

## **The African Renaissance and the Struggle for Mental Health in the African Diaspora Frederick W. Hickling, M.D. Jamaica**

The mental health challenge for African people in the Diaspora at this time is to make sense of the psychology of racism and colonization, to challenge the psycho-sociological constructs of slavery and underdevelopment, and to catalyse the transformation process that will move the African Diaspora into freedom, prosperity, and psychological stability. The challenge for African mental health professionals at home and abroad is to create a blueprint for mental health in the African Diaspora. This presentation attempts to meet this objective, by revisiting the developmental history of the world using a psycho-political analysis with race as the primary dialectic construct. This challenges the conventional political analysis of Karl Marx, which uses class as the primary dialectic construct, and rejects the post-modern constructs of Foucault (1) and others as the latest form of western philosophical orthodoxy, which facilitate globalization.

This thesis negates these analyses using a historical and political methodology called psychohistoriography developed on the Caribbean island of Jamaica, and grounded within a post-colonial philosophical perspective. It concludes that historical events of the past five hundred years have systematically confronted the European imperative to own the world and the people and resources contained therein. These challenges to world history have forced the systematic transformation of world mental health systems, based upon the negation of the Eurocentric concept of white supremacy and the confrontation of the European delusion of world ownership by Divine Right.

The concept and praxis of the African Renaissance, which has emerged since the fall of apartheid in South Africa, represents a recent phase of the historiographic negation of the racist European social system that has dominated the history of the world for the past five hundred years. Makgoba (2) defines the African renaissance:

“The African renaissance is a unique opportunity for Africans to redefine ourselves and our agenda according to our own realities and taking into account the realities of the world around us. It is about Africans being agents of our own history and masters of our own destiny” (Makgoba 1999, xii).

The African Renaissance and the struggle for mental health in the African Diaspora must also be seen within the context of Pan Africanism and the great Pan-Africanists of the recent century. Frederick Douglas, Harriet Tubman, W.E.B Dubois in the United States, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore and CLR James from the Caribbean, join Jomo Kenyata, Kwame Nkrumah and Nelson Mandela to represent some of the great Pan-Africanists of the 20th century, who have helped to chart the emergence of the African Renaissance and the necessity for African people to redefine ourselves.

This paper argues that the African Renaissance must be seen in the context of mental health in the African Diaspora. This paper argues that African mental health must incorporate the phenomenological perspective of psychiatry within the prism of the psychological, political and philosophical experiences of African people. This paper posits a thesis that demands the rethinking of the African epistemology from an interdisciplinary and philosophical repositioning, and the fusion of such thought with the dream of a united Africa, and the Pan-Africanist vision of cooperation and justice. The thesis takes off from the writings of another Caribbean psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon (3) using race as the primary dialectic for analysis, and repositioning class as the secondary dialectic antipode.

### ***Method***

The ideas and concepts in this paper have come from a number of psychohistoriographic large group experiences over the past twenty-five years. The technique of psychohistoriography (4) was developed at Bellevue Mental Hospital, Jamaica in the late 1970's. The process was developed in response to the major changes that were taking place in that mental institution as a result of the intense de-colonization process that had been triggered by the political climate in Jamaica in that decade (5). The technique was adapted from the concept of historiography which is a method of analysis of historical documents which had been described initially by Thomas Becker (6) and by the Caribbean historian Elsa Goveia (7). Historiography is a method of analysis of historical documents to determine a given society's outlook, ideology and beliefs and to identify dynamics and social forces that compel change.

Historians have used historiography to analyze the writings of the period in a particular region to identify the vectors of change in a given society. Often, there have existed conflicting views between historians and psychiatrists as psychiatrists have tended to make exclusively causal (biological) explorations, whereas historians have tended to address themselves exclusively to the understanding of actual experiences in all their detail. The time has now come for both sciences to include, within both fields of enquiry, the evidence from psychopathology to work for their mutual advancement.

The investigation of psychopathological phenomena in society and in history must be of prime importance to the development of a realistic perspective on our total human reality. In order for therapy to progress, and for change to take place, the patient must internalize the insights in order to facilitate transformation by dealing with forces that block action. The marriage of psychiatry and history through the investigation of psychopathology must promote problem solving and reality testing and facilitate the mastering of anxieties. The process must reinvest normal life goals within the acceptance of personal limitations and handicaps while fulfilling the development of the highest degree of human creative potential.

Thus the technique of historiography was incorporated in a graphic technique called *psychohistoriography*; an analytic methodology designed to produce insight in a group situation

by the examination of psychopathology within the historical perspective of that group. The method incorporates historical material garnered from anecdotes and knowledge within the oral tradition and presents this material in a graphic form within a dialectic perspective; to identify reality based themes and trends; and to facilitate productivity and change for the individuals and group. Psychohistoriography was developed in the mental hospital in Jamaica within the context of helping people from various socio-economic and educational backgrounds with under-developed political and psychological constructs, to debunk the myths of colonization and to establish reality as a framework for future action.

Psychohistoriography uses group psychological dynamics in the collective analysis of the group's history and behaviour as recorded in the person's memories, exemplified in the oral tradition that is so common in the culture of the African Diaspora (8). A major contributor to the components of the process has been the Martiniquan psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, one of the first psychiatrists to recognize the importance of politics in the understanding of the psychopathology of human beings and in particular, black people. Fanon demanded that the historical perceptions of the world be seen within a dialectical framework and that psychological analysis is incomplete without this component. The analytic work of Fanon has given us a platform for contemporary analysis, and locates this work firmly on the shoulders of the ancestors who have gone before.

The psychohistoriographic analysis occurs in a large group setting with a designated chairperson and analyst. Using blackboard or a large flip chart, the analyst begins by drawing a horizontal line across the centre of the chart, constituting the time line or time continuum. The group decides collectively the period of history under consideration and the analyst charts the initial year of that period on the extreme left edge of the time line. The present year is charted at the extreme right hand edge of the time line and the line between these two points is subdivided with equidistant points each representing equal time periods.

A dialectical matrix is then established above and below the time line. The conventional dialectical continuum used in the context of Marxist dialectic materialism is the social class continuum. This dialectic continuum is charted on the extreme left-hand side of the graph and the dialectical antipodes of the class are placed on the top and the bottom left hand corner of the chart respectively. In this context, the primary dialectical matrix identified was the racial dialectic, with the anecdotal historical material serving the interests of the white and the black people involved being charted. The social class dialectic, those of the rich and the poor, was also charted, but as the secondary dialectic antipode. Central to this understanding of the separation of these dialectic analytic continua, was the identification of the coterminous relationship between race and class (9). The third matrix, which is important for the analysis, is the dialectical matrix of the mad and the bad. Once the psychohistoriographic matrix is completed, it is then ready to receive historical data either from anecdotal materials within the group or the reports of written work characterized in particular times on the graph.

Using conventional group dynamic techniques, the group discusses its history by eliciting the individuals' free associations. Each historical fact is verified by the group and is referenced wherever possible or necessary. Once consensus is achieved regarding each historical datum, the group establishes its class relationship. The datum is then entered on the chart at the point corresponding to the time when the datum occurs and which has been collectively agreed upon as the racial/class position. As many historical facts as possible are discussed by the group and recorded in the manner stated. Very soon the chart becomes filled with consensual historical material.

The analysis continues by the process of visual inspection by the analyst and the group, identifying specific clusters of charted historical data. Around these clusters vertical theme lines are drawn and horizontal trend lines are established again by group consensus. The theme and the trend lines are then labeled by the group using single words or single phrases which express the group's perception or insight of the theme or the trend. The theme lines represent a cross-sectional analysis at a particular point in time, and are represented by labels at both dialectical ends of the chart, either at the top or the bottom, respectively representing the race/class/psychopathologic perceptions of the historical themes. The labeled themes are then listed on separate sheets of paper and are used within the process of "insight bringing", in order that the group can understand the development of their attitudes and behaviours through this particular analysis of the dialectical perspective of their history.

This paper will now identify specific and repetitive theme lines that have emerged from a number of different collective analytic processes in different group settings over the past twenty-five years.

### ***Results***

#### **1. 'The Discovery Grande-Invaders: "come outta mi land" (circa 1492)**

The European encounter with the New World began as an accident with Christopher Columbus endeavoring to find passageway to the Far East. Instead of finding that pathway, he encountered millions and millions of human beings, unknown to the European world, who inhabited North and South America and the Caribbean. The dialectic perception of this discovery by the Europeans is strongly contested from the perceptions of the indigenous Caribbean and American people who regarded the European "discovery" more as an intrusion, and in reality an invasion of their personal, social and geographic space by marauding White pirates. The early sixteenth century writings of the Spanish monk, Las Casas (10), identify the dialectical processes involved in this period. The Europeans were particularly interested in plunder and the exploitation of the mineral resources and other treasures of the lands that they had "found".

The principal insight of this theme line was the recognition that the Eurocentric concept of

white supremacy, which identified European ownership of the world, the indigenous people and resources therein by Divine Right, were elements of a collective delusion which we have called the *European psychosis*. Essential to this delusion was that people of color, the indigenous inhabitants of the rest of the world, were sub-human, only slightly superior to domestic animals.

## **2. Ethnic Cleansing: Genocide: “dem a kill we” (circa 1520)**

By definition, a delusion is a fixed, false belief, contrary to rational argument, which is out of keeping with the cultural beliefs of the time. Clearly, the delusional ideas of owning the land and the people of the world were out of keeping with the belief systems of every culture in the world, with the exception of the European culture. By the systematic eradication of all opposition of the indigenous people by mindless and ferocious genocide, and by systems of cultural imperialism, the European was able to impose the madness of European colonization on the world. Las Casas describes the voracious genocide of the native Arawak and Carib Indians of the Caribbean by Spanish Europeans. Millions of people were wiped out not only by diseases brought to the New World by the Spaniards, but also through the systematic genocidal destruction of these people who were hunted down by bounty hunters paid for by the state. The Spanish were excited by the prospect of gold and other mineral riches to be found in the New World. By the middle of the 17th century, the Taino Indians of the Caribbean had been virtually decimated. Thornton (11) estimates that there were 72 million native people in the western hemisphere but that they were reduced to less than six percent of that number, slightly more than four million people, in the following two centuries. The European delusion had been dragged into reality by the genocidal negation of the cultural opposition. The gun had become the midwife of the madness.

## **3. The Rights of Europeans: “Dem wipe de slate clean” (circa 1655)**

The Americas and the Caribbean represent a slate wiped clean by Europe - a template for European social engineering. Having removed the original inhabitants, Europe proceeded to re-engineer these countries and populate them with Europeans, and then with Black people enslaved from the continent of Africa.

Millions of African people from West Africa and Southwest Africa were brought across the Atlantic in the Middle Passage to feed the plantation system developed by the Europeans. The British Merchant Navy was the main agent of transportation of the African slaves, who were sold on auction blocks from Barbados in the East to Jamaica in the West, Charleston, North Carolina in the North to Palmares, Brazil in the South. The physical and mental cruelty of the process of enslavement, the period of enforced labor and the passage across the Caribbean is a story that has not been completely told. The dis-membering of Africa and the Holocaust of African slavery certainly does not impinge upon the memory of European people in the same way as the Jewish Holocaust of Nazi Germany has impinged upon the collective psyche of white people at this time.

**4. 'Fuelling the Plantation-The Birth of Capitalism, Forced Migration, African Slavery: "dem tek we from we lan" (circa 1700)**

The horror of the imposition of the European psychosis on the New World and the African people has recently been summarized

"The suffering and mental illness of the enslaved African people at that time must have been untold and horrendous, but whoever heard of a mad slave? Slaves who had physical and mental disability would no doubt have been swiftly executed and exterminated by the European slave owners and slave masters, leaving the perception that mental illness was something which was not known in African people. This lie was clearly expressed by Halliday in his writings in 1824, which declared that mental illness was rare in the slaves of the West Indies, in the heathens and pagans of Africa, and in Welsh and Irish peasants. Suicide by hanging and dirt eating at an individual and a group level was common among slaves on their way from Africa and within the Caribbean plantation system. But the horrors of the African experience in the New World did nothing to diminish the African cunning for survival, wisdom for regeneration and reinvention of self, penchant for adaptation, and courage to resist the enslavement".

(Hickling 2002, p114)

The ferocity with which the ideas of white supremacy and European ownership of the world were imposed can only be likened unto the irrational violence of psychosis. The essence of this psychohistoriographic theme underlines the epiphany that the collective delusion of a race, a psychosis of racism, can be imposed on whole nations of people, if the lunatic enslaver holds the instruments of superior military power.

**5. Emancipation from Slavery: "fight down de white oppressor" (circa 1830's)**

European colonization of the New World virtually wiped out the indigenous populations of North and South America, but the stubborn ferocity with which African slaves in the Americas resisted the slavery imposed by the European madness soon triggered the emancipation of African slaves. This retreat by the European slave-mongers to concede emancipation in essence represented the first major collective *psychological encapsulation* of these delusional ideas within the sweep of history. A new modified form of the European psychosis called colonialism, which produced a new layer of European exploitation, replaced slavery in 1834 in the New World.

The incisive analysis of Trinidadian African scholar Eric Williams identified that this period heralded the birth of the capitalist system by fuelled by the Industrial Revolution in Europe. From the perspective of this psychohistoriographic analysis, the capitalist system must be seen as a psychopathological construct, the material economic manifestation of the delusional greed of the colonizing European.

**6. ‘Treaty of Berlin: The Scramble for Africa: “dem tief we lan” (circa 1884)**

By the end of the 19th century, the European nations were engaged in a frenzied scramble for control of Africa, as their attention was shifted from the exploitation of the New World to the under-development of Africa during this period of time. Walter Rodney, the Guyanese African historian, in his book *How Europe Under-Developed Africa*, made clear the processes that were used by Europe to continue the ruthless rape of the African continent and the African people.

Psychohistoriographic analysis has illustrated the cunning and Machiavellian strategies used by the European colonizer in the maintenance of the enslavement and exploitation process. As the development of the capitalist system ensured the sharpening of the class forces in Europe and around the rest of the world, this also formed the basis for the persistent poverty, described so eloquently by Jamaican African economist George Beckford, and the dire economic situation of African and Caribbean people.

**7. The European Wars: “fighting over our treasures” (circa 1914)**

The scramble for Africa by European nations at the Treaty of Berlin in 1884 was the precursor of the two European wars, commonly referred to as ‘World Wars’. These ferocious battles represented a struggle between the European nations over world hegemony. The contempt with which Europe simply divided up the African continent, is a reflection of the lunacy with which Europe mid-wifed modern Africa through the creation of boundaries that served their grandiose and delusional interests in their frenzied quest for African land, labor and raw materials. Magubane points out how Lord Salisbury the British Prime Minister, in a speech on 6th May 1898, divided the nations of the world into the living and the dying with the relegation of African nations into the category of the dying nations.

Magubane asks the question whether we can dismiss the callousness of the actions of the Europeans as characteristic of their time and of no interest to us in the present. This psychohistoriographic analysis provides an answer to the question, by forcing us to apply the thinking and actions of the time into a psychopathological continuum of the European delusion, which has existed for five centuries and is most certainly still alive at present

**8. White on White Racism: “Dem ah kill dem one anoder”**

In the sweep of the history of the latter half of the millennium, certain critical historical events can be identified which at first glance might not fit easily into the psychohistoriographic analysis which has identified the European psychopathology. These events are the American Revolution in 1776, the French Revolution of 1795 and the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. However, on the contrary, these events merely buttress the conclusion of the existence of the European psychosis, as they underscore the reality that the delusion has and continues to exist, as evidenced by the hostility of one white ethnic group for another.

The early European settlers in America were themselves escaping from the racial and ethnic

cleansing of their own kith and kin in Europe, who were attempting to perpetuate their tyranny across the Atlantic. The white French aristocracy treated the French peasants who stormed the Bastille with the same contempt and oppression that they meted out to their African slaves. This truth is revealed in the increased violent expression of the virulent European delusional system directed by the white American revolutionaries towards their own African slaves. Unlike the African slaves however, the French peasants were subsequently absorbed into the French racial tapestry following the revolution. Liberty, equality and fraternity were the watchwords of the French revolution, but only for white French people, not for their Black African and Caribbean slaves.

The Soviet Revolution contained within it similar expressions of the virulence of the European psychosis. In spite of proletarian platitudes of comradeship with people of colour, the harsh expression of racism by Soviet people to blacks at home and abroad has often been reported. Numerous examples of white on white racism insert themselves into the psychohistoriographic analysis but receive the same analysis and treatment. The English attempt to subjugate the Irish, and more recently the Serb genocide against the ethnic Albanians serve as other examples.

In this regard, we must not forget the atrocities and the mental suffering of the Jewish holocaust in Nazi Germany in the twentieth century. Again, this is another example of white on white racism within the context of the European delusional system. But as with the other examples of white on white racism, once the problem has been resolved with the oppressor, the victims of this type of racism become the perpetrators of an even more virulent form of racism against Black people. The behavior of the Jewish State of Israel to the Palestinian people in the latter half of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century illustrates this complicity with the European madness.

### **9. Independence from the Empire: “gimmie back mi lan” (circa 1955)**

Emancipation represented the first watershed defeat of the European psychosis and its retreat into its new form of colonialism. The independence period in the decades of the 1950's and 1960's represents the next major historical defeat of this psychopathology, the dissolution of the “empire” and the birth of the next phase, now known as neo-colonialism and subsequently as globalization.

Crippling racism was experienced by the soldiers of colour from India, Africa, the Caribbean and America who fought for the west in the trenches against the Kaiser in the First European War. The racism that was meted out by their colonial masters acted as a catalyst for revolutionary anti-colonial fervour on their return home. By the early 1930's, political discontent and rebellion were springing up all around the British, Spanish and French empires. By the end of the Second European War, the colonized people of the Caribbean, India and Africa had pushed Europe against the wall and forced the political break-up of their empires and the creation of politically independent nation-states.

Once again the racist psychosis had been confronted, had been pushed against the wall by the struggles of Black people around the world. Once again the most virulent elements of the delusion were pushed back and encapsulated. Once again the resultant compromise with Europe allowed the psychosis to survive in exchange for major political concessions to the people of colour. However, the fundamental mainstay of the psychopathological European social system, the economic control of the resources of their former colonies, remained intact. The European psychosis metamorphosed and survived, to reform itself again. With each defeat, more of the psychosis was forced to encapsulate while the struggle for survival of the remnants of the delusion became more desperate.

#### **10. Defeat of Apartheid: The African Renaissance (circa 1993)**

The thirty-year period from 1960 to 1990 saw the turbulent realignment of political and strategic forces around the world as the European psychosis was pushed back and forced to encapsulate further. The Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America forced the ruling centre of the European psychosis to check its more virulent elements. The escalation of racial tension in the United Kingdom forced the “mother” of the European psychosis to admit that institutional racism was alive and well in Britain. The recent McPherson Report which looked into the death of African Caribbean teenager Stephen Lawrence, substantiates the numerous previous reports of racism by the police force in Britain. Most blacks living in Britain know, as a daily reality, that race is the basis of social barriers that are endemic in modern British society. The perception of many black people living in the UK (challenging the postmodern orthodoxy), is the presence of a pervasive racist conspiracy which riddles British society and makes the daily living for most black people in Britain a living hell.

The stupendous victory of the African people against Afrikaner Apartheid System in South Africa is seen by some as being nothing short of a miracle. The victory represented decades of struggle and courageous valour by the African masses in the face of the most vicious expression of the European psychosis witnessed on earth. The fact that this virulent form of the European psychopathology was allowed to flourish by the rest of the western world reflects a paradox. Even in the face of significant encapsulation of the white delusional system around the globe, evidenced by emancipation and the independence movements, bizarre, grandiose delusions and psychotic thoughts were allowed to flourish in a raw and unexpurgated form in apartheid South Africa, in many respects nurtured by the west. The victory over apartheid in 1993 represents the next major world historical victory against the European psychosis, and has itself given birth to the fledgling epiphany of the African Renaissance.

Jamaican African visionary leader Marcus Mosiah Garvey articulated the concept of Pan-Africanism at the turn of the twentieth century. His newspaper *The Negro World* was translated into 25 languages, and long before the telephone or the Internet, was being read and studied by African people in every corner of the globe. In 1945, at the 1st Pan-African Conference held in

Manchester, England, the vision of that movement was given flesh by the African Founding Fathers. Ghanaian African Kwame Nkrumah, Kenyan African Jomo Kenyata, Trinidadian African George Padmore and American African William E B Dubois, and Peter Abrahams, a South African who was later exiled in Jamaica, were the major players.

By 1963, the Organization of African Unity came into being at the Founding Conference held in Addis Ababa. Soon after that conference H.I.M. Emperor Haile Sellasie gave his famous address to the United Nations in California on Feb. 28 1968, which has been immortalized by the song of Bob Marley "War":

*Until the philosophy which holds one race superior and  
another inferior is finally and permanently  
discredited and abandoned...*

*everywhere is war  
mi sey war...*

*we Africans will fight we find it necessary  
we know that we shall win, as we are confident in the  
victory of good over evil*

The relentless battle of people of colour against delusional European racism in this historical period was undoubtedly the cause of the eventual defeat of the Afrikaner Apartheid system in South Africa. The recent declaration of the formation of the African Union in July 2002, fashioned on the European Union represents the most recent advance of this encapsulation process. From the perspective of psychohistoriographic analysis this victory represents the latest in the escalating historical negation of the European racist delusional system. As with the other watershed periods described, the victory was not final, was not complete, but represented a compromise formulation with the European delusion. The victory forced a further negation of the delusion, placing political power in the hands of the African masses, but still leaving the ownership of the commanding heights of the economy in the hands of the Whites.

It is very simple for the seasoned observer, the insightful historian, the grounded psychologist to recognize the similar components of institutionalized racism, whether it exists in postcolonial Jamaica, the deep southern United States, in Stephen Lawrence's Britain or in post apartheid South Africa. White people still own the commanding heights of the economy, and blacks are forced to scrape out a meager survival in a social reality that relegates them to an economic second class. Even in the countries where Blacks are in the majority and are in political control of the society, the tangible elements of the racist delusional system still control the reality for black people.

From the perspective of this analysis, the insights gained have revealed that the birth of the capitalist economic system represented a psychopathological manifestation of the insane European social system. The surplus generated by theft, exploitation and slavery imposed by this

lunacy has formed the material basis for the birth and growth of the capitalist economic system and has left Black people with a Catch 22 situation. Without control of the commanding heights of the economy, black people are destined to eke out an existence in the ghettos of the canefields and the copper mines, in the inner cities and the townships.

The profound importance of the insight that the capitalist system is a psychopathological mushroom of European madness being imposed on the rest of the world will be of the greatest importance in our consideration of the African Renaissance. The psychohistoriographic analysis predicts that the next watershed points in human history must confront this lunatic economic construction. In Thabo Mbeki's words, ". . .we are subjected to the strange situation that the process of the further reproduction of wealth by the countries of the North has led to poverty in the countries of the South". Without the confrontation and defeat of this capitalistic madness there can be no African Renaissance, and the historic defeats of the past will simply have dashed the struggles of the African people at home and abroad against the treacherous reefs of European psychopathology. But the compelling and relentless defeats of the European delusional system provide a historic comfort that human life on this globe will not tolerate the continued existence of this lunacy.

### ***The African Renaissance and Mental Health***

Many will find the perception of racism in this account as a reduction to the level of psychopathology, and will consider this to be problematic. However, this is the essence of this analysis, and is the principal insight from the process of psychohistoriography. No doubt this perception will challenge thinkers from Africa and elsewhere, and will at the very least be controversial. Few can deny however, that much of the time and resources of the world for the second half of the millennium have been devoted to the irrational European desire to own the world.

The greatest challenge to the mental pathology of European colonialism and enslavement has come from black popular revolt. Stuart Hall and his colleagues have picked up the psychic challenge of the black revolt of the period, and begun to articulate the intellectual and philosophical challenge to postmodernism. The western dominated paradigm of postmodernism assumes the ability to explain all and to apply meaning to peoples of all cultures in a unitary way. Hall has posited the antithetical construct to postmodernism, which has become known as post colonialism. Postcolonial theory describes how the processes of colonization and decolonization have been indelibly branded within the cultures of the colonizers as well as within those of the colonized, thus displacing the "story" of capitalist modernity from its European centering to its dispersed global peripheries; from peaceful evolution to imposed violence; redirecting the focus of the transition from feudalism to capitalism and replacing this with the formation of a world market controlled essentially by Europe.

Most importantly, Hall and his colleagues have constructed an intellectual and philosophical

platform in Britain for black people to redefine issues of their own mental health. It is hard to comprehend how European society successfully renders people with black skins 'invisible'. Melba Wilson argues that " In mental health terms, the invisibility engendered by the image, when combined with the overall tendency to portray people with mental health problems outside the bounds of normality compound the disadvantage experienced by black people in both the mental health and criminal justice systems". The stereotypical images of black men as violent rapists, black people as lazy and unproductive, and black families as unstable and pathological are clearly rooted in the experience of racism

At a recent conference on Pan African Mental Health held in Dakar in Senegal in April 2000 a call was made for the establishment of a Pan African Association of Mental Health Professionals. Such an Association would certainly facilitate a blueprint for mental health in the African Diaspora. I suggest that the blueprint should include the following elements:

1. A vehicle for African Unity across the Diaspora
2. Development of psychological processes designed for the negation of the effects of racism and colonization in people of colour in the Diaspora.
3. The training of culturally sensitive mental health workers for every community of black people in the African Diaspora
4. The creation of community based mental health services across the African Diaspora
5. The deinstitutionalization of European colonial custodial mental hospitals in the African Diaspora.
6. The establishment of rehabilitation facilities across the Diaspora that places work as therapy and the use of art, dance, music and drama as the vehicles for African mental health
7. The use of evidence-based mental health methodologies for Africans at home and abroad

Perhaps the most important mental health imperative for African people in the world today is to find strategies for navigating capitalism, and the encapsulation of the European psychosis. African people have as much right as any ethnic group to be in all parts of the world and to claim ownership of the world community which we have helped to build by our labour and our blood. Once there are white Africans, there will certainly be black Europeans. Our navigation maps must include creating safe places where African people can be culturally safe and secure. We must restore the driving ambition of our people, which has tended to be erased by this pervasive delusional system. We have to continue our process of stepping out of being the underclass and being our own masters as we create economic wealth across the globe, which will teach us how to live with ourselves in a harmonious and unified way.

This must be the focus and the vision for all black people - The Unity of Africans at Home and Abroad!