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VIEWPOINT

Engaging Axiology: Enabling Meaningful Transdisciplinary Collaboration in Adapted Physical Activity

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In this article, I explore the concept of axiology in the context of adapted physical activity research and analyze its connection to the more commonly discussed paradigmatic assumptions of epistemology and ontology. Following methodological scholars, I argue for an acknowledgment of the pivotal role that axiology already plays in adapted physical activity research and for the potential interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary opportunities that could be enabled by engaging with axiology in more explicit ways. I discuss a number of potential axiological gaps between the field of adapted physical activity and disability communities, arguing that such differences may undermine attempts at doing meaningful transdisciplinary research with such communities. I offer strategies for bridging these axiological gaps, encouraging us to work together in axiologically reflexive ways in order to increase meaningful opportunities for more people with disabilities to be engaged in the movement-based activities and communities of their choice.

Keywords: critical disability studies, interdisciplinarity, paradigms, research assumptions

> What do you think caused your heterosexuality? . . . Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of? Could it be that your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex? (Rochlin, 1995, pp. 38–39)

In 1972, Rochlin first published “The Heterosexual Questionnaire”: an oft-quoted text that replaces the concept of *homosexuality* with *heterosexuality* in some of the most ubiquitous questions that members of queer communities were asked by researchers, practitioners, family, and strangers. Although, on the surface, many of the questions only replace one word, the shift is transformational.

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The questionnaire brings to the fore tacit values that frame such seemingly objective questions. It undermines the universality of such values. It renders visible the unanswerability of such questions for communities that do not share the pathologizing frame of those asking them. Indeed, Rochlin was a psychotherapist who wrote the questionnaire to try to get homosexuality removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders II*: to fundamentally challenge the pathologizing assumption that homosexuality was something bad and undesirable that should ethically be fixed (Hobbs & Rice, 2013). In short, "The Heterosexual Questionnaire" was an axiological intervention.

In this article, I am attempting to make a similar axiological intervention within the context of adapted physical activity (APA): one that renders noticeable the tacit values, and ethical and aesthetic judgments behind our research questions and knowledge claims; one that enables us to notice and bridge possible value differences between researchers and the disability[1] communities being studied. I do this through an interdisciplinary analysis: That is, I leverage axiological insights from disciplines, such as philosophy, feminist studies, queer studies, indigenous studies, postcolonial studies, sport studies, and disability studies, to reflect upon some of APA's most salient internal disciplinary differences and most taken-for-granted assumptions.

> A process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline, and draws on the disciplines with the goal of integrating their insights to construct a more comprehensive understanding. (Repko & Szostak, 2017, p. 8)

I begin by introducing the concept of axiology and exploring its connection to major paradigms engaged within APA and their parent disciplines, unpacking some of their ontological and epistemological assumptions. I then discuss some ways that axiology affects APA research across disciplines and paradigms, and the ways these may impact upon interdisciplinary collaborations. Next, I introduce four possible axiological dissonances that may undermine our attempts at transdisciplinary research with disability communities. In so doing, I offer some strategies for bridging these axiological gaps, enabling us to work together toward increasing the life chances of people experiencing disability.

The Importance of Axiology

Axiology is the study of human values and our processes of valuation (Creswell, 1998; Hart, 1971). As Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) argued, axiology relates to three philosophical areas of study: "ethics, aesthetics, and religion" (p. 116). For researchers, axiological assumptions refer to the often-unexamined, unrecognized, or mistakenly universalized values that influence our work: Personal or disciplinary assumptions about what is good and bad, right and wrong, and more or less valuable, worthy, desirable, and beautiful (Hart, 1971). Is Down syndrome a more or less valuable human variation than blue eyes? Is walking better than wheeling? Is generalizable data better? Is scoliosis beautiful? Should people with disabilities be included in society? Should able-bodied people be allowed to play a wheelchair sport? Should the leadership of people experiencing disability be prioritized in our field? APA is full of axiological questions.

APA is not alone in this regard. Heron and Reason (1997) argued that axiological questions, such as "what is intrinsically valuable in human life" and "what sort of knowledge, if any, is intrinsically valuable" (p. 299), inform virtually every aspect of research across all disciplines, including research questions, methods, ethics, and quality criteria. For these reasons, Lincoln et al. (2011) argued that axiology is "part of the basic foundational philosophical dimensions of paradigm proposal" (p. 116), every bit as important as epistemology, ontology, and methodology (Heron & Reason, 1997; Wilson, 2008). Like these other assumptions, axiological differences can make reading, reviewing, thinking, and especially collaborating across disciplines challenging, particularly in a field like APA where scholars draw their assumptions from numerous parent disciplines, across the three research cultures of natural science, social science, and the humanities (Bouffard, 2014; Kagan, 2009). In the following section, I review how APA researchers from different parent disciplines and paradigms might approach these axiological considerations in different ways. Acknowledging these differences, I argue, is a first important step to thinking across them.

Axiological Differences Across Paradigms

A number of APA's most influential parent disciplines are deeply steeped in positivist and postpositivist paradigms, including biomechanics, neuroscience, exercise physiology, and some forms of sport and exercise psychology (see Bouffard, 2014). Positivist and postpositivist researchers generally adopt realist ontological stances and either objective or objective/subjective epistemologies (Markula & Silk, 2011). This translates as the belief in a relatively stable and universally true reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This reality can either be known objectively, or at least closely approximated (in the case of some postpositivists), through the use of rigorous methodological practices (Creswell, 1998). Believing in the possibility of objectivity does not mean that one believes that humans are always objective. Quite the opposite, it is the desire to minimize the validity threat of human bias that has led to strict adherence to research protocols, such as triangulation and prevalidated instruments (Fielding & Fielding, 1986; Markula & Silk, 2011). Such protocols are designed to minimize, among other things, the effect of tacit axiological biases, including values about who is good or bad, and whose information is more or less valuable. Other axiological concerns are forefronted in these paradigms, such as the importance of ethical research conduct (Lincoln et al., 2011).

APA researchers also draw from parent disciplines that rely on more interpretivist and critical assumptions, including some streams of psychology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, history, education, nursing, feminist studies, and critical disability studies. Those researching within interpretivist and critical paradigms adhere to a range of ontological allegiances, often embracing relativist or historical forms of realism: Belief in a reality that can never be objectively known, and for some, belief in a reality that is influenced by social constructions and political forces (Lincoln et al., 2011). Researchers within these paradigms tend to work under the epistemological assumption that human knowledge and experiences are always deeply subjective (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln et al., 2011). Because a researcher's values cannot help but influence his or her research—at least to some degree—data from these paradigms are often understood as coconstructed between researchers and participants (e.g., through the wording of questions, the body language of the interviewer, and the subjectivity of coding and analysis; Markula & Silk, 2011). As a result, there is often an emphasis on using reflexivity to acknowledge the impact of a researcher values on this cocreation (Holloway, 1997). Critical scholars, in particular, tend to emphasize —or even celebrate—how research knowledges are coconstructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and often explicitly let their axiological commitments to influence their work, for example, by valuing marginalized voices; by arguing that dominant systems of power are bad, unjust, or wrong; and by embracing ethical obligations to challenge these injustices (Atkinson, 2011; Oliver, 1990).

Less commonly, APA research is influenced by postmodern paradigmatic assumptions: drawing from disciplines, such as (sport) sociology, philosophy, history, fine arts, as well as feminist, indigenous, postcolonial, and disability studies. Postmodern, and specifically poststructuralist, researchers eschew modernist notions of truth and objectivity, thus working off the epistemological assumption that all knowledge is deeply subjective, and the ontological assumption that there is no singular or universal truth (Markula & Silk, 2011). What matters to many poststructuralists is how particular kinds of knowledge (e.g., athlete classification), spoken by particular kinds of people (e.g., classifiers), within particular relations of power (e.g., deeply uneven relationships in official processes of classification), come to be regarded as true, often at the expense of different knowledges of different people (e.g., the knowledge of the athlete; Howe, 2008; Peers, 2012; see also Andrews, 2000). Thus, at the heart of poststructuralist research is the argument that all seemingly objective knowledge and universal truths are instead deeply influenced by axiological assumptions that have been naturalized to the point of near invisibility through relations of power (Flax, 1992; Shogan, 1998). In this way, postmodern researchers tend to tackle axiology head on—critiquing naturalized assumptions, engaging explicitly with aesthetics in their writing, conceptualizing their research as coconstructed knowledge, taking explicit political stands, and valuing and evaluating their research according to nonmodernist and often community-specific values (Lather, 1993; Richardson, 2000).

As APA is a widely interdisciplinary, or at least a cross-disciplinary, field, it takes significant work to acknowledge, think, and work together across these disciplinary divides (Bouffard, 2014). To do this, it will require authors to be reflexive enough about our own paradigmatic and disciplinary assumptions to be able to articulate these explicitly to readers, reviewers, and collaborators who may come from another discipline (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Further, it will require readers to be generously critical: Generous enough to critique the work of others from the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions of the author's discipline and critical enough to generously offer reflections on these assumptions in ways that could spark greater reflexivity and collaboration across difference. In so doing, we may discover shared axiological affinities that turn our gaze outward to new ways of knowing and overlapping axiological issues that turn our gaze inward to more reflexive ways of thinking.

Axiological Issues Across Paradigms

Axiology and Doing Meaningful APA Research

Markula and Silk (2011) argued that sport and physical activity scholars should do meaningful research, that is, research that not only identifies how participant "experiences become meaningful within certain social and historical contexts" (p. 3) but that also seeks to make a meaningful impact through, for example, changing sport policy, affecting public opinion, improving lives, advancing understanding, challenging ideas, or changing injustices. This is often termed the "so what?" of research. Why does the research matter? What makes it a useful, valuable, or worthwhile contribution? Such questions are, at their heart, axiological.

The problem is that what may seem obviously meaningful for a researcher—such as using physical activity to help minimize the effects of an impairment—may not be meaningful at all for the people who they are trying to help. Case in point: "The Heterosexual Questionnaire" (Rochlin, 1995). Some APA researchers may face similar axiological disjunctures as Rochlin is critiquing: Some human variations may be assumed by researchers to be undesirable impairments (such as autism, deafness, or mental illness), whereas some communities that live with those variations may embrace more neutral or positive feelings about those same qualities (such as neurodivergence, deafness, and madness; McWade, Milton, & Beresford, 2015). In such cases, the tacit value judgments that make certain APA studies meaningful to researchers may mean that they are not meaningful—or worse, felt as oppressive—to those who the studies are intended to support. Axiological reflexivity may enable researchers to identify such situations and determine research courses that are meaningful both to themselves and to participants.

Axiology and Doing Ethical APA Research

One part of APA research that is, by definition, axiological is ethics. Blee and Currier (2011) argued that, for many researchers, ethics has simply become a euphemism for gaining research clearance by institutional review boards (IRBs), rather than a commitment to axiological analysis throughout their research. These review boards adopt an approach called *principlism*, where all human-based research conduct must comply to universal ethical principles (Blee & Currier, 2011). Most of the core principles of IRBs are based on utilitarian ethics (Christians, 2011; Sparkes & Smith, 2014)—an approach developed prominently by British 18th–20th-century philosophers and used extensively to justify British imperialism, the slave trade, and eugenics (see edited collection, Schulz & Varouxakis, 2005). To be clear, it is not that utilitarian ethics necessarily lead to imperialist research; mandated ethical research standards have undoubtedly saved lives and prevented further atrocities. Rather, I argue that utilitarian principlism is neither universal, value neutral, nor necessarily always ethical, and thus, it is not the only (or always the best) way of engaging ethically in APA (see also Palmer, 2016; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Below I outline three variations of this argument that are particularly useful for APA scholars.

First, cultures and communities develop their own ethical codes of conduct, and the IRB's utilitarian principles may not account for, or may be in conflict with, the codes of these communities (Markula & Silk, 2011; Palmer, 2016). For example, IRBs tend to center individual benefits, harms, and consent, whereas some cultural communities prioritize these concerns at the level of the group (Christians, 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011). Thus, when running a study on (adapted) physical activity in an indigenous community, the community would often expect to vet and consent to a study before any individuals are even approached (Schinke et al., 2008). Such critiques have led to the development of more context-dependent approaches to ethical research, including virtue ethics (Blee & Currier, 2011), relational ethics of care (Noddings, 2013), communitarian ethics (Christians, 2011), and ethical reflexivity (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

Second, utilitarian principlism, as currently operationalized by many IRBs, does not fit well with some research paradigms and methods (Christians, 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011). For example, ethical clearance often requires that research questions, methods, and ethical safeguards be approved by the IRB prior to contacting participants. By contrast, if a scholar wished to do participatory action research in which, for example, community members created their own representations of their inclusive physical activity programs (see Goodwin et al., 2017), participants would be expected to participate in the creation of these research questions, methods, and ethical protocols (Heron & Reason, 1997). IRB principlism thus encourages top-down research from outsiders and makes community-led research more difficult (Sparkes & Smith, 2014)—a predicament, I argue, that is ethically suspect.

Third, utilitarianism's major principle is the greatest good for the greatest number, which is operationalized through the comparative weighing of potential benefits and harms (Christians, 2011). Good and harm, however, are value laden and often culturally specific concepts that are operationalized in deeply biased ways (Schulz & Varouxakis, 2005). For example, most bioethicists work off of the assumption that children born with impairments, neurodivergence, and nonnormative hearing necessarily constitute harms to be prevented and that normalizing people is necessarily a good or a benefit (Newell, 2006; Withers, 2012). By contrast, if an APA researcher is doing physical activity research with individuals in deaf communities, participants would be in a better place to articulate, for example, if their nonnormative hearing feels like a hearing loss or a cultural gain (e.g., Stewart, 1993). Such questions often cannot be answered, or even determined, in advance. Thus, in addition to getting review board clearance, researchers need to acknowledge the practice of ethics in APA (Palmer, 2016). That is, that ethics is an ongoing, reflexive, and messy process that involves attending to many, often-unforeseen, "ethically important moments," where dominant Western, and discipline-specific, ethical frameworks may not be able to fully determine what might be good and right within specific relationships, communities, and cultures (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 262). This is a practice of axiological reflexivity.

Axiology and Doing Non-Eurocentric Research

Western researchers have a long, undeniable, history of justifying and legitimatizing values and knowledges that served certain European and White North American interests. This included bolstering the White supremacist and eugenic ideologies that enabled genocidal violence, colonial rule, slavery, and the forced sterilization of thousands, particularly during periods when these practices were subject to great moral and ethical debate (Dei, Hall, & Rosenberg, 2000; Mohanty, 1988; Ordover, 2003; Withers, 2012). These colonial and eugenic scientists included some of APA's predecessors, like McKenzie (1909), whose writings betray deeply eugenic views about how those with "mental dullness, backwardness, arrested development or feeble-mindedness" (p. 210) were incapable of rehabilitation and should be institutionalized for their entire reproductive lives so "that they may not have an opportunity to yield to the physical temptations to which they are so peculiarly susceptible, and so propagate their own kind" (McKenzie, 1900, p. 213).

Western scholars (often unknowingly) continue this imperialist tradition through three related choices: (a) The choice to ignore or underplay Western researchers' roles in legitimizing racist and colonial violence; (b) The choice to engage with Western values, ethics, and methods as though they were universal and always empowering; and (c) Discounting the knowledges and knowledge systems of indigenous and non-Western people (Dei et al., 2000; Matsinhe, 2007). One of the ways that these indigenous and non-Western knowledge systems are devalued is that they are written off as superstitious belief systems instead of knowledge systems, often because they are intricately connected to ideas about the sacred (Matsinhe, 2007; Wilson, 2008).

Lincoln et al. (2011) argued that one of the reasons that scholars tend to shy away from engaging axiological concerns is because axiology deals with, among other things, the realm of religion, spirituality, and the sacred—realms that enlightenment traditions have taught us to keep far away from our processes of knowledge production. However, many scholars have argued that taking the sacred, and even the spectral, seriously can open up new ways to analyze and value spirituality, ecologies, communities, human life (Lincoln et al., 2011; Richardson, 2000), as well as sport and disability, specifically (Braye, 2014; Watson & Parker, 2015). Reason (1993) argued, for example, that "a sacred human inquiry based on love, beauty, wisdom and engagement is one of the highest virtues and possibilities of human consciousness" (p. 273). Gordon (2008) and Granzow and Dean (2016) argued that the notion of haunting can enable scholars to analyze how traces of social phenomena that happened in the past can still deeply influence us today. For example, colonial practices, like mandatory and violent residential schooling (and the physical activity programs that were used therein), are often thought of as in the past. Yet, as the findings of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) makes clear, this colonial legacy is still deeply with us in the form of generational trauma, disappearing languages, and the continued widespread removal of aboriginal children from their families.

Matsinhe (2007) argued that indigenous knowledge systems often deal with sacred and spectral phenomena. When such knowledge systems emerge from the communities being studied, he argued, they should be operationalized "unapologetically as methodological orientations in research and representations" (p. 848). He expands: Such critiques should be considered by APA researchers because the field concerns itself with numerous projects that involve researching and practicing with those who do not share our Western knowledge systems, especially in the area of development through sport, and other global physical activity and play programs. We have choices, as APA scholars and practitioners. We can continue the imperialist tradition of imposing our knowledge systems—our ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological assumptions—onto indigenous and non-Western lives, beliefs, and communities as though these were neutral and emancipatory acts (Schinke et al., 2008). Or we can take seriously the (potentially sacred or spiritual) knowledge systems of the communities we work with as legitimate ways of knowing—as theoretical, methodological, ontological, epistemological, and axiological approaches equally valuable as our own (Matsinhe, 2007). I argue that it is incumbent upon us to reflect on how we universalize our Western axiological assumption about the (ir)relevance of the sacred, and instead take seriously the sometimes partially spiritual structures through which some people create and mobilize knowledges about their bodies, capacities, physical activities, communities, and lives.

> The interweaving of the actual and the virtual, the here and the hereafter, the physical and non-physical worlds abound in indigenousness. For my respondents, the physical and non-physical were equally real, and they drew from both to construct their social reality. . . . Researchers should be courageous . . . taking the multitude's accounts of the social world seriously, not only as contents but also as forms. (p. 848)

Axiology and Writing APA Research

Another way that tacit values emerge in virtually every kind of research in APA and beyond—positivist to postmodern—is in the researcher's choices of terminology (Dunn & Andrews, 2015; Peers, Spencer-Cavaliere, & Eales, 2014). As biochemist and ability studies scholar Wolbring (2014) argued, even the most positivist of scientists use value-laden words around disability. Wolbring (2017), for example, searched Google Scholar and found that the value-laden term "risk" was used almost five times more often than either "probability" or "likelihood" when discussing Down syndrome (p. 2). This is an example of axiological slippage: where deeply value-laden beliefs become evident in discourse and research, often without the researcher's knowledge, because these values are so taken-for-granted as to seem neutral to the researcher. Because impairment is discussed so often in APA, scholars have a significant likelihood of encountering such moments of possible axiological slippage. Given the positivist and postpositivist paradigmatic enmeshment of objectivity and rigor, recognizing and minimizing axiological slippages should be understood as minimizing threats to researcher reliability in APA research.

Axiological slippages, however, are not simply a problem for positivists and postpositivists. Unacknowledged value-laded terminology is used across the paradigmatic spectrum, which is why the multidisciplinary journals like *Adapted*

Physical Activity Quarterly have written policies against heavily biased language like *genetic defect* (vs. *genetic variation*) and *suffers from* (vs. *has been diagnosed with*; Human Kinetics, 2017). Indeed, nonpositivists who use more literary writing styles may also want to reflect on how tacit values pervade their use of metaphors and similes. A notable example is how scholars concerned with physical activity and social justice, use blindness, paralysis, and mental illness ubiquitously as metaphors for inability, ignorance, oppression, hopelessness, and nonaction (Garland-Thomson, 2005; Titchkosky, 2015). Such perpetuations of negative stereotypes threaten to undermine the quality of social science and humanities research in APA, given the critical and often poststructuralist axiological commitment to challenging social injustices (Markula & Silk, 2011).

APA Research and Disability Communities: Possible Axiological Gaps

I spent most of my 20s in disability communities. I am not referring, here, to the mythic, singular disability community of often-isolated and disconnected people with shared identity (Kwon, 2002). I am referring to specific (although often-dynamic) groups of people, where the majority of people experience disability, they gather of their own choice and impetus, and the actions and choices of the group are led by people experiencing disability (see Charlton, 2000; Oliver, 1990). I experienced such disability community in parasport, in integrated dance, in activist circles, and in critical disability scholarship.

I do not mean to suggest, here, that all these disability communities, or all critical disability theories, are the same. Critical disability studies is a multidisciplinary field of inquiry that tends to engage with disability as a social, political, interrelational, and/or cultural phenomena rather than only an embodied one (Garland-Thomson, 2005). Like APA, it is a field that borrows from multiple disciplines, and thus, people hold a range of ontological and epistemological assumptions, and use a wide range of methodologies (Withers, 2012). A defining characteristic of critical disability studies—and of all of my disability communities—I argue are a set of axiological affinities (Peers, 2017): values, ethics, beliefs, and aesthetics that have largely emerged from disability arts and activist communities, and that differ significantly from those that normative cultures hold in relation to people experiencing disability (norms, by the way, that I bought into fully before I had access to disability community; see Charlton, 2000; Kafer, 2013; Peers, Brittain, & McRuer, 2012).

This dissonance between mainstream and disability community values jarred me in my first graduate APA seminar. A classmate (who has consented to me sharing this story) announced that his partner was newly pregnant. He said that he knew his son would be a great hockey player. “Maybe SHE will be a great hockey player,” a classmate jibed, correcting the assumption that the child would be—and would preferably be—male. Everyone laughed. “Or a great sledge hockey player,” I added, pointing out the similar dis/ability assumption at play. No one laughed. The chastising looks and comments informed of their shared axiological judgment: My comment was ethically wrong and aesthetically worthless (e.g., unfunny).

Their reactions also betrayed more implicit axiological assumptions, however: A girl should be of equal worth and desirability to a boy; a child with impairment was less desirable than a child without; it is wrong to ask someone to imagine the possibility of a child with an impairment entering his or her life; it is right to question sexist assumptions; it is wrong to question ableist assumptions; poking fun at ableism is not funny. I may sound naïve, but I was honestly shocked and appalled at how appalled they were. I felt like my disability communities trained me to value disability. I tested my hypothesis. I shared the story with my teammates, my activist comrades, and my critical disability studies reading group. In each case, they laughed. I was also offered two high fives and zero chastising looks.

Since that day, I have been trying to work through the problem of how to reconcile the axiological assumptions of APA with those of my disability communities and the critical disability studies theories I was reading. At times, this axiological dissonance was nonexistent, such as with the critical-disability-inspired works of various APA and disability sport scholars (e.g., DePauw, 2000; Howe, 2008; Shogan, 1998). At other times, the axiological dissonance was so great that I debated quitting the field. Instead, I made such dissonances the heart of my research, in hopes that it would encourage deeper interdisciplinary conversations between APA and disability studies, and that these interdisciplinary conversations would enable more transdisciplinary research (see Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Transdisciplinarity is "a version of interdisciplinarity that involves stakeholders from outside the academy in research teams" (Szostak, 2016, p. 70). Within the context of APA, it is research that engages meaningfully in knowledge making with disability communities. In what remains of the paper, I introduce four of the most pronounced axiological dissonances that I have come across that might get in the way of interdisciplinary work between APA and disability studies, and transdisciplinary research with disability communities: piss on pity; desiring disability; against normal; and nothing about us without us.

Piss on Pity—Disability as a Social Issue Not Personal Tragedy

"Piss on pity" is a popular disability activist slogan across North America and Europe that challenges the axiological assumption that disability is inherently something bad and undesirable and that good and ethical engagements with disability involve pitying, saving, curing, treating, and charitable giving, rather than increasing choice, rights, and social justice (Clare, 2009; Withers, 2012). Although sometimes such approaches enable more funds to be raised, Withers (2012) noted that such tactics are far more problematic than helpful because they are almost always chosen and designed by nondisabled people, the raised funds most often go to paying nondisabled people's salaries and research interests, and that the harm it does to all disabled people far outweighs the supports it may offer for a few.

If APA researchers wish to partner with disability communities, we need to ask ourselves, as a field, if we are willing to stop playing on lucrative social stories about disability suffering, pity, and need, in order to get our research and physical activity programs funded? Are we also willing to stop using the related stories of inspirational overcoming: Discourses that disability scholars and activists have long argued reproduce rather than challenge pitying notions of disability (Clare, 2009; Peers, 2012; Withers, 2012)?

The pity problem extends beyond how we sell our projects and programs to funders. If we hold the tacit belief that disability is a bad thing needing to be solved, such beliefs are likely to create the methodological "problem of illegitimate questions" (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 118). These are interview questions that have no meaning because they are based on the researcher's frames of reference, which often do not align with the frames of participants who are expected to answer these questions (Lincoln et al., 2011). Similar to Rochlin (1995), Oliver (1990) rewrote the British disability questionnaire to show how seemingly objective questions about disability often preframe disability as a personal, medical lack rather than, for example, a problem of social (in)justice. For example, he transforms "what is your disability" to "how does society disable you" and "do you have difficulty in holding, gripping and turning things?" to "what design defects lead to difficulty in holding, gripping, or turning things" (pp. 7–8). Having personally participated in over 20 APA studies in my life, I can attest to the ubiquity of questions that frame my life and impairment as a loss, and a personal/medical problem to be solved.

The problem with such questions is not only methodological but also ethical as well. What is the effect of being asked over and over again, by doctors, strangers, bullies, practitioners, and researchers to recite the ways that your body or mind is a problem in need of fixing (see Peers, 2012)? IRBs cannot engage with this kind of cumulative harm, but we, as APA researchers, can make axiological choices of whether or not to participate in it.

One strategy for bridging this axiological gap between APA and many disability communities is to follow Rochlin's (1995) lead: To try replacing key disability-related words with attributes about which you may feel more neutral or positive in order to recognize tacit values. A second option is to follow Oliver's (1990) lead: To reframe questions from the perspective of different models of disability. Are there versions of our interview questions that enable people to answer from various perspectives on disability? Either way, this will require a more explicit practice of axiological reflexivity. Are we prepared to piss on our own pity?

Desiring Disability—Disability as Generative

Numerous self-identified disability, mad, deaf, neurodivergent, and crip, communities have gone further than pissing on pity, explicitly adopting the axiological position that disability and other nonnormativities can be good, worthwhile, ethical, generative, beautiful, desirable, and artistic at its heart (Hershey, 1992; Kafer, 2013; Marcus, 2013; McWade et al., 2015). As Fritsch (2013) argued, crip community is defined precisely by the "desire to dwell with disability . . . and to open up desire for what disability disrupts" (para. 2). In other words, people may find great meaning and value in (their own and each other's) disability, illness, and nonnormativity if they can dwell with these, outside of dominant social drives to pathologize, pity, or change them.

In my experience, periods of serious illness have enabled far more deep, intimate, and mutually vulnerable relationships. They have helped me to value and seek out meaningful interdependencies. They have taught me to curate my life so that it is full of only that which is most meaningful. Serious illness taught me how to live a much higher quality of life. These experiences have not only been meaningful, but they have also been generative (Peers et al., 2012). When normative ways of doing things get disrupted by nonnormative bodies, capacities, and perspectives, new technologies (e.g., Bluetooth headsets); artistic forms (e.g., integrated dance); theories (e.g., mad theory); policies (e.g., the Americans with Disability Act); cultures (e.g., deaf culture); and practices (care communities) emerge.

Part of the axiological field that desiring disability can generatively destabilize is that of aesthetics. This is evidenced by the broad range of dark, hilarious, moving, and mind-shifting, crip, mad, autistic, and deaf contributions to every artistic discipline (Peers et al., 2012). Each of these aesthetic interventions offer "an unashamed claim to beauty in the face of invisibility" (Sins Invalid, 2017). Aesthetics is an important field for axiological interventions (e.g., challenging dominant pity stories); reimaginings (e.g., of experiences of disability as desirable); and debates (e.g., over assisted suicide). Through aesthetic interventions, McRuer argued, "we are going to generate visions of the body and desire and community that are in excess of attempts to contain and manage us" (Peers et al., 2012, pp. 148–149).

My (crip) desire is for APA to be more on the side of generativity than of containment and management. As a field, we can explicitly value the interdependences, vulnerabilities, and creativity of disability and illness, rather than necessarily imagining independence as an ideal. We can engage with artistic movement practices (e.g., dance, painting) beyond their therapeutic components, and instead, value aesthetics components of self-representation, beauty, and humor as integral to being meaningfully engaged in movement culture. This is evidenced by recent, deeply collaborative, aesthetically oriented research projects by Eales (2016) and Goodwin et al. (2017). Through projects like this, I believe that we can, as a field, learn to "dwell with disability" and to learn to desire all that it might disrupt (Fritsch, 2013, para. 2).

Against Normal—Increasing Opportunities Not Decreasing Abnormality

One theoretically useful intervention by disability, deaf, mad, and neurodivergent communities has been to challenge the ethical impulse toward, and the taken-for-granted valuation of, normalcy and normalization (Davis, 1995; Shogan, 1998; Withers, 2012). They have convincingly demonstrated that far from being an objective sociological measure, normalcy is often operationalized axiologically: The choice to measure, pathologize, and intervene is often based on proximity to a socially valued attribute or skill set (e.g., consider the focus on measuring and improving sight and ambulation, compared with the lack of focus on measuring and improving peoples' sense of smell). As discussed previously, many people do not desire to be more normal, indeed, deaf, disabled, mad, and neurodivergent adults have argued that parents' and practitioners' obsession with normalization can be unethical, oppressive, and eugenic (Davis 1995; Kafer, 2013; McWade et al., 2015; Withers, 2012). Even if one does not embrace the crip perspectives of generativity, discussed in the previous section, one can still engage with important axiological questions about when the use of norms is helpful and when it may be experienced as oppressive.

To be clear, I am an advocate for multiple ways of engaging disability. My flourishing depends on political interventions by activists before me. It is supported by my vibrant crip arts community. It is has fed off years of wheelchair basketball and integrated dance. It is also the result of various medical interventions, including a surgical "normalization" of my heart function. I believe that all these approaches to flourishing are reconcilable; they can all be mobilized as ways of increasing life chances (see Spade, 2011).

Increasing life chances can mean an axiological investment in the survival of people experiencing disabilities. In a culture with deep eugenic pasts and presents, supporting disability survival is an important political act (Kafer, 2013; Withers, 2012). This can include opportunities for people to choose to use physical activity to improve respiration capacity or to lower chances of cardiac arrest. People's capacities may become more normalized through such activities—however, normalization is not what determines the activity's, or participant's, value.

Importantly, increased life chances can also mean an ethical commitment to decreasing the social structures that diminish some people's chance of survival and opportunities for flourishing: structures like poverty, abuse, exclusion, lack of housing and transport options, bullying, lack of health insurance, immigration bans, and high levels of surveillance and control (Clare, 2009; Withers, 2012). APA programs and research designed to increase inclusion, decrease bullying, and prioritize social justice are already increasing life chances in this way. This type of engagement means fighting against situations that require people to normalize themselves in order to access activities, communities, rights, and dignity (see Shogan, 1998).

A third way of increasing life chances is to contribute to the multiplication of opportunities and choices. This includes increasing opportunities to meaningfully participate in movement practices and communities. APA practitioners do this by helping to remove barriers, by inclusive design, by reteaching teachers, by studying experiences, and by critiquing policies and power relations. Importantly, however, if we are going to commit to increasing life chances in this way, we cannot also be trying to delimit life chances and choices to those that researchers and practitioners value as the best, the healthiest, the most capable, the most productive, the most beautiful, the most desirable, or the most normal. There is a world of axiological difference between supporting greater life chances and enforcing what we deem as "better life choices."

Nothing About Us Without Us—Disability Leadership

Charlton (2000) argued that the most fundamental disability rights slogan worldwide is "nothing about us without us" (p. 3). It signals a political demand and ethical obligation to meaningfully and deeply include communities in creating the decisions, policies, activities, and knowledges that most affect them (Stroman, 2003; McWade et al., 2015; Withers, 2012). Notably, the slogan is not "nothing about us with anyone but us." It is not a claim that nondisabled people should not be involved in disability research and programming (Bredahl, 2008).

This demand emerged from histories of deeply oppressive research, policies, and programs run by nondisabled people, purportedly for the benefit of those experiencing disability, including eugenic institutions and policies (Withers, 2012). It is based on the argument that nondisabled people are often influenced by their tacit ableist values and are often not aware of what disabled people need or want (Charlton, 2000; Oliver, 1990). Thus, insiders are crucial for creating higher quality, less oppressive, and more insightful research, programs, and policies (Arneson, 2009; Bredahl, 2008; Oliver, 1990). This demand for a meaningful say in all that affects people experiencing disability has created changes in various research; programming and policy areas, including consumer-initiated health care reforms, disability think-tanks consulting on national policies; and the active recruitment and support of disabled, mad, deaf, and neurodivergent scholars in some fields (Charlton, 2000; Stroman, 2003; Withers, 2012). Deaf, disabled, mad, and neurodivergent people are leading other fields that impact them—including critical disability, mad, and deaf studies. Where are all of the researchers from these communities within APA? What are barriers to their full participation as students, researchers, and practitioners? Do the axiological assumptions of readings, reviewers, and supervisors act as major barriers, delimiting what counts as knowledge and who counts as knowledgeable? Our field is axiologically premised on inclusion; can we practice what we preach (Bredahl, 2008)? These, I argue, are just a few key axiological questions for our field that can only be answered and addressed through deep interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and conversations.

Final Thoughts, Values, and Desires

Although much of this paper has focused on the axiological tensions of doing transdisciplinary research with disability communities, I end it with the possibilities that axiologically reflexive interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research offers for relieving such tensions. I argue that if APA, as a field, desires to narrow the axiological gap between our research and the communities we serve, we need more research that takes disabled, deaf, mad, neurodivergent, Indigenous, and non-Western researchers and participants seriously as knowers, stakeholders, collaborators, and researchers.

I do not believe that the field of APA can afford to leave axiology to the philosophers. I have argued, herein, that the domain of axiology—what is good, what is right, what is valuable, what is sacred, and what is beautiful or meaningful—deeply influences our work in APA. We need to acknowledge this, reflect on this, and operationalize it as a strength. There are dozens of APA researchers who are already doing this hard, reflexive work in the realm of axiology.[2] This work makes it easier for researchers who experience disability, like myself, to invest in this field.

I am advocating for this reflexivity across disciplines, and between disciplines, in APA because I believe that it will enable more disabled, deaf, mad, and neurodivergent people to choose more often, and from more choices, about how to live, to move, to challenge ourselves, to express ourselves, to define ourselves, and to connect through movement to others. I want us to be able to engage in movement in as many, and as meaningful, ways as humanly possible. And I want APA scholars to continue to research it all and to read all of the research from all of the disciplines. I want us to be researching together—APA scholars and disability communities—as knowers, and stakeholders, and students, and researchers. And I want us to do this generously, and critically, and creatively, and ethically, and adaptively, and if at all possible—beautifully.

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Notes

1. I acknowledge that many people who have been pathologized as having disabilities do not identify as such (e.g., members of deaf, mad, and neurodivergent communities). I prioritize the language and capitalization choices of these communities. I use a range of terminology to ensure that my language is consistent with the paradigms discussed. I use experiencing disability as a generic term that is intended to span multiple paradigms.

2. Some APA scholars whose explicit axiological reflexivity has sparked and encouraged me include Kelsie Acton, Stuart Braye, Karen DePauw, Lindsay Eales, Donna Goodwin, David Howe, Kyoung June Yi, Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere, Brett Smith, and Øyvind Standal.

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