

African Liberation Psychology

by

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Liberation psychology involves transforming the Afrikan out of oppression-induced psychological states, and achieving proactive natural development by actual participation in Afrikan survival thrust, as indicated by authentic Afrikan culture. This Afrikan survival thrust can be defined as "the condition and process of survival maintenance that is indigenous to and thus characterizes a racial-cultural group's genetic and geo-historical pattern undergirded by their cosmology". Said another way, the Afrikan survival thrust manifests through thought processes, actions/behaviors and institutions that purposely and proactively operate in the best interest of Afrikan people and serve to improve their quality of life.

In order to understand what Afrikan liberation psychology encompasses, it is important to consider four critical points:

- 1.) Afrikan liberation psychologists must be aware of the assumed universality of Eurocentric psychology;
- 2.) The inadequacy of exclusively using the principles that derive from the theory, research and practice of Eurocentric psychology;
- 3.) The problematic issue of combining Eurocentric-thought based along with a superimposed Afrikan cultural perspective; and
- 4.) The fundamental premise that liberation psychology for people of Afrikan descent is and can only be Afrikan psychology.

Liberation psychology is predicated upon the establishment of a new epistemology and a new praxis. This new epistemology and praxis is central to the important task of recovering historical memory. The recovery of a historical memory supposes the reconstruction of models of identification that, instead of chaining and caging Afrikan men, women and children, open up the horizon for them, toward their liberation and fulfillment. However, in articulating the importance of the relationship between liberation psychology and historical memory, we caution that it has to do with recovering not only the sense of one's own identity and the pride of belonging to a people but also a reliance on a tradition and a culture, and above all, with rescuing those aspects of identity which served yesterday, and will serve today, for liberation, which is to say that those aspects of traditional Afrikan worldview(s) that are not applicable and relevant to our contemporary social, political and economic reality should be placed within their proper cultural and historical context, but the beliefs and values that can be modified and made practical in the liberation of Afrikan people should be encouraged, embraced and employed.

We suggest that Afrikan psychology must be a psychology of power. It does not merely describe the traditional nature of Afrikan people, or the orientation of Afrikan people based on traditional Afrikan culture. It is a psychology that

is prescriptive as well as descriptive. It is a psychology of liberation. Afrikan psychology as a liberatory psychology thus must have a transformative function in the lives of Afrikan people, by functioning as a mechanism of social change and it must also attack all that which is an affront to Afrikan existence and reality.

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