

The Association of Black Psychologists Condemnation of the Word Nigger aka the N-Word Position Paper

Introduction

The Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) has a longstanding commitment to addressing issues that affect the mental health, dignity, and well-being of African (Black) people worldwide. In alignment with this mission, the ABPsi recognizes the urgent need to confront the pervasive use of the word nigger aka the n-word (henceforth redacted in the text). It is a term deeply rooted in the history of white supremacy, racism, and the denigration of blackness. This position paper outlines the reasons behind the ABPsi's resolution to denounce the use of the word [REDACTED] and advocates for its eradication from public discourse.

Historical Context and Legacy

The word [REDACTED] has a long and sordid history as a tool of oppression, used to dehumanize, degrade, demean and denigrate African people. It is a linguistic tool of white supremacy, embedded with the power dynamics of domination, enslavement, and systemic racism. It is the epitome of psychic terrorism that distorts the sense of worth and value. The ABPsi acknowledges that the continued use of the [REDACTED] perpetuates the untreated legacy of racial hatred and violence against African (Black) people. The lingering and popular utilization of the word, [REDACTED] concretizes the semantics of domination, enslavement, oppression, privilege, power, superiority and inferiority needed to maintain the caste denigration, demeaning and dehumanization of African (Black) people.

Cultural and Psychological Impacts

The [REDACTED] is not just a word; it is a weapon that inflicts direct and subliminal psychological harm. It reinforces negative stereotypes and perpetuates a false sense of white superiority and black inferiority caste system. The word [REDACTED] supports the bi-polar false sense of White superiority and Black inferiority; unknowingly and intentionally continue the unabated denigration of Black people, foster relationships of disregard and disrespect; and creates denigrating and even deadly conflict between people and groups in American society. The ABPsi recognizes that the casual and widespread use of the [REDACTED] in popular culture, including music, literature, and media, normalizes its toxicity and desensitizes individuals to its harmful effects. This normalization contributes to the intergenerational trauma and psychic terrorism experienced by African (Black) people. The stigma of this word embodies and invokes painful memories, intergenerational trauma, mental terror, inhumane ill-will, and racial animus. Its' devastating impact of discrimination and white supremacy, racism, and anti-blackness can no longer be ignored or tolerated

Global Pernicious Spread and Misappropriation

The contagious use and acceptance of the denigrating, demeaning and dehumanizing word [REDACTED] is being adopted by young and old people in Africa, China, Brazil, the West Indies, Australia, Sweden, and throughout the world as evidence of being hip or cool like Americans. The demeaning terms like coon, tom, savage, picanniny, mammy, buck, sambo, jigaboo, buckwheat were replaced with the universal use of [REDACTED] derivatives, i.e., [REDACTED] (acting in a

lazy and irresponsible manner); [redacted] lipping (wetting the end of a cigarette while smoking it); [redacted] lover (derogatory term aimed at whites lacking in the necessary loathing of blacks); [redacted] r luck (exceptionally underserved good luck); [redacted]-flicker (a small knife or razor with one side heavily taped to preserve the user's finger); [redacted] heaven (designated places, usually the balcony, where black people were forced to sit); [redacted] knocker (Axe handle or weapon made from an axe handle); [redacted] rich (deeply in debt but flamboyant); [redacted] shooter (a slingshot); [redacted] steak (a slice of liver or a cheap piece of meat); [redacted] stick (police officer's baton); [redacted] r tip (leaving a small tip or no tip in a restaurant); [redacted] in the woodpile (a concealed motive or unknown factor affecting a situation in an adverse way); [redacted] work (demeaning, menial tasks. [redacted]-brown, [redacted]-black: a dark shade of color); Nigger-breaker, [redacted] r-dealer, [redacted] driver, [redacted]-killer, [redacted]-stealer, [redacted]-worshipper, [redacted]-baby, [redacted]-boy, [redacted]-girl, [redacted]-mouth, [redacted]-feet, [redacted]-preacher, [redacted] job, [redacted]-love, [redacted]-culture, [redacted]-college, [redacted]-music: anything belonging to or linked to African Americans). [redacted] was used to offend other ethnic groups. Jews are called white-[redacted]; Arabs, sand [redacted]; and Japanese, yellow-[redacted]. The term has served as a pernicious, pervasive and contagious infection delimiting the worth and value of Black people. The adoption of the word [redacted] r has been even applied to the flora and fauna, eg, "[redacted] rhead cactus," (for echineacea); "[redacted] rhead termite"(Nasutitermes graveolus); "[redacted] r toes" (Brazil nuts); "[redacted] r knackers" (Irish Prunes). Negerinnetten or "[redacted] r's tits" (Belgium chocolates), Negerzoenen, "[redacted] r kisses" (Holland chocolates), Negerbollar, "[redacted] r balls" (Swedish treat), [redacted] r does not erase the historical and international contamination to the identity of Black people. No other derogatory names designed to reduce a peoples' humanity, eg "Kraut" (German people), "Jap" (Japanese people); "Cong" (Vietnamese people); "Gook" (Korean people) have lingering and spread into the everyday lives to impact the people's identity. The problematic use of the [redacted] r has transcended American borders, being adopted by various cultures worldwide as a misguided attempt to appear "cool" or "hip." This global spread further entrenches the dehumanization of African descent people, demonstrating the need for a concerted effort to eliminate the word from all forms of communication.

Misguided Reclamation Efforts

While some African (Black) artists, writers, and laypeople have attempted to reclaim the [redacted] r as a term of endearment or community solidarity, the ABPsi argues that such efforts are fundamentally flawed and dangerous. Changing the spelling or pronunciation of the word does not erase its toxic history or mitigate its harmful impact. Changing from using [redacted] r to using politically correct the [redacted] r only serves to mentally veil the denigrating and dehumanizing meaning of [redacted] r that reinforces the universal disregard and disrespect for the human worth and dignity of African (Black) people. The ABPsi recognizes that the word itself is a "sign" indicating dehumanization and the [redacted] r serves as symbolic representation of the same idea. The word's inherent negativity and denigration cannot be sanitized or re-appropriated in a way that benefits the Black people.

Psychological and Social Ramification

The lingering and popular utilization of the word, [redacted] r concretizes the semantics of domination, enslavement, oppression, privilege, power, superiority and inferiority needed to maintain the denigration, demeaning and dehumanization of African (Black) people.

The ABPsi recognizes the extensive psychological damage caused by the use of the [REDACTED] which directly impacts the consciousness and identity of African (Black) people and serves as a mentally denigrating trigger for racial animus and socio-psychopathology. The word's usage fosters relationships of disregard and disrespect, contributing to social and racial tensions. It is particularly damaging to children, as it normalizes inhumanity and undermines their sense of self-worth, agency and dignity.

Media and Literary Indoctrination

The seminal lexicographer Noah Webster referred to Negroes as [REDACTED] and the Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines [REDACTED] as "usually offensive: a black person; member of socially disadvantaged class of persons...." The word [REDACTED] has been used as a strongly negative term of contempt for a Black person since at least the 18th century. Classical writers like Mark Twain, Edgar Allen Poe, Ian Fleming, Bram Stoker, Agatha Christie, Joseph Conrad, Harper Lee, and Rudyard Kipling, and others have all normalized the literary use the word, [REDACTED]; and serves as the "drinking well" for the 20th century entertainment industry. The ABPsi recognizes that the entertainment industry is a major influencer in determining societal values and mores and has directly fostered and propagated the use of the word [REDACTED] to define, support, describe and prescribe a demeaning and denigrating image and character of African (Black) people. The ABPsi recognizes that from the Birth of a Nation (1915) to "Django Unchained" (2012) movies, particularly have essentially indoctrinated the world by depicting African (Black) people in historical dramas, satirical comedies, and racist inferior representations as brutes, savages, ignorant buffoons, criminals, lazy slaves, mammies, whores, simpletons, vengeful murderers, loyal servants, rapist and people of ill-repute in stark contrast to the White hero and dramatic leads. Music, especially hip hop, is equally complicit in this nefarious indoctrination. The ABPsi understands that three companies (Warner Records, Universal Music Group, and Sony Music Group) control around 90% of the depiction of Hip Hop and two companies, CoreCivic (formerly CCA Corrections Corporation of America) and GEO Group own almost all the private prison beds in the USA. There is a relationship between the negative messaging of hip hop and the profiteering of Black criminality.

Call to Action

In light of the evidence presented, the ABPsi calls for the following actions:

1. **Promotion of Human Dignity:** Actively promote the human dignity and worth of African (Black) people through positive affirmative representation, language and programming.
2. **Educational Initiatives:** Develop and implement educational programs and curriculum to raise awareness about the historical and psychological impacts of the [REDACTED].
3. **Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for policies that prevent the use of the [REDACTED] in public institutions, media, and other platforms.
4. **Professional Publications:** Aligned with the ABPsi Ethical standards, the professional publications will, henceforth, adopt a publication policy that prohibits the representation of the [REDACTED] and supports affirming African being.

5. **Organizational Collaboration:** Collaboration with other behavioral, educational and socio-political organization to co-create and/or support policy, programs, services and activities that affirm being African
6. **Addressing Media Complicity:** Examine, critique and provide consultative services to rectify the role and function of the entertainment industry in maintaining a denigrating racist caste system in American society. Especially the possibility that hip-hop music has been manipulated to drive up privatized prison profits.
7. **Public Denouncement:** The ABPsi considers the [REDACTED] derogatory, dehumanizing, and damaging. It should not be supported, encouraged, or uttered in any public setting.
8. **Unifying Common Cause:** In recognizing the rich diversity within the African (Black) community as well as the strange lack of unity and common interest, The ABPsi recognizes that the proliferation of the [REDACTED] may be the incipient contaminant to every aspect of Black life. Its elimination should allow us to come together and serve as the common cause needed to allow the unification of the different factions and interest groups around being well and affirming
9. **Denouncement:** The ABPsi considers the [REDACTED] derogatory, dehumanizing, and damaging and will offer the application of Black psychology theories, practices, frameworks, and models so that it will not be supported, encouraged, or uttered in any public setting.

Conclusion

The ABPsi is committed to the liberation of the African Mind, empowerment of the African Character, and enlivenment and illumination of the African Spirit and remains steadfast in its mission to improve the mental health and well-being of African (Black) communities. By addressing the pernicious, harmful and dehumanizing legacy of the [REDACTED], the ABPsi aims to foster a more respectful, inclusive, and psychologically healthy society. The eradication of this word from public discourse and social representations is a crucial step toward healing and empowerment for African (Black) people. The ABPsi will devote energy and time to facilitate the different factions and divisions in the African (Black) community to come together to address the eradication of the debilitating effects of the proliferation of the [REDACTED], especially with our children, as a global common cause.

This position paper is intended to articulate the ABPsi's condemnation of the [REDACTED] and to serve as a foundation for future advocacy and educational efforts. The ABPsi invites all individuals and organizations to join in this important endeavor to eliminate the use of this harmful term and to promote the dignity, sanctity, and humanity of African (Black) people.