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Embracing Diversity and Avoiding ACRASH by Calling Spades, Progressing Syntaxes, and Affirming Actions

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Abstract: Despite greater awareness that the American population and workforce are increasingly diverse, there is little appreciation for the persistent and discrepant effect of difference on the lived experiences of social outsider groups. Consistent with a history of preference for able-bodied, well off, White, mature, heterosexual, males, for example, most U.S. institutions continue to be hegemonic. Proffering a road map for managing diversity and equalizing life chances across multiple spaces, this paper articulates an innovative conceptual framework called ACRASH. This powerful analogy and acronym (for ableism, classism, racism, ageism, sexism, and heterosexism) denotes the primary dimensions of difference that spawn discrimination, harassment, and prejudice and shape disparate realities for Americans. As well, attention calling, perpetual proportionate affirmative action, and the use of a progressive syntax are posited as effective means for improved relations and the development of more positive socioeconomic and political outcomes in the U.S. and, perhaps, beyond. In response to scholars like Collins (2005), McWhorter (2000, 2005, 2007, & 2008), Patterson (1997), and Rothenberg (2004) and building on concepts introduced in Turnipseed's (2009) dissertation, this work urges focused, ongoing, and universal acts of social justice.

Keywords: Ableism, Affirmative Action, Ageism, Classism, Heterosexism, Progressive Syntax, Racism, Sexism

Introduction

Despite greater awareness that the American population and workforce are increasingly diverse, there is little appreciation for the persistent and discrepant effect of difference on the lived experiences of social outsider groups. Consistent with a history of preference for able-bodied, well off, White, mature, heterosexual, males, for example, most U.S. institutions continue to be hegemonic (Ahmed & Reddy, 2007; Anderson, 2011; Badruddoja, 2008; Basas, 2010; Cho, 2011; Fischer & Holz, 2010; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2010; Hayes & Juarez, 2009; Henneberg, 2010; Turnipseed, 2009). Proffering a road map for managing diversity and equalizing life chances across multiple spaces, this manuscript articulates an innovative conceptual framework called *ACRASH*. This powerful analogy and acronym (for ableism, classism, racism, ageism, sexism, and heterosexism) denotes the primary dimensions of difference that spawn discrimination, harassment, and prejudice and shape disparate realities for Americans. As well, attention calling, perpetual proportionate affirmative action, and the use of a progressive syntax are posited as effective means for improved relations and the development of more positive socioeconomic and political outcomes in the U.S. and, perhaps, beyond. In response to scholars like Collins (2005), McWhorter (2000, 2005, 2007, & 2008), Patterson (1997), and Rothenberg (2004) and building on concepts introduced in Turnipseed's (2009) work, this research urges focused, ongoing, and universal acts of social justice.

Progressive Syntax

An important step toward embracing diversity for politically correct academics and activists is avoiding hegemonic language in writing. Just as a host of scholars employ and explain the capitalization of terms like *Black* and *White* when referencing race (e.g., Boris, 2010; Chaney,

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2009; Cherry, 2001; Clay, 2008; Gilbert, 2009; Janson, 2005; Kidder, 2000; Onwuachi-Willig, Hough, & Campbell, 2008; Pascoe, 2009; Wegmann-Sanchez, 2001), we make these and several other written and oral adjustments for socio-politically expedient reasons. First, critical theorist, feminist, and rationalist foundations compel us to divorce man from woman for a more egalitarian syntax that underscores the wholeness and distinctiveness of each and continuously promotes anti-sexist thought and action. As well, we endeavor at least to be anti-ableist, anti-classist, anti-racist, anti-ageist, and anti-heterosexist in every reasonable way. The aim is not to needlessly complicate grammar but to foster an atmosphere where everyone is consistently thoughtful about operating in ways that value everybody and bring us closer to our best selves (Turnipseed, 2009).

Borrowed and new constructions of this syntax include *femyle* for *female*, *humyn* for *human*, *sxe* for *she*, and *womyn* for *woman/women*. These syntactic productions are solely for writing purposes as the pronunciations of the replacements are the same as the originals (Turnipseed, 2009).

Alternatively, the syntactic manifestation *her or his* for *his or her* (as opposed to *he and sxe* for *he and she*) requires both written and oral adjustments. The underlying principle is rooted in the same critical theorist, feminist, and rationalist frame as the aforementioned. When given a choice in almost any listing or series of terms where no particular arrangement is intimated or obvious, alpha order is employed given its logical and readily systematized presentation (Turnipseed, 2009).

While Turnipseed (2009) represents one of the most sweeping uses of progressive syntax in scholarly literature to date, a number of other researchers are making forays. While Steinmetz (1995) delineates the etymology and popular usage of *womyn* from 1976 to 1994, for example, Browne (2009) wholeheartedly embraces the term. Sciullo (2006) consistently employs the words *womyn* and *humyn* in his work explaining that "the root '-man' or '-men' constructs womyn from a male perspective" (p. 712). In our application of a progressive syntax throughout this text, we concur, finally, with one of Revilla's (2004) respondents, who asserts that the end goal is the deconstruction of a "language that constantly silences, objectifies, and disempowers womyn, queer community, people of color, (and) immigrants….It is a challenge to the hierarchy and sexist structure of this patriarchal, capitalist, Eurocentric, sexist, homophobic world" (p. 88). Indeed, more activist scholars need to incorporate progressive syntax as a means of fostering greater diversity and inclusion.

What is ACRASH?

While it is important to steer clear of regressive language in writing, we also should avoid discrimination in our daily dealings with others. Developed to critically express core categories of difference prescribed at birth which structure the lived realities of Americans, in particular, ACRASH is an acronym, an analogy, and a theoretical framework for interrogating social stratification. Its component elements are ableism, classism, racism, ageism, sexism, and heterosexism. And its central message is as follows:

[J]ust as a reasonable person would choose to avoid a vehicle accident given the possibility of mental, physical, and monetary damage, so, too, should individuals and organizations avoid ACRASH in order to spare themselves and others potential pain, discomfort, and/or psychological and material expense (Turnipseed, 2009, p. 12).

As champions of diversity-related equity, we consciously and continually employ this conceptualization to gauge whether particular contexts, propositions, or occurrences are just (Turnipseed, 2009).

While ableism, classism, racism, ageism, sexism, and heterosexism often function to divide groups of people, they are collectively powerful in that they advantage and disadvantage all, to varying degrees, at some point. Moreover, each category of difference is hierarchical and

produces winners and losers at the extremes and at every point along the way. Social status is complicated further by the multiple combinations and dimensional intersections that form identity and inevitably shape individual and group experience. Following is a brief explanation of each aspect of the ACRASH acronym and analogy.

Ableism

Ableism encompasses the cultural, institutional, and individual discrimination or prejudice of persons who are or are perceived to be cognitively, developmentally, emotionally, mentally, physically, and/or sensually differently abled. It is a pervasive yet often subliminal negative attitude that paints these individuals as less than—abnormal, defective or deficient, and in need of fixing (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Campbell, 2008; Castaññeda & Peters, 2000; Hehir, 2002; Hehir, 2007; Smith, et al, 2008; Storey, 2007; van Daalen-Smith, 2006-7; Wolbring, 2008). Of the 20% of Americans who are differently abled in some way (Smith, Foley, & Chaney, 2008), for example, roughly 65% are unemployed although the overall employment rate is less than 9% (U.S. Bureau of Labor, n.d.). The unemployment rate for differently abled persons in industrialized nations broadly is between 50% and 70% while comparable figures in developing countries are 80% to 90% (Disability and Employment, n.d.).

Classism

Classism involves the cultural, institutional, and individual discrimination or prejudice of *the poor* or people from lower social classes. The consequence of class privilege—unearned advantage and conferred dominance—plus power, is a pervasive system of oppression (Aosved & Long, 2006; Holly & VanVleet; Langhout, Rosselli, & Feinstein, 2007; Liu, Sokeck, Hopps, Dunston, & Pickett, Jr., 2004; Smith, 2005). Classism is a comparative social ranking derived from income, wealth, status, and/or power that creates extreme inequality and affects the attainment of basic humyn necessities (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997).

In 2005, for instance, there was a perfect positive correlation between family income and median scores on the SAT—the most popular college admissions test in the U.S.—such that testers in households receiving $100,000 or more earned scores greater than 1100 and those in homes that brought in less than $10,000 scored less than 900 (Mantsios, 2004). While members of different social classes in the U.S. also face disparate housing and healthcare realities (2008 National Healthcare, 2009), for example, one of the most glaring effects of underclass status internationally is world hunger. Although there are some 19 million malnourished people across all developed countries, the number of persons suffering in less developed regions—Near East and North Africa (37 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (53 million), Sub-Saharan Africa (239 million), and Asia and the Pacific (578 million)—is far greater (2011 World Hunger, n.d.).

Racism

Although race is commonly conceptualized as a given category, it is a socially constructed idea that is inherently problematic, constantly contested, and continually evolving via political struggle (Herzog et al, 2008; Wainwright, 2009). Racism, nevertheless, is a persistent and insidious system of advantage based on perceptions of race (Arai & Kivel, 2009; Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2010; Bozalek, 2010; Herzog, Sharon, & Leykin, 2008; Pachter, Berstein, Szalacha, & Coll, 2010; Tatum, 1992). Racism has individual, cultural, and institutional manifestations (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2010; Herzog et al, 2009; Nuru-Jeter, Dominguez, Hammond, Leu, Skaff, Egerter, Jones, & Braveman, 2009; Pachter et al, 2010; Tatum, 1992). And while it is argued that racism hurts everyone (Tatum, 1992), it is clear that those most injured and disadvantaged in local, national, and global context are non-White and

non-Euro (Arai & Kivel, 2009; Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2010; Bozalek, 2010; Dwyer, Stevens, Sullivan, & Allen, 2009; Herzog et al, 2008; Nuru-Jeter et al, 2009; Pachter et al, 2010; Tatum, 1992).

In the U.S., for example, there are deep-seated differences in the economic attainment of particular racial and/or ethnic groups, even after accounting for education and years of work experience (National Committee, 2004). Organizations like the UNESCO-initiated International Coalition of Cities against Racism share experiences in order to develop better policies to combat racism, discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion globally (International Coalition of, n.d.). The contemporary (2004) formation of this group suggests that racism continues to be a formidable problem worldwide. As well, the Durban Review Conference's 2009 examination of worldwide advancement in the fight against racism concluded that a great deal of work is still necessary (International Day for, n.d.). There is considerable evidence, finally, that preference for lighter versus darker skin—*colorism* or *pigmentism*—is the root cause of racism (Barnett, 2004; Bodenhorn, 2006; Gullickson, 2003; Herring, 2002; Hill, 2000 & 2002; Hochschild & Weaver, 2007; Nancef, 2005).

Ageism

While ageism is a pernicious and prevalent form of oppression based on age (Calasanti, Slevin, & King, 2006), its stereotypes and prejudices most commonly victimize older people (Calasanti et al, 2006; Cherry & Palmore, 2008; Dennis & Thomas, 2007; Marshall, 2007; McGuire, Klein, & Chen, 2008; Mueller-Johnson, Toglia, Sweeney, Ceci, 2007; Phelan, 2008; Woolf, n.d.). Described as the third great *ism*, after racism and sexism, and hugely concerning since it affects everyone who lives long enough (McGuire et al, 2008; Woolf, n.d.), ageism is cultural, individual, and institutional in its disproportionate and systematic discrimination (Cherry & Palmore, 2008; Dennis & Thomas, 2007; Marshall, 2007; McGuire et al, 2008; Phelan, 2008).

And while ageism is often directed at the young (Marshall, 2007), it costs old people both status and money in society (Calasanti et al, 2006). At 65, the universal age of old in most western societies, for example, people may be forced to retire and live off less (Harbison, 2008; Phelan, 2008; Terry, 2008). In 2003, U.S. monthly Social Security payments were just over US$1,000 for men and less than US$800 for womyn. This amounts to nearly half of all income for roughly four-fifths of recipients and the sole income for 22% of recipients (Calasanti et al, 2006).

Sexism

Sexism is characterized by negative attitudes concerning womyn, their societal roles, and their conventional gender roles (Aosved & Long, 2006; Borrell, Artazcoz, Gil-Gonzalez, Perez, Rohlfs, & Perez, 2010; Capezza, 2007; Garos, Beggan, Kluck, & Easton, 2004; Gianettoni & Roux, 2010; Masser & Abrams, 1999; Nicholson, 2002; Stitzlein, 2008; Swim, Mallett, & Stangor, 2004). Sexism is a prevalent and insidious form of oppression (Aosved & Long, 2006; Borrell et al, 2010; Capezza, 2007; Chaudoir & Quinn, 2010; Copp & Kleinman, 2008; Johnson, 2004; Nicholson, 2002; Pharr, 2004; Stitzlein, 2008; Swim et al, 2004; Szymanski & Stewart, 2010) that occurs at cultural, institutional, and personal levels (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Stitzlein, 2008; Szymanski & Stewart, 2010). While males can be negatively affected, femyles bear the brunt of sexism (Aosved & Long, 2006; Benwell, 2007; Borrell et al, 2010; Capezza, 2007; Chaudoir & Quinn, 2010; Copp & Kleinman, 2008; Garos et al, 2004; Masser & Abrams, 1999; Nicholson, 2002; Stitzlein, 2008; Swim et al, 2004).

There is a statistically significant and persistent wage gap, for example. As of September, 16, 2010, U.S. womyn earned approximately 77 cents for every dollar that men earn (National Pay Equity, 2011). Across industrialized countries, in fact, womyn's median, full-time wages were 17.6 percent lower than men's (Rampell, 2010). The global gender gap is probably even

higher since developing nations often do not track national data and hundreds of millions of femyles in informal and unprotected occupations do not appear in any records (Women Earn Less, n.d.). Borrell et al (2010) argue, moreover, that the utmost manifestation of sexism is mental and physical violence, and gender violence, especially intimate partner violence, which is responsible for a significant number of injuries and deaths globally.

While conceptualizations of sexism were almost exclusively hostile and formed around negative feelings regarding femyles in nontraditional roles prior to Glick and Fiske (1996), these authors' notion of *ambivalent sexism*, which is based on Katz, Wackenhut, and Hass' (1986) work on *ambivalent racism*, is linked with traditional notions of gender roles, such that *benevolent sexism* predicts positive feelings about womyn in traditional roles (Masser & Abrams, 1999). Glick and Fiske's *benevolent sexism* is grounded in the belief that womyn are inherently moral, reliant on protection, and culturally sophisticated. These notions, while ostensibly positive, reinforce the idea that femyles are weak and not as capable as males (Capezza, 2007; Masser & Abrams, 1999). So, instead of the pure hostility that is common with most other types of prejudice, beliefs about femyles—even among those who are highly sexist—often include both positive and negative components, in part, because of the ongoing, long-standing, and intimate connections between men and womyn (Capezza, 2007).

Heterosexism

Heterosexism involves the subordination of all queer, or non-heterosexual, identities or ways of being because of the discriminatory assumption that heterosexuality is more natural, normal, and moral and that everyone is or should be attracted to individuals of the opposite sex (Chesir-Teran, 2003; Chesir-Teran & Hughes, 2009; Fish, 2008; Harris, 2009; Hodges & Parkes, 2005; Lance, 2002; Litovich & Langhout, 2004; Murphy, 2006; Pharr, 2004; Smith et al, 2008; Szymanski, 2005; Szymanski & Owens, 2008). Heterosexism is a formidable problem because it is oppressive (Fish, 2008; Hodges & Parkes, 2005; Smith, Foley, & Chaney, 2008; Szymanski, 2005), pervasive (Johnson, Carrico, Chesney, & Morin, 2008; Lyons, Fassinger, & Brenner, 2005; McDavitt, Iverson, Kubicek, Weiss, Wong & Kipke, 2008; Swim, Johnston, & Pearson, 2009; Szymanski, 2005; Szymanski, & Owens, 2008), and systematic (Chesir-Teran, 2003; Chesir-Teran & Hughes, 2009; Fish, 2008; Harris, 2009; Lance, 2002; Lyons et al, 2005; Szymanski & Owens, 2008). Countering heterosexism is challenging since it occurs across cultural (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Chesir-Teran, 2003; Chesir-Teran & Hughes, 2009; Fish, 2008; Hodges & Parkes, 2005; Johnson et al, 2008; Lance, 2002; Murphy, 2006; Szymanski, 2005; Szymanski & Owens, 2008), institutional (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Chesir-Teran & Hughes, 2009; Harris, 2009; Lance, 2002; Litovich & Langhout, 2004; Lyons et al, 2005; Szymanski, 2005), and individual (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Chesir-Teran, 2003; Chesir-Teran & Hughes; Harris, 2009; Lance, 2002; Litovich & Langhout, 2004; Lyons et al, 2005; Johnson et al, 2008; McDavitt et al, 2008; Smith et al, 2008; Swim et al, 2009; Szymanski, 2005; Szymanski & Owens) domains.

As of February 7, 2011, for example, sexual orientation-based discrimination is legal in 29 U.S. states (HRC: Employment Non-Discrimination, 2011). Indeed, a 1996 review of bisexual, gay, and lesbian employees' experiences revealed that as many as 66% reported workplace discrimination based on their sexual orientation (Lyons et al, 2005). Beyond the workplace, Uganda has emerged recently as the international poster child for homophobia and intolerance with the highly publicized murder of activist David Kato and the government's ongoing deliberation about whether to institute the death penalty as punishment for homosexuality (Kron, 2011). Unlike many other kinds of prejudice, moreover, heterosexism—domestically and globally—often is blatantly reinforced by the stigmatized individual's own family members. So, while victims of other discrimination can sometimes rely on family for support, sexual minorities frequently lack such encouragement (McDavitt et al, 2008).

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This section delineated the elements of ACRASH and indicated how important it is to understand others and avoid intentional and unintentional discrimination at individual, cultural, and institutional levels. Another step in this critical process is effectively confronting prejudice whenever and wherever it manifests. One way of doing this is by *calling spades*.

Calling Spades

To *call a spade a spade*, according to Rockwood (2009) and Quinion (2004) is to speak candidly about a subject—especially one that others may view as embarrassing, uncomfortable, or inappropriate. While some might spurn this phrasing given its relatively recent usage as an ethnic slur against Black people, we craftily employ it given our African American heritage and the true origin of the shovel-referencing wording via Nicolas Udall's 1542 English translation of *Apophthegmatum Opus* by Erasmus—itself a mistranslation of *Apophthegmata*, written some 1,500 years prior by the Greek scholar Plutarch (Quinion, 2004).

The practice of calling spades would likely be denounced by authors like Orlando Patterson (1997) and John H. McWhorter (2000, 2003, & 2005). Indeed, Patterson (1997) vehemently indicts *victimhood* and "the bizarre cult of the victim" (p. 6) among Blacks while McWhorter assails *the Cult of Victimology*. In *Losing the Race* (2000), for example, McWhorter presents victimology along with *separatism* and *anti-intellectualism* as three major currents in "the ideological sea of troubles plaguing black America and keeping black Americans eternally America's case apart regardless of class" (p. xi).

While accusing others of insufficiently recognizing the enormity of Black achievement, McWhorter aggrandizes Black sociopolitical advancement and minimizes the insidiousness of residual racism. His withering criticism of individuals perceived as focusing on remaining obstacles without sufficient appreciation of substantial Black gains may simply reflect a philosophical difference. Certainly, we would caucus with those inclined to spotlight problems rather than celebrate accomplishment—if we could only do one. For ongoing bias is disquieting given its potential for isolating and impeding Blacks whereas success often speaks for itself and is its own reward. Perhaps what McWhorter perceives as indignant fixation is instead the vigilant identification of racialized barriers that stymie progress, temper outcomes, and negate racial parity. While we grant that mere bellyaching is vain, calling attention to injustice anywhere is necessary for attaining justice and equality everywhere (Turnipseed, 2009).

Although some of what McWhorter says provokes rational thought and promotes social equity, much of his commentary is more appropriate for the living room of Black America. Like the tone of recent remarks by Bill Cosby (Bill Cosby Speech, n.d.; Dyson, 2005), McWhorter's tenor is grotesque; and, his message would more suitably be shared in churches and community centers in a spirit of love rather than disdain. For, though many in our community must work harder to lift themselves, it is important to ensure that individuals who put forth effort justly benefit. It is difficult, indeed, to persuade some to continually struggle to achieve when vast evidence suggests that opportunity and advancement continue to be elusive and/or unequal because of race (Turnipseed, 2009).

McWhorter and Patterson ask quite a bit given the totality of Blacks' everyday experiences. They view workplace and social racism as little more than water rolling off a duck's back. McWhorter and Patterson expect Blacks not to be deterred by discrimination since its intensity has weakened over time and they believe it has no effect that cannot essentially be overcome. Since the rain of discrimination falls on everyone, they argue, the fact that some Blacks do well proves that all can be successful if they earnestly try (Turnipseed, 2009).

Rather than the idiomatic water off a duck's back, a more suitable analogy is that of a heavy snowfall on a community that lacks the mechanized resources to plow roadways and sidewalks. Moreover, the precipitation is coming from artificial snowmakers that disproportionately target Black residential areas. The chillier the overall climate, naturally, the more likely the snow is to

cause prolonged problems. And the more financial and material means some Blacks possess, the more likely they are to (1) reside in largely White neighborhoods and be less affected and/or (2) find ways for themselves and others to manage the snow's effects. Whether one works inside or out, walks to work or drives, has proper winter clothing, can afford heat, and so on, indeed, matters. And to represent the ability of some to access snowplows, salt trucks, and folk with shovels as intrinsically commonsensical and bootstrap-ish without acknowledging the difficulty and questioning the contrived and bizarre origin of the event is obtuse. Failure to address gross resource disparity, on the one hand, and the implication that Blacks ought to be optimistic about their success chances despite perpetually particularized challenges, on the other, is absurd (Turnipseed, 2009).

While McWhorter and Patterson task Blacks with affecting positive change, justice especially demands that individuals in positions of power be balanced and fair in their selections, evaluations, promotions, and everyday dealings. Justice does not force people to work hard, be well prepared, or achieve excellence; it does, however, require that individuals who do, be rewarded accordingly. Though the obligation is bidirectional, the greater onus is on the institutionally privileged in contexts of ability, class, race, age, sex, sexuality, and beyond to help level the playing field and authentically engage diversity (Turnipseed, 2009).

Although many tire of hearing about the challenges of the dispossessed, we are nevertheless concerned about the weary and disparate state of those who persistently battle discrimination. So where McWhorter and Patterson see victimology, victimhood, and a resigned underclass, we see a critically observant delineation of ethnic and racial *victimization* that names evil, reminds a nation of its pledge to justice for all, and continually encourages the fair-minded to counter injustice (Turnipseed, 2009). Calling spades and demanding redress when and wherever unfairness jeopardizes the true embrace of diversity writ large is vitally important.

Morality and the Acknowledgement of Victimization

Not only is acknowledging victimization not inexorably deterministic, as Patterson suggests, but admonishing victimizers does not grant them moral superiority. While morality entails adherence to universal values, the demarcation of victimization in the American context, for example, rationally concedes that power is effectively White. And although Patterson ghastly contends that appealing to Whites' 'moral sense and mercy' renders Blacks morally compromised, this is as untenable as arguing that it patently denotes Blacks' moral superiority.

This is the societal conundrum that has sustained patriarchy and White privilege since the United States' beginning. The powerful have nothing to gain from doing right but altruism, moral alignment, and the true fulfillment of America's founding declaration. If that is not enough, then a paradigm shift is needed in our national thought. The wonder of humynity, as Patterson snidely concedes, is that we all have 'a spark of magnanimity.' Indeed, it is this ember that fuels the hope of a voracious moral fire that purifies the humyn soul and promulgates universal peace and goodwill (Turnipseed, 2009).

As Patterson adeptly indicates, the United States (and by extension this world) now belongs to all of us. Passionately challenging institutional discrimination, therefore, is more about exercising our birthright as heirs of the American dream and citizens of the world and less about holding White and other majority structures responsible for constrained outsider group achievement. We must willingly and relentlessly call spades in our bold insistence that universal ideals of social justice represent and benefit everyone (Turnipseed, 2009).

Perpetual Proportionate Affirmative Action

While the preceding section points out how important it is to call spades, or bring attention to disparity, it is perhaps more powerful to proactively promote diversity and inclusion by

continually and holistically engaging everyone. We argue that the ongoing acknowledgement of difference via a new form of affirmative action is appropriate and powerfully effective.

Contrary to Patterson's (1997) plan to sunset affirmative action in a matter of a few years and in contrast to McWhorter's (2000) call for an immediate halt in most cases with temporary maintenance in such areas as business, we are strongly advocate *perpetual proportionate affirmative action*. Rather than terminating affirmative action prior to achieving an ideal balance, we believe it should continually be employed to maintain proportional representation at least of protected classes like ability status, race, age, and sex (Facts About the, n.d.; The Age Discrimination, n.d.; The Equal Pay, n.d.; Title VII of, n.d.) in various sociopolitical and vocational contexts. As opposed to emphasizing equal opportunity per se, a focus on proportional representation is apt because although it might not be equivalent, it is fair (Turnipseed, 2009).

Identity matters since the organizational ideal should be to mirror the population in which it is located. Recognizing that sociopolitical and workplace pursuits may not appeal equally, however, the goal should be apposite representation and the holistic inclusion and development of everyone. And no matter who this policy temporarily advantages, the objective is to synergistically engage the whole community. When and where there is imbalance, then, strategies and resources must be directed toward equilibrium (Turnipseed, 2009).

Interestingly, perpetual proportionate affirmative action meets Patterson's (1997) twin aims of systematically reducing inequality and 'greatly increasing cross-pollination of …multiethnic communities' (p. 157). Repeated engagement across dimensions of diversity eventually fosters familiarity, mutual respect, and trust, and a broader exchange of knowledge and beliefs. And the dynamism of progressively authentic relationships moves us closer to national and global ecumenicalism (Turnipseed, 2009).

Conclusion

The blueprint for embracing diversity and equalizing life chances we have outlined consists of four elements: (1) the use of a progressive syntax in academic/activist writing, (2) a new conceptual frame for razing discrimination called avoiding ACRASH, (3) the vigilant identification and confrontation of social inequality, and (4) a cultural and structural commitment to the proportional engagement of all sectors of society. Because the world is more connected than ever and diversity is increasing locally and globally, we all have a responsibility to avoid the discrimination of ACRASH if we understand its hierarchical impact on various social sectors. The potholes of ableism, classism, racism, ageism, sexism, and heterosexism in life's roads are treacherous. And apposite navigation requires a progressive syntax or particularized language that powerfully deconstructs hegemony at micro and macro levels. As well, we must vigilantly name the individual and structural injustice we see by calling spades and relentlessly pressing for change. Finally, we must engage in perpetual proportionate affirmative action by fighting for the fair sociopolitical representation and inclusion of all people all the time. Such a road map for managing diversity and attaining social parity effectively bridges the grand differences that make us who and what we are and moves us closer to our best selves.

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