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*...I bet your nanny never told you  
criminologists have poo-poo theory in short,  
they talk about punishment of offenders,  
how about the punishment of the innocent?  
Punishment of Offenders - BPOO!  
Punishment of the Innocent - BPOTI!... (Pg. 114)*

In *Counter-Colonial Criminology: A Critique of Imperialist Reason*, Biko Agozino draws the reader's attention to criminology of state crimes, one that includes the crimes of imperialism. He formulates the proposition that all crimes, wrongs, and injustices may sprout from the sins of imperialism. He insists that all individuals, social classes, gender groups, and racial and ethnic categories are capable of colonizing the private or collective spaces of others.

Unquestionably, professor Agozino has produced a dazzling body of scholarly work that will fertilize a lasting interest and sustainability of the development of African criminology. This significant work not only challenges mainstream criminology to escape from its colonial past, but in our view, challenges other scholars with varying domain assumptions to decolonize colonial criminology. Indeed, Agozino denounces the current methods and theoretical approaches of traditional criminology by insisting that the study of criminology include the punishment of the innocent (POI) along with the punishment of the offender (POO). These ideas were pioneered in his earlier work, *Black Women and the Criminal Justice System*, which was published by the Ashgate Publishing Company in 1998.

Although in that composition Agozino focused on the injustices that black women faced in England and America at each of the law enforcement, correctional, and judicial levels, in his present outstanding work, he extends his ingenious theory to include the behaviors of colonial oppressors in the former colonial societies. He cautions the nascent disciplines of academic criminology in Third World countries to resist the temptation of relying on the already established Western brands of criminology, which have higher, uncontrolled crime rates and little to offer that will benefit the criminology of indigenous people. Professor Agozino aptly recognizes that imperialistic countries have dominated, victimized, and oppressed the inhabitants of their colonies, and have also refused to acknowledge those crimes. It is within the parameters of this perspective that he developed the premise for this book.

Agozino makes a clarion call and demonstrates in his scholarly work a thorough knowledge of the traditional and modern aspects of the discipline of criminology and its implications for Africa. Indeed, Agozino not only summarizes the thesis of criminology, he provides a rich literature for further research by scholars interested in unmasking colonial criminology. We must also stress that this book provides an understanding of

the history and development of criminological assumptions—among them the various areas of Marxism, left realism, phenomenology, labeling, realism, critical criminology, and left idealism—by pointing out that they are sadly deficient in their advancement of criminological theory. By focusing, mainly, on predatory offenses committed by the poor, or the so-called members of the “dangerous” class, and without placing similar emphasis on the crimes of the powerful and the state, which are most often more dreadful, vicious, and expensive, the author appropriately reveals that both traditional and non-conventional perspectives have approached the subject of crime from narrow points of view.

The book maintains that Marxist scholars, championed by conflict, radical, and critical theorists, have failed to hold the state culpable for the widespread punishment of the innocent by different imperialist countries. Agozino reminds us that Edwin Sutherland may have been the first to instigate a desire of examining white-collar crime. However, he failed to include the heinous offenses and crimes of colonialism.

Though he does not always clearly enunciate how it is to be accomplished, Agozino calls on the masses to begin to punish the state for its crimes and to not let the punishment for crimes be solely the prerogative of the state against individuals. Not only were African nations colonized, the African Academe itself is a product of Euro invasion. One African leader and scholar once opined that the African child was educated away from his own history and geography. Indeed, Africans knew more about European culture, history, and geography than they did about their own. Therefore, Agozino was right in pointing out this scenario is his present work. According to him, even within the field of feminist criminology, black feminist criminology should be part of this discussion, because, in reality, they were similarly colonized, marginalized, and victimized like women from their African historical past.

In addition, the author succinctly contends that the realms of African literature, art, and music have been more committed to pointing out state offenses than have conventional criminology. Also, Agozino alludes to the artists who have been the dedicated and outspoken voices against apartheid and colonialism. For instance, Peter Tosh, killed for his efforts, had been a critic and a victim of imperialism and neocolonialism, which he criticized through the venue of his musical art. Others have used literature, poetry, and the stage to decry the crimes of the state. Agozino calls on criminologists to join them and to abide by the tenets of committed objectivity in the search for principles of justice. His scrutiny challenges social scientists to be unbiased, and at the same time, be unswerving to social change. Social scientists’ endeavors do not rest on the pursuit of truth, but rather, their quest is for the acquisition of understanding and for the application of that understanding to the goal of the enhancement of society. Passion, commitment, and objectivity need not be enemies.

In his conclusion, Agozino makes an appeal for the consideration of a decolonization model, which would enable criminologists to look at the world from a global perspective and from the standpoint of the punished innocent, not merely to study individuals who commit crimes. In this case, Agozino reminds his readers again about the need for criminology to focus on the crimes of the state, and not only on the economies of the indigenous populations. This approach, he argues, would include the total plundering of the human resources of the colonized. Indeed, we enthusiastically

recommend this groundbreaking research in African criminology, and urge all scholars interested in Africa and the Third World to read the book. We also recommend the text for undergraduate and graduate studies in criminology, sociology, Africana Studies, African American programs, and other facets of ethnic and multicultural programs. Undoubtedly, this book will energize scholars and encourage the publication of more works on African criminology and beyond.