

### **Biko Agozino's Criminology as Lovemaking: An Africa Centered Theory of Justice (Summary and Response)**

In "Criminology as Lovemaking: An Africa Centered Theory of Justice," Agozino investigates the role of love in criminal justice and law by unearthing old and new philosophies of justice to expose how various philosophical traditions avoid love in their attempt to devise a solution to the shaky groundwork of justice, which is solely based on the rationality, authority, and truth but it lacks love. Agozino does this investigation in the form of Platonian philosophical dialogue between two fictional characters- JJ, a businessman who perished searching for universal justice through the nature of crime, not love and IA, a Nigerian feminist theorist (Agozino, 2005, p. 4).

The dialogue starts with the entrance of JJ's spirit at IA's dinner table and she invites him over to join her. The two characters discourse about the role of love in justice. Rather than viewing criminology as a hate-driven system of revenge and punishment, IA examines criminology as a theory and methods of generating love among people in multicultural societies, to educate JJ about universal love. IA believes that justice cannot exist without love, and with its absence, law would be empty of justice and be merely domination (Agozino, 2005, p. 6). IA discloses how love would make a difference in the lives of inmates, as well as help them in their fight against continued institutionalization by the criminal justice system because learning to love one another would eliminate self-hatred that exists in them. However, JJ maintains that rather than love, law and justice must be based on nature because love is arbitrary, and it takes self into consideration, as a result this would create unsound judgment (Agozino, 2005, p. 7). In response to this, IA claims that this crisis of seeing love as a weakness is rooted in the Western social theory. For instance, Plato doesn't call upon men to love one another and for him the greatest love is the love of pure beauty, which is similar to the pursuit of fame or immortality, and his rejection of love as a method of making men whole, shows his idea of social disunity, and therefore, what he aims is not love but respect (Agozino, 2005, p. 7). Moreover, Plato and others partially replicated the legal system of ancient Egypt, whilst disregarding its basis on universal love. Ancient Egyptians judicial system was built on love but the ancient Greeks preferred to restrain love because they viewed love as erotic love, dismissing the love of justice and the love in justice which the Egyptians observed as natural and holy (Agozino, 2005, p. 14). Contrary to Egyptians, the current Christian love is often otherworldly. Even thousands of years before the Greek City States arrived, the notion of 'you should love your neighbor' was already created by ancient Africans and they believed everybody was created by one God and therefore, one shouldn't judge people from differing cities as foes (Agozino, 2005, p. 12). In order to see progress in the world today, IA recommends the restoration of the love of knowledge and the knowledge of love in our study of *Mythos, Logos, Physis, Nomos and Eros* (Agozino, 2005, p. 14). IA further highlights that the focus on the unity of love and justice is extremely crucial beyond the family considering it is something that everybody should advocate for the global family.

The author argues that the general characteristics of all crimes represents imperialism (Agozino, 2005, p. 19). For him, the commonality that is found in all crimes is the desire of

conquering the spaces of others and colonizing them. For example, when adults abuse children, when pick-pockets invade, when rapists attack, when countries invade other countries, they are all involved in invading another people's space (Agozino, 2005, p. 19).

I do agree with Agozino about the nature of these crimes portraying imperialism, which I know is the practice with which one extends their power and control by invading space. All the crimes mentioned above encroach on people's space. However, what about other crimes that involve no physical contact such as cybercrimes or those white-collar crimes which are non-violent crimes. When Agozino says all crimes, does it include newer crimes/cybercrimes arose from the expansion of technology and globalization or the white-collar crimes? Do these crimes invade another people's space? What about other Western or American ideologies such as individualism? Individualism emphasizes the demands of individuals over the demands of a group as a whole. Then can we say such ideology also symbolizes crimes? When you follow such cultural beliefs (individualism), you give importance to yourself or you put yourself first and not others and such belief has the potential to hinder oneself from seeing the importance of helping others. As a result, it becomes easier to invade space/commit crimes, since you don't care about others. This behavior goes against ancient African's idea of love for your neighbor. Since both Imperialism and Individualism is rooted in American culture then can we say that the culture itself is flawed?

Agozino further talks about how love can play an important part in resolving the issues of crime and social order because true lovers are usually not regarded as invaders or colonizers. American society, which is founded on imperialism and has conquered many territories throughout history. Does it indicate America is not a true lover? Agozino proposes an African theory of justice, which acknowledges the common humanity of us all, as well as seeks to decolonize interpersonal and inter-group relationships by instructing them on love rather than conquest (Agozino, 2005, p. 19). I think that love would be a great solution to eliminating or minimizing crimes or invading other people's space because emotions are more powerful than hate. I think the effectiveness of love can be more visible on an individual level, but what about on the institutional level? Will love be effective enough to annihilate imperialism from American society which they have been practicing since the founding of their nation?

Western philosophers have left out the most important element in devising a solution for the shaky foundation of justice or their legal system, which is universal love or the ancient African notion of "you should love your neighbor". Because of the absence of love in Western legal system, its nation is in chaos. For example, US prisons are overflowing with criminals and this not only reveals the mayhem that exist in its criminal justice system, but also the fact that their approach in maintaining order is ineffective, therefore, requiring some alterations. Such a justice system can be fixed with love instead of conquest/imperialism. Teaching people to love their neighbors can prevent them from committing criminal conducts. Especially, love is required in the prison system because when prisoners don't recuperate properly, they find it hard to reintegrate back into society after their release. As a result, they are more likely to commit crime again. It is crucial that love be introduced in the justice system through reentry programs that focus on love and neighborhood. An example of reentry program which incorporates love would be to engage offender's families in reentry.

Through the love and care from their family members, the prisoners can become true lovers. Just as Agozino mentions, true lovers are not invaders and colonizers, this means that when criminals become true lovers they are less likely to commit crime, thereby maintaining the order in a nation or the world.