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Vos, Renske

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observation also helps explain the doggedness of serial litigator—and former lover of van Lynseele’s—Alexander Chaffers. He is an intriguing antagonist, a tenacious black-mailer of the Twisses motivated more by hatred than by money. Not only does he attempt to have van Lynseele deported but he continues to press his case while locked up in the poorhouse, even after both Twisses expire. Yet rather than understand Chaffers as obsessively deranged, we might perceive his unflagging vengeance as part of expansive personhood’s internal drama. That is to say, the kinds of performative rituals used to construct and defend van Lynseele’s status and personality as a noblewoman should not be seen as divided or disconnected from Chaffers’s compulsive hatred and desire for retribution. The flip side of ostentatious performances and required rituals of personhood is the threat and desire to expose and unmask, to reveal the supposed real thing or person behind the legal personality. If expansive personhood is a legal fiction, then part of the dynamic, part of the meaning of that person, is the constant desire to, and threat of, exposing the fiction, revealing the “true” self underneath.

Finally, the third major claim of Fitzmaurice’s book is methodological: “Micro-intellectual history takes relatively minute events, or microcosms, and uses them to open up greater questions about history” (24). Focusing on van Lynseele’s metamorphosis into a European noblewoman permits us to “ask questions about transformation of persons, natural and artificial. . . and. . . shed light upon the role played by transformation in Victorian culture and political thought” (25). Potential connections that were not previously apparent become so, such as the development of aspects of international law from ecclesiastical marriage law. This method also opens up potential connections to other related moments of micro-history and corrupt ideas.

The book’s micro-historical method also suggests that aesthetic forms—paintings, poems, novels, plays, and so on—must be folded into the exploration of cultural transformations: Ovid’s Pygmalion myth was part of the texture of personhood discussions during this period. The tale’s motifs appear throughout *King Leopold’s Ghostwriter*, via Charles Dickens’s fiction, the novelization of the Twiss story by Joseph Hatten, and paintings by Ernest Normand and Edwin Landseer. Art too often plays an illustrative or handmaiden role to official history, micro or macro. But as Fitzmaurice’s invocation of the Ovid story reveals, aesthetic creation belongs more centrally to the story of personhood. In this splendid intellectual history and biography, we start to see why.

Lisa Siraganian

Johns Hopkins University

Imagining the International: Crime, Justice, and the Promise of Community

By Nesam McMillan. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2020.

224 pp. \$26.00 (paperback). ISBN: 9781503612815

“What does [] internationality signify?” (10) is the question Nesam McMillan asks when zeroing in on ideas of international crime and international justice. It is exemplary of her sustained commitment in *Imagining the International* to asking the different question. In

this way, she dissects the “commonplace” notion that “certain events and categories of harm are of broader, global significance” (1). She poses questions not so much to ask what harms should be of concern or how justice is done, but to interrogate “the special global *position* of international crime itself as social, political, historical, and cultural construction” (68) and to examine how the category of the international is constitutively imagined, and at what cost.

The neat analysis in this slim volume is grounded firmly in the rich, critical scholarship on international criminal law. Yet perhaps more strikingly, the book is also part of and foreshadows a currently (re)emerging interest in the imagination in international (criminal) law (see, for instance, work by Alison Young, Gerry Simpson, Mark Drumbl). The book’s contribution to the development of that interest is to concretize study of imagination, as well as to show how it can produce certain relations and valorizations. McMillan demonstrates how the international is imagined as “elsewhere, relating to others; and beyond politics, culture, and history” (130), and she shows how this imagined international informs ideas of international crime and justice. According to McMillan, ideas of international crime and justice do not only conjure up images of criminal activity, violations of human rights, and mass harm, but also call up images of a collective response to such problems in return. Thus, the international “is a space in which the suffering of some—women, children, and African people and communities, to name a few—is drawn upon as a means of and motivation for imagining an international community and an international crimino-legal sphere” (38).

To ground her approach to imagination, McMillan focuses on space. Building on the work of notably Doreen Massey, this move opens up a number of lines of inquiry, which underlie the subsequent analysis of the book. For instance, McMillan points out how moments of great suffering weave together a landscape through which the imagination of members of an international community moves. As international events, these moments locate and orient the imagination of this international community. McMillan also discusses how the imagination works with regard to the distinction between local crime and international justice, as the space between them implies distance and a difference of scale. She then goes on to problematize these implications.

The analysis in the book is pursued through three case studies of internationalization, international crime, and international justice. The recurring critique is that how the international is imagined disconnects it from the everyday (121). International justice is seen to be carried out by those who are “constitutively external and other” to those who suffer harm (121). Moreover, this harm is spectacularized to such a point that it becomes difficult to relate both to the suffering itself, as well as to the lives and agency of those who experience it. In addition, when serious harms are identified as international crimes, an element of hierarchy is introduced. Events are removed from the level of local concern to be located on the level of international interest. McMillan notes how this appropriation is disconcertingly resonant with colonial modes of imagining and dividing up the world (127).

The first case study in the book interrogates “Rwanda.” The scare quotes are used to indicate how the 1994 Rwandan genocide has become “shorthand” for “international failure” (40). As has been argued by James Dawes, Mahmood Mamdani, and others, on the global stage “Rwanda” is “a site for the West to imagine and visualize itself as the

moral, global savior it failed to be” (54). The internationalization of “Rwanda” entails an appropriation in which events come to signify the feelings of Western bystanders over the historical experience of Rwandans. McMillan thus shows how “[t]he Rwandan genocide becomes international due to its implications for non-Rwandans” (59). All the while, the actual “suffering of the Rwandan Tutsis remains the missing referent” (56).

The second case study traces how international crime is conceptualized in the reports of the International Law Commission. McMillan uses the concept of scale and related concerns of size, height, and hierarchy to enquire into how this “special” and “unusual” type of criminalized harm is constitutively imagined through the Commission’s work (69). Scale figures in the “extreme seriousness” and “mass nature” of the crime (68). Enhancing the problematic idea of distance, the move from national occurrence to international crime is imagined as a scaling up to something higher-up and larger. McMillan argues that “[s]calar conceptions of international crime are implicated in the spectacularizing, hierarchization, and generalization of international crime, and they serve to create relational distance between people and communities who experience harm and others” (73).

The third and final case study explores the idea of international criminal justice. It shows this idea as curiously yet powerfully underdefined. Indeed, it is mostly defined by what it is not; international justice is most importantly not local or national. This positioning introduces the idea of “contrast” (90). By contrast to international justice, national justice is claimed to lack “legitimacy, impartiality and independence” (100). Thus, according to McMillan, “[t]he very need for the ICC’s existence is established through an image of national lack and failure” (98).) Far removed from and in stark contrast to the everyday national failings, international justice thus comes to be viewed by contrast as the “gold-standard” (96).

We come here to the core of McMillan’s critique: that as it is imagined international criminal justice results in “a form of purportedly international justice that is constitutively divorced from local realities, peoples, and concerns” (114). In other words, current modes of imagining the international “serve to create distance between international criminal justice and life as it is lived,” notably by those “most directly affected by international crime” (91). In separating the idea of the international from ordinary life, international justice emerges as a form of authorless, transcendent justice beyond reproach. Such an ideal is both artificial and undesirable (91).

Is there then any promise in imagining the international, as the book’s subtitle suggests? The critique in this book “is not one I expected to make when I started this research” (8) McMillan states at the outset. Yet the hope is that the critique might help us reimagine socio-political, cultural and geographical relations (114). If there is promise then, it is in unsettling the ideal of international criminal justice to provide the space to imagine it anew as grounded nationally and internationally in peoples’ lives as they are lived (91, 111).

Renske Vos

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands