: Krip-Hop Nation’s Covid19 Virtual Benefit Featuring disabled Hip-Hop Artists, DJs, Poets and Visual Artists from around the world. This virtual concert raised over \$2,000 for people with disabilities in New York and Detroit. During that event, on top of live Hip-Hop performances, we also had a cypher and a dance party. This concert was Krip-Hop's first international virtual event<sup>8</sup>.

Krip-Hop Nation has chapters around the world doing activism through Hip-Hop, visual arts, and other cultural expression avenues. Krip-Hop Nation aims to get recognition from the United Nations for our international work. We are currently working with our Krip-Hop chapter in Tanzania, who recently purchased two acres of land to help to build a school for disabled youth with a Krip-Hop Institute.

*8) Increasing visibility in Black museums and cultural centers.*

While this tenet may be obvious, one of my Ph.D. goals is to open a Krip-Hop Institute (KHI)<sup>9</sup>. We need to go beyond inclusion and start establishing our own independent

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<sup>7</sup> [Album link](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Krip Hop Nation's COVID19 Virtual Benefit](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Link to Krip-Hop Institute](#)

institutions. I envision a society where all cultural expression, whether it be mainstream or underground, in today's unprecedented political and social unrest, be embraced for what it is. Ideally, disabled Black artists will be positively adhered to. It is critical that current and future disabled artists, especially Black/Brown disabled cultural workers, thinkers, and writers, are studied from an anthropological, non-ethnocentric perspective. We need to honor those that came before us. KHI will do this through our communities both locally and internationally, all the while making the unique contribution of having a community space to gather, perform music, learn about and display the arts, technology, exploration of political history and current environmental educational resources.

*9) Taking the Black community and Hip-Hop communities through the Building Process to get to Krip-Hop Politics.*

Krip-Hop Nation is more than music and “bling bling”; it is about advocacy and education and taking back what has been taken from us to oppress us. Language, like other oppressed groups, was taken from people with disabilities and the language was turned on us to oppress us. As I mentioned, before people with disabilities had civil rights, a movement and arts, many had placed labels on us like “crazy”, “lame”, “cripple” and “retarded”, etc. Of course, now with our civil rights and disability studies and culture, we have named ourselves and have used the negative terms to our own benefit to not only shock people but to respect that these words are our history, and we must reclaim them and flip them into a political lens but to do this culturally and politically there is a process of unlearning and relearning what we call Krip-Hop Nation's Politics.

To get to Krip-Hop Nation's Politics we must see it as a building process (that might take a while to go through if the person is at a stage to question mainstream and to unlearn what has

been force on them about disability) from erasure to exploitation to pity to overcoming to identity politics to self-empowerment to seeing ourselves politically, culturally through speaking, singing/rapping, writing, and most importantly living with an activist lens on what affects us in our community, in institutions, and as allies, etc. Through song, poetry, visual arts and writing we realize that we are stepping up and helping to correct how society views us as persons with a disability/artists with disabilities, and at the same time, we know we wear many hats when we want to advocate and when we just want to party.

Stepping up to the Krip-Hop Nation's political, educational, and cultural table is a huge step because it means that the person is ready to challenge everything they knew about themselves that was produced by others in the mainstream nine times out of ten in a negative light. It also means the person is ready to be open to listening to certain disability justice activists, scholars, and cultural workers of today who are flipping this negative light into our historical experiences that turn into present pride and foundation of where we came from, leading into living proud in our Black/Brown/White and disability skin thus becoming politically disabled.

We continue in this process by self-empowerment and correcting history in two ways, (1) Seeking out Black/Brown disabled people who have challenge the ableism in our Black/Brown community and (2) after uplifting Black/Brown disabled community scholars, men and women, then self-education that I hope will lead to self-empowerment that would lead to as being politically/culturally disabled. Being politically and culturally disabled goes deeper than just being disabled. This stage is still lacking not only in Hip-Hop but in our Black/Brown communities and institutions, thus making the stage of becoming politically and culturally disabled an unpopular, lonely, and hard road to travel.

Despite this, we are seeing more people living politically and culturally as individuals with disabilities and more non-disabled people viewing disability as a historical, political and cultural viewpoint. I have seen this process of learning of Krip-Hop politics that led to the increase of requests for Krip-Hop chapters in textbooks, especially Hip-Hop textbooks like Chapter 15, “‘When Can Black Disabled Folks Come Home?’: The Krip-Hop Movement, Race, and Disability Justice,” by Leroy F. Moore Jr. and Stephanie Keeney Parks in 2023, *Freedom Moves Hip Hop Knowledges, Pedagogies, and Futures* edited by H. Samy Alim, Jeff Chang, and Casey Wong, and “Back to the Community: My Life in Rap, Poetry, and Activism” in *That’s the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader 3rd edition*, a volume which includes an entire section on disability and Hip-Hop called “Part VI ‘Krip-Hop’: Disability and Hip Hop” with pieces written by myself, Anna Hinton and Mikko O. Koivisto. Krip-Hop Nation has also been the subject of graduate students’ thesis and dissertations outside and inside of the U.S. for examples:

Gavieta, Matthew. *"The intersectionality of blackness and disability in hip-hop: The societal impact of changing cultural norms in music."* International Social Science Review 96, no. 4 (2020): 1A-1A.

Koivisto, Mikko. *"The Birth of a Nation: Krip Hop and the Art of Disability Activism."* In InSEA World Congress. (2017)

Koivisto, Mikko O. *"Egresses: Countering stereotypes of Blackness and disability through horrorcore and Krip Hop."* *Representing communities: Discourse and contexts* (2017): 163-180.

Migliarini, Valentina. *"Inclusive education for disabled refugee children: A (re) conceptualization through krip-hop."* In *The Educational Forum*, vol. 84, no. 4, pp. 309-324. Routledge, 2020.

Skinner, Anthea. "Rolling out the "krip hop army": depictions of disabled solidarity and resistance in Kounterclockwise's *Whip*." *Disability & Society* 37, no. 2 (2022): 320-337.

*10) Establishing a Krip-Hop Institute as a space for the Black community to gain disability/Krip-Hop political education, cultural expression, activism while understanding the historical importance of Black disabled individuals at various different time periods in history.*

The Krip-Hop Institute will be a cultural, activist, and inclusive platform meeting space for the community. KHI specializes in the accurate representation of those who are marginalized, especially disabled, Black, and the intersection between the Black disabled community therein. This will be achieved both locally and internationally by having a music studio, visual art gallery, archival historical data. Ultimately, the goal of KHI is to create an international hub for disabled and non-disabled activists, artists, and researchers around the world. KHI will be where the public, educational institutions, and cultural centers can learn about Black disabled art and activism. The unique distinction here is that individuals will have access to a multimodal representation of an appropriate myriad of academic historical empirically produced but start their own archives and organize disability events in their cultural centers like museums. It is essential that KHI be based in the Black and disabled community to be truly represented. Through adequate collaboration within the community, KHI will outreach to educational institutions with the prospects of gaining more allies and establishing the Institute's much needed materials. Examples include but are not limited to, the acquisition of hard to find books, scholarly articles, as well as specific types of art.

As of today, there is not one community space in the U.S. or around the world that provides disability political education, arts, music making when it comes to Hip-Hop. Although

we have all kinds of Hip-Hop spaces like the Hip-Hop Education Center, The Center for Hip-Hop Advocacy, upcoming Hip-Hop Museums, Hip-Hop dance studios, and the list goes on none of these spaces have deeply thought about the rich history of disability, including Hip-Hop artists with disabilities.

Throughout my years of organizing, writing, event planning, and now academic studying on music and disability has led me to notice a lack of a physical place that can put out reports, articles, books, studies at the same time be a place of creative expression and activism of disabled Hip-Hop artists especially Black disabled artists and provide housing aka what we are calling the upcoming Krip-Hop Institute. We also know that governments under title thirty of the UN Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) have to guarantee that people with disabilities are participating in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport and this includes the arts. The Krip-Hop institute can fulfill the implementation of article thirty under the UN Treaty on Disability.

At this moment, my dissertation topic will be the building of a virtual Krip-Hop Institute. We'll create the Krip Hop Nation Institute as an VR Online Platform. Our goal is to bring the international Community of the KHN Art/Activism Project online together via the computer and virtual reality. Possible functions we have in mind are, for example:

1. A Virtual Media Player with the ability to live stream Twitch & YouTube on a Digital TV Screen, also live audio streaming is possible.
2. A Digital Art Gallery connected to the Blockchain so artists from all over the world can show and sell their art in the virtual institute
3. A Meeting room to make KHN Meetings with important members out of all continents.

4. A Podcast Station to stream live talks with the crew and invite interesting guests to talk about Hip Hop, the music industry, and a lot more.
5. A Lobby Area for Album Listening Sessions and Party, concerts and a lot of other things.
6. Krip-Hop Nation will hopefully be partnering with Poor Magazine, Disability Studies Programs, at UCLA and UCB, UCLA's Hip-Hop Initiative, The Paul Longmore Institute and more to make KHI accessible and a model for the community and on an international scale.

### **Conclusion: Dear Hip Hop, Dear Black Radical Tradition**

Krip-Hop Nation has critiqued the ableism within the Hip Hop community, the overwhelming whiteness of the disability rights movement, and the broader intersecting oppressions of ableism and racism, including Black ableism. Rather than a traditional academic conclusion, I would like to conclude this thesis with two letters, one to Hip Hop, and one to Cedric Robinson. These letters serve as an example of Krip Hop Nation's attempts at community-based education as well as a plea to the Hip Hop community and to the Black community to take disability justice seriously.

*Dear Hip-Hop,*

We, Krip-Hop Nation, an international collective of Hip-Hop artists and other musicians with disabilities, are writing this letter to you to not only give thanks for a platform but also to push this artistic international movement to become more politically aware and play an active role with us to reeducate the Hip-Hop and music industry and our communities about not only the ableism in Hip-Hop. We must go past the charity model of disability to step up to what

Krip—Hop Nation calls politically and culturally disabled with disability justice and Krip-Hop politics, language, international solidarity.

This process of unlearning of ableism and the charity model of disability will take rebuilding relationships within the disability community, knowing that although Hip-Hop from the beginning gave us a platform to not only see and express ourselves. Hip-Hop has become an ableist and harmful environment for not only disabled, especially physically disabled, artists but also people with disabilities who want to work in Hip-Hop like journalism, scholars, TV show hosts, and more.

Musicians with disabilities have always been here however, there has been a lack of cultural activism, especially in Hip-Hop with a disability justice to not only advocate but to continue to display the talents of musicians with disabilities and at the same time advocate and celebrate our history, intersectional cultures and to politically educate ourselves and our communities locally, nationally and internationally.

For almost thirteen years Krip-Hop Nation has provided public education through our music CDs, lectures, workshops, Youtube conversations, short video clips, activism, visual arts, articles, and political education locally and internationally. We have made strives; however, it has been outside of the mainstream Hip-Hop arena. So we are pushing ourselves in 2021 and beyond to collaborate to the Hip-Hop popular arena to help to make Hip-Hop a more open and politically, culturally environment where disabled Hip-Hop artists/activists, journalists, scholars can not only work in but can be proud to share and welcome others like them into.

You ask how? Krip-Hop Nation knows that this process has to be bigger than a one-time event; it must be an ongoing process with local, national and international not only Hip-Hop artists but Hip-Hop organizations, international partners like the United Nation and others. It can

start off as a conference that will spell out goals of this ongoing reeducation with materials like books, films, curriculums and media campaigns, etc. Knowing that people with disabilities around the world are the poorest of the poor, Krip-Hop Nation knows if we want to make an impact that will change attitudes, institutional beliefs and actions it must be well funded and uplifted by local to international organizations and spokespersons.

Are you committed to partner with Krip-Hop Nation and pull in resources and institutional backing to spread Krip-Hop Nation's mission, work and not only organize and hold this conference but most importantly to accomplish what comes out of this conference with Krip-Hop Nation leadership? One of our big goals is to open what we call the Krip-Hop Institute. We have work to do and this event speaking on Ableism on Hip-Hop: Krip-Hop Artists Drop Knowledge and Lyrics and letter is the beginning. I hope you will learn from my letter and this event and then join us in doing the work!

Krip-Hop Nation

Leroy F. Moore Jr.

*Dear Ancestor, Cedric Robinson,*

First thank you for your work! I have learned so much. As a Black disabled man I have questions. I listened to your seminal book, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* and I wonder what your thoughts are about the Black disabled body and mind? I realize you are arguing against Karl Marx and Marxism so I wonder if you share Marx's view on the disabled body and the social model of disability? I know in your time (1940-2016), the disability movement only started in the 1970's. Knowing that you grew up in Oakland, California, I wonder did you know about the disability rights movement? You knew about the Black Panther Party so I wonder if you knew of Brad Lomax and his involvement in the

disability movement? It's interesting that you attended UC Berkeley in 1963 and were involved in campus activism for Black studies and advocating for Malcolm X to speak on campus because only a couple years later after your attendance came a White disabled young man, who organized a group of disabled, Rolling Quads (which I think they started out all White) and Ed Roberts of 1969. Interesting connection.

I want to return to your book, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. I have noticed that Karl Marx had thoughts about the disabled body relating to capitalism. I won't go deep into his perspective on the disabled body in capitalism, but in short because the disabled body was seen as a "non-worker," his writings on the disabled body are basically seen as a result of pushing the non-disabled body until it becomes disabled through unsafe working conditions. Knowing that the social model of disability was created by a White UK man, as I have written in my thesis, I wonder how disability would be seen through the lens of the Black Radical Tradition? This is my work, to try to put your ideas into conversation with today's growing Black disabled politics, activism, art, music and radical and academic thinking. By writing and organizing in the Black community, and in academia, my aim is to bring Black Studies together with Disability Studies with the radical goal of disability justice for Black and other marginalized communities worldwide.

Leroy F. Moore Jr.

R.I.P. Cedric Robinson

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