CHAPTER OVERVIEW

- Intro., Definition & Conceptual Frameworks
- Historical Perspectives
- Self-Determination
- Status of AA Psychology today
- Methodological and Research Issues
- Critical Analysis
- Summary
What is African American Psychology?

- African Americans: Census Bureau → “A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.” Includes self-definitions.
- Kobi Kambon (aka Joe Baldwin): “…system of knowledge….from the perspectives of African cosmology….” “…application of …African reality structure [world view] ...to psychological phenomena.”
- Two perspectives: universal psychological ideas; or culturally grounded?
- Daudi Azibo: AAP must be grounded in AA philosophy.
- Adelbert Jenkins: humanistic approach → AAP as planful, purposeful, resisting oppression.
CONVERGENT PERSPECTIVES

- AAP as a science, systematic & organized
- Distinguished from Western Psychology (a psychology of control, prediction, domination) and ancient African approaches (Kemet) ➔ self-realization.
- Observable behavior (Western) vs. self-knowledge and intuition & spiritness
**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES – ORIGINS OF AFRICAN PSYCHOLOGY**

- **Azibo:** 3200 B.C.: Kemet (organized knowledge). See, later, the Principles of Ma’at: Truth, Justice, Order, Compassion, Reciprocity, Harmony, Balance

- **Western Psychology:** Greek Philosophy [but see George G.M. James, Stolen Legacy, which argued that much of Greek Philosophy was repackaged African philosophy] (e.g., “Know Theyself”)

EUROPEAN SCIENTISTS’ CONTRIBUTIONS TO RACISM

- Robert Guthrie’s *Even the Rat Was White* (1976, 1998)
  - Physical Anthropology
  - Social Darwinism (1859+)
  - Sir Francis Galton & Eugenics (1869+)
American Scientists’ Contributions to Scientific Racism

- Arthur Jensen (1969), Harvard Education Review
- Herrnstein & Murray (1994), The Bell Curve

Intelligence Testing
- Alfred Binet (1904)
- Charles Spearman
- Alice Strong (1912)
- G.O. Ferguson (1916)
- [Lewis Terman, 1916]
STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY

- Erroneous Applications of Western Constructs (Ideas)
  - Self-Esteem; Self Concept: “I think, therefore I am” (Descartes) versus “I am because we are, and because we are, therefore I am” [Principle of Consubstantiation]
An anthropologist proposed a game to the kids in an African tribe. He put a basket of fruit near a tree and told the kids that the first one to find the fruits would win them all. When he told them to run, they all took each other's hands and ran together, then sat together, enjoying their fruits. When he asked them why they ran like that as one could've taken all the fruits for one's self, they said: "UBUNTU, how can one of us be happy if all the other ones are sad?"
Black/White comparisons and the conclusions that “Differences are Deficits”

- Intelligence
- MMPI (personality traits)
- Internal/External Locus of Control

Nature/Nurture Controversy
Self-Determination

1960s

- Civil Rights
- Black Power
- Malcolm X & Martin Luther King
- Birth of ABPsi (1968)
  - Demands on APA (1) integrate workforce; (2) graduate schools; (3) eliminate racist content in APA journals; (4) establish programs (OEMA)
  - Mission of ABPsi: training & support to students [ABPsi Student Circle]; development of an authentic AAP; advocacy in psychology and the community; deconstruction & proactive approaches.
  - HIV/AIDS; obesity; incarceration & recidivism. Today: Emotional Emancipation Circles
  - Diasporic Outreach
TOWARD A BLACK PSYCHOLOGY

- Guthrie’s Historical Review
- Joseph White (1970)
- Journal of Black Psychology (since 1974) – now bimonthly
INFLUENTIAL AA PSYCHOLOGISTS

- Francis C. Sumner (1920)
- Inez Beverly Prosser (1933)
- Mamie & Kenneth Clark (1939 +) & Brown
- William Cross (nigrescence)
- Reginald Jones
- James Jones
- Janet Helms (& racial identity)
- Margaret Beale Spencer
- Africentrists (Na’im Akbar, Asa Hilliard, Wade Nobles, Joseph Baldwin, Linda James Myers)
STATUS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

- Numbers increasing (but still small)
- 9% in doctoral programs (??)
Methodological and Research Issues

- Experimental Method decried
- Observation & interviews
  - But focus on Low SES
- Expanding samples (from HBCUs to PWIs to real world domestically and internationally)
- Values and the Myth of Objectivity
**Critical Analysis**

- Focuses on research directions
  - Positive psychology (& optimal theory)
  - Identity
- Key Milestones
- Influence of AAP on Western Psychology
- Transdisciplinary influences
Discussion Questions: Is racism relevant today? Why or why not?

Yes, Relevant

No, not relevant
Discussion Question: Why do we need more diversity in higher education? Or do we?

We need more diversity

We have enough diversity