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Braithwaite’s circle of restorative justice is presided over not by a prosecutor, but a convener who manages the process so as to assure all important issues are voiced. Indeed, his model is not all that radically different from juvenile courts, where judges often take an active role in shaping the process. And, interestingly enough, the terrible harshness of the criminal process—relatively speaking—has not extended so deeply into the juvenile justice system. It is unfortunate that this body of work that builds on long-standing insights into successful regulatory regimes and is so closely related to Barkow’s administrative concerns is not even mentioned let alone examined. Consider, also, that some trial judges have been marginally effective reformers of police departments and prisons and jails. One might ask, why can’t they apply some of these same skills at trying to change their own courthouses?

I have wandered far and wide in my review of Prisoners of Politics. This is because it is an important and provocative book. Barkow identifies an important problem, and in my view aims precisely in the right direction, towards a more regulatory-like criminal process. Like her, I think this is the new future for criminal court reform. However, a more historical perspective, attention to macrodevelopments, more attention to other actors, and a more expansive take on the regulatory process for the criminal process is probably necessary to tackle massive problems she has identified. Where is the field’s Max Weber?

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Reviewed by Caroline Fournet, Department of Criminal Law and Criminology, Faculty of Law, University of Groningen in Groningen, The Netherlands

The relationship between the International Criminal Court (ICC) and African States and/or defendants has not escaped academic scrutiny and a considerable amount of literature has been devoted to this topic, be it in the form of journal articles (Keppeler, 2012), blog texts (Akande, 2016) or monographs (Clark, 2018; Jalloh and Bantekas, 2017; Johnson and Karekwaivanane, 2018; Werle,
Fernandez and Vormbaum, 2014), including by Kamari Maxine Clarke herself (Clarke, 2009; Clarke, Knottnerus and de Volder, 2016). If Affective Justice thus joins the plethora of literature on the ICC and Africa, it undoubtedly adds to the existing works. Through a highly original approach that combines theories and empirical research, this book sheds new light on the complexities of this relationship. In Affective Justice—The International Criminal Court and the Pan-Africanist Pushback, Clarke innovatively explores the making of international criminal justice from the standpoint of affects and emotions and, in doing so, offers an unprecedented and indispensable theorization of international criminal justice which—after reading this book—can simply not be ignored any longer.

While, in the words of its author, the book “is about the strategies of international justice brokers and the sentimentalized imaginaries of many of the African interlocutors with whom [she] conducted [her] research” (xxiii), Affective Justice absolutely resists any sentimentalism in offering a thorough academic and scientific analysis—based on the author’s expertise and empirical research—of the relationship between the ICC and several African States. Going into the details of the different assemblages that, according to Clarke, frame contemporary international criminal justice would go far beyond the remit of this brief review, which will thus concentrate on some of the key concepts—borrowed from the nonlegal world—used by Clarke to dismantle and unveil (international criminal) law-making and which particularly stood out, perhaps because they are not usually contemplated within legal studies.

The first such concept is taken from psychoanalysis and is the Freudian notion of transference, which Clarke here uses to deconstruct and explain the deployment of affects and their strengthening through narratives of power (106). Affective transference allows her to identify the rhetorical practices—sometimes referred to as “frenzies” (110)—of both the detractors and the proponents of the role of the ICC in Africa and to qualify them as consolidators of power. These practices indeed aim at triggering emotions and at gathering crowds and affirming power. While language can of course be used to convince and unite, these rhetorical strategies are however not without risk and can drastically backfire. Such a backlash finds a striking illustration in the acquittal of Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo by the ICC in June 2018; an acquittal which stood in stark contrast to the words pronounced when he was arrested by the then ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo: “Mr. Bemba’s arrest is a warning to all those who commit, who encourage, or who tolerate sexual crimes. There is a new law called the Rome Statute. Under this new law, they will be prosecuted”
Clarke also turns to economics and marketing to detail the “symbolic construction of the ‘victim’ fetish” (114) which she notably develops within the context of the #BringBackOurGirlsCampaign (Chapter 3) by demonstrating how this hashtag campaign proceeded to the replacement of the victims’ bodies in a way that fitted the “contemporary capitalist logic” (120) and that ultimately “represent[ed] a fetishization of the ‘victim’” (127). The exploration of this campaign, admittedly triggered by humanitarianism and consideration for the victims, via a multiple lens that brings together economics, consumerism, advertising principles and aesthetics, is among the most thought-provoking features of Affective Justice and touches upon a very contemporary issue: the marketing of international criminal justice (Schwöbel-Patel, 2018). Clarke’s examination of how the celebrities who participated in this campaign substituted their own physical image to that of the actual victims reflects how the condemnation of mass atrocities has gradually become not only a Hollywood trend but perhaps also a Western trademark through the replacement—and thus appropriation—of the victims’ bodies by that of the advertising celebrities. Aside from the originality of the approach that links economics with mass violence condemnation and that focuses on the bodies of the victims, the real strength of Clarke’s demonstration is that it remains entirely academic and resists any activism or bias. The result is a truly intriguing chapter that will stay with the reader long after the book is closed.

Interestingly, and as a final remark, the body as a concept also appears—even if more discreetly—in the second part of Clarke’s book which focuses on the process of reattribution via which culpability is “renarrated” (Chapter 4) and “reinscribed onto other bodies, other motives, other actors” (164, emphasis added). In line with the rest of the book, Clarke here makes a compelling case showing how this shift and redirecting of culpability transcends the bodies of the actors to reshape guilt for atrocity crimes and is used to either contest or support the ICC’s work in Africa.

Affective Justice takes the reader through a journey in “the life of the law” (259) and the hope expressed by the author in her preface that “the book will contribute to the much needed development of an anthropology of international justice of the twenty-first century” (xxvii) is certainly realized. Affective Justice is definitely a must-read for anyone interested in understanding
international criminal justice, from its making of to its current—and perhaps future—developments.

References


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Reviewed by Gordon E. Harvey, Department of History, Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, AL.

Desegregation. Busing. Integration. School Choice. Court orders. Words that, to most people, summon thoughts of the American South and massive resistance to school desegregation in response to the 1954 Brown decision. Rarely does one think of San Francisco in association with desegregation. Yet, it was the first major