
LITERATURBERICHT | REVIEW ARTICLE

German-African Entangled Histories¹

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Ten years ago, Olaf Kaltmeier, Ulrike Lindner, and Angelika Epple convened a workshop on “*Entangled Histories: Reflecting on Coloniality and Postcoloniality*” at the University of Bielefeld (29 May 2010). One year later, an issue of *Comparativ*, based on this workshop, made a case for entangled histories of colonialism and postcoloniality.² This tenth anniversary seems a good occasion to look back and to assess entangled histories of colonialism published in Germany over the past couple of years. I leave it in the middle in how far this workshop and journal issue triggered the practicing of entangled histories of colonialism in Germany or rather signalled it, but either way, it marked a turning point in how colonial history is dealt with in German academia.

The issue contained six research articles dealing with coloniality and postcoloniality in Latin America, South Asia and Africa. After a comparative conceptualization of coloniality and postcoloniality on the three continents, more than half of the remaining

1 Review of the following titles:

Dörte Lerp: *Imperiale Grenzräume. Bevölkerungspolitiken in Deutsch-Südwestafrika und den östlichen Provinzen Preußens 1884–1914*, Frankfurt am Main: Campus 2016, 340 p.; Manuela Bauche: *Medizin und Herrschaft. Malaria bekämpfung in Kamerun, Ostafrika und Ostfriesland 1890–1919*, Frankfurt am Main: Campus 2017, 390 p.; Albert Gouaffo/Stefanie Michels (eds.): *Koloniale Verbindungen – transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien. Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns*, Bielefeld: transcript 2019, 243 p.

2 A. Epple/O. Kaltmeier/U. Lindner (eds.), *Entangled Histories: Reflecting on Concepts of Coloniality and Postcoloniality*, Leipzig 2011 (= *Comparativ* 21 [2011], 1).

contributions dealt with Africa. Out of eight authors, seven were Germans affiliated to German-language universities and one was from Sri Lanka and worked in the Netherlands. Given this combined German and African focus, this review article is also primarily concerned with German-African entangled histories of colonialism and postcoloniality, giving passing attention to a few entangled histories having no direct link to Africa. Practicing entangled histories of colonialism between Africa and Europe myself, I have met most of the people who were involved back then. However, at the time, I missed it completely. One month before the workshop, I had moved to Leipzig from Belgium, a country not less affected by colonialism and colonial history than Germany. I did not yet have a clue what was on the agenda of German colonial historiography. As much as the German move towards entangled history was shaped in a German historiographical context, my own trajectory had been an emancipation from a national starting point as well. In more than one regard, the move towards entangled history departs from domestic perspectives, as will be further demonstrated in the remainder of this review article. What is meant by entangled history of colonialism, though, needs to be addressed first. In the introduction to the aforementioned *Comparativ* issue, Epple and Lindner emphasize entanglements between motherlands and colonies (spaces) and between colonizers and colonized (people). They also highlight the possibility of comparison by looking at various regions and different empires. And they take the question to a meta-level by referring to different conceptualizations of coloniality, postcoloniality, and the entanglements between them. It is not fully clear if entanglement is understood as a one-on-one translation of the German “Verflechtung” (interwovenness, intertwinement) or if they also hint at the English subtext of being enmeshed/convoluted/warped. Either way, entanglements of spaces and of people, entanglement as enhanced comparison, and conceptual entanglements provide a stimulating range of paths towards histories of colonialism that overcome national or imperial containers.

This call for entangled histories of coloniality and postcoloniality could build on manifold inspiring publications in the first decade of the century, making a plea for transnational approaches, for global histories of imperialism, or for postcolonial reflections on Europe’s colonial entanglements. Limiting this brief overview to initiatives with a German connection, Jürgen Zimmerer had drawn the line from colonial genocide to Holocaust,³ Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel edited a volume on imperial Germany in a global context,⁴ Frank Hadler and Matthias Middell edited a *Comparativ* issue calling for a transnational entangled history of East Central Europe,⁵ and Shalini

3 E.g. J. Zimmerer, “Colonial Genocide and the Holocaust. Towards an Archaeology of Genocide”, in: *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, ed. by A. Dirk Moses, New York 2004, pp. 49–76. Also see his 2011 monograph: J. Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust*, Münster 2011.

4 S. Conrad/J. Osterhammel (eds.), *Das Kaiserreich transnational. Deutschland in der Welt 1871–1914*, Göttingen 2006.

5 F. Hadler/M. Middell (eds.), *Verflochtene Geschichten: Ostmitteleuropa*. Leipzig 2010 (= *Comparativ* 20 [2010] 1/2).

Randeria, on one occasion together with Sebastian Conrad, promoted postcolonial perspectives in order to come to shared histories.⁶ However, the combination of entanglement, colonial history and a postcolonial approach sets the 2010/11 call by Kaltmeier, Lindner, and Epple apart from the invaluable examples set before.

Since, several research projects have been initiated at German universities, tackling the challenge of producing an entangled history of colonialism, primarily between Germany and Africa. Admittedly, this way of phrasing it (Germany versus Africa) gives a wrong impression of the individual books under scrutiny in this review article. None of them juxtaposes Germany as a whole with Africa as a continent, nor do they take Germany as unit of analysis. Notwithstanding, a German part of the equation and an African part of the equation is what they do have in common, even if the cases at hand are always spatially more specific, focusing on specific regions, towns, border zones. The spatial precision appears to be as characteristic for entangled histories as the above-mentioned departing from a particular domestic frame of reference, a frame that is not abandoned but complemented, juxtaposed and intertwined with other frames. Entangled history, thus, seems to be a way to escape methodological nationalism, without cutting the ties with a national heritage, or more precisely, it is a way to come to terms with laden aspects of this heritage, by reframing them in their enmeshed, convoluted, warped entanglements beyond the deceivingly neat national cocoon.

In the remainder of this review article, I mainly discuss two monographs and one edited volume, based on the questions (1) how they employ entangled history, and (2) how they address (post)coloniality. Besides, I give passing attention to a few publications, cooperations and expositions, which touch upon at least one dimension of German-African entangled histories of colonialism.

1. Imperial Frontier Zones

Dörte Lerp's *Imperiale Grenzräume: Bevölkerungspolitiken in Deutsch-Südwestafrika und den östlichen Provinzen Preußens 1884–1914*⁷ juxtaposes German policies of space and population control in Prussia's eastern provinces (today in Poland) and in German South West Africa (today Namibia) in the three decades before the First World War (although the final chapter also addresses labour and mobility in and out of Prussia's eastern provinces during the war). Spaces, central actors (people), and comparison are three organiz-

6 S. Randeria, "Geteilte Geschichte und verwobene Moderne", in: J. Rüsen/H. Leitgeb/N. Jegelka (eds.), *Zukunftsentwürfe. Ideen für eine Kultur der Veränderung*, Frankfurt am Main 2000, pp. 87–96; S. Conrad/S. Randeria (eds.), *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 2002, especially the introduction: S. Conrad/S. Randeria, "Einleitung: Geteilte Geschichten – Europa in einer postkolonialen Welt", pp. 9–49.

7 For a review of this book, which does not assess it as a German-African entangled history, see M. Hedrich: Rezension zu: Lerp, Dörte: *Imperiale Grenzräume. Bevölkerungspolitiken in Deutsch-Südwestafrika und den östlichen Provinzen Preußens 1884–1914*. Frankfurt am Main 2016, in: H-Soz-Kult, 09.06.2017, <www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/reb-23520>.

ing principles of the book, which are reminiscent of the above-mentioned paths towards entangled histories of colonialism.

Concerning *space*, Lerp investigates how practices of rule ordered space and how territorial population policies were grafted upon these spatial orders. The decisive spatial instrument of control in her analysis is “Grenzraum”, which plays with the ambiguity between “zonal frontiers” and “clear-cut boundaries” (p. 42, drawing on Johannes Paulmann). “Grenzraum” can either refer to a spatial policy of expansion and occupation or to separation and exclusion, it can refer to an area of labour recruitment and settlement or to checkpoints and procedures of containment, and it can be applied on the territorial scale of nation state or empire or on the level of urban planning and segregation. These deliberate ambiguities are reflected in the book structure, which (after an introduction and a historical background chapter) is divided into four parts: (1) “Grenzziehungen” (drawing the boundaries/frontiers), (2) “Siedlungskolonialismus” (on colonial settlement within Europe and overseas), (3) “Die geteilte Stadt” (the segregated city), and (4) “Entgrenzung” (on expansion and migration).

The entry-point to this research are practices of rule (“Herrschaftspraxen”), or more precisely population policies, which the author seeks to reconstruct through a combination of an actor-oriented approach and scrutinizing legislation and implementation. The difference in treatment between the African and the German parts of this entangled history becomes most apparent in the presentation of the central actors (*people*), their relations and associations, and their influence on regulation and implementation. For the Prussian policies in the East, we get to know the most active and influential lobbyists, their initiatives and their contentions, their successes and tenacity, and even in some cases the evolution of their positions over time. Geographical and German-nationalist circles predominate in the analysis, yet the reconstruction of their actions allows the author to present the eventual legislation and its implementation as the outcome of networking, lobbying and mobilization by central actors. For the imperial policies in German South West Africa, the reconstruction of population policies and spatial ordering primarily depends on the legislation (see for instance p. 105) and on sparse reports by colonial officers (see for instance p. 195). Certainly, this is due to a profoundly different source base, but it does result in a book containing considerably more detail and more nuance on German colonialism in Poland than on German colonialism in Namibia. Notwithstanding, both Namibian and Polish people remain anonymous masses, and the same is true for the German settlers in both frontier zones. Nevertheless, the author consistently analyses Prussian policies in the East at par with German policies in Africa, i.e. as colonialism in both cases. The focus on a specific domain (population policies) and on well chosen spaces (imperial frontiers/border zones) in both the European and the African part of the German empire qualifies this study as an entangled history of colonialism, although one can question if we observe European-African entanglements or rather inner-German national-imperial ones.

The author does not call her research an entangled history but positions it at the intersection of *comparative* history and history of transfers. In the historical background

chapter, she juxtaposes the division of Poland with the scramble for Africa. Throughout the four main chapters of the book, she consistently poses the same questions, addresses the same problems, follows the same heuristic logic for both cases. Obviously, she is not to blame that the sources do not allow to tackle the questions and problems in the same way. Searching the same thing does not automatically result in finding the same thing. The author admits that she hardly found direct transfers between both cases, neither between people nor between spaces. However, she did uncover revealing parallels, shared thoughts, and to a lesser extent relevant differences (e.g. resistance against too many Polish workers in the German heartlands versus a desire to mobilize as many African workers as possible throughout the African colonies). She, thus, established similarities rather than connections between East Central Europe and South West Africa. The few connections that did appear were mainly between colonial contexts in Africa.

Zooming in on the individual chapters, we see a wide range of policies aimed at controlling people and space. In the chapter on bordering ("3. Grenzziehungen"), the author scrutinizes the trade-off between control of migration and mobilization of labour, primarily concerning the Polish provinces of Prussia. Applying the same reading grid to German South West Africa, she comes to the convincing interpretation that the genocide on Herero and Nama was executed as a spatial programme, as a plan for spatial organization, accumulation of space, and a collective death sentence through exclusion from vital spaces (e.g. waterholes) (p. 97). Whereas, at least in the first decade of the twentieth century, the degree of severity still differed between the two areas of imperial bordering, it is noteworthy that already at the time, contemporaries considered overseas colonies and "internal" colonial lands together (p. 115). This becomes particularly apparent in the policies for settler colonialism ("4. Siedlungskolonialismus"). In this chapter, the mobile people, whose mobility is controlled through policies of population control, are German nationals. Settlement, whether in the Polish provinces or in South West Africa, is a means towards national expansion by influencing the dominant population in the frontier zones ("Grenzräume") (p. 150).⁸ Thus, Prussian and imperial governments constructed the relation between state, space and people. The same happened in a highly concentrated fashion in towns, where hygiene and disease were used as a legitimation to control population and space – exemplified by case studies of segregate Posen (Poznań) and Windhoek ("5. Die geteilte Stadt"). The final and shortest chapter ("6. Entgrenzung") illustrates the coming together and contradictions of the different dimensions of imperial population policies in the forced migration, the forced labour recruitment and military expansion during the First World War. Although a highly informative and well researched chapter as such, it is out of tune with the rest of the book, because it is at odds both with the indicated timeframe of the book (1884-1914) and with the thus far consistent attempt to pose the same questions for the Prussian eastern provinces and

8 For a more detailed analysis of the colonial frontier and territorialization policies, see the ongoing research by J. Decker "Lines in the sand: railways and the archipelago of colonial territorialization in German Southwest Africa, 1897-1914" (draft paper).

for German South West Africa. Throughout the book, as mentioned before, there is an imbalance in the treatment of both cases, which can be attributed to differences in the source base. In the final chapter, however, the attention for the African side of the story is cosmetic at best.

Nevertheless, *Imperiale Grenzräume* is a well researched, original and inspiring entangled history of German policies of space and population in Prussia's eastern provinces and in German South West Africa. Hitherto, these two regions were not only geographically, but also historiographically far apart, as Lerp aptly puts it (p. 332). The entanglements she laid bare are not so much direct connections or transfers, but rather shared imperial mindsets (p. 320). More than likely, these mindsets were not confined to the German national-imperial context, as becomes clear in the few examples of inter-colonial entanglements in Southern Africa (for instance on p. 268). However, the German case is particularly revealing for parallel colonialism in Europe and Africa.

2. Malaria and Statehood

Displaying colonialism at work in Europe and Africa is also what the second reviewed monograph, Manuela Bauche's *Medizin und Herrschaft: Malariabekämpfung in Kamerun, Ostafrika und Ostfriesland (1890–1919)*⁹, does. The opening paragraph already pins down what the book is about – and what it does not pretend to be. Commenting on an 1898 quote from the famous German bacteriologist and epidemiologist Robert Koch, Bauche incisively points out that his train of thought was instrumental for German imperialism: “we” have to get malaria under control *in order to* implement imperial rule (“Herrschaft”) in “our” colonial property. Even a leading medical doctor understood the medical challenge to combat malaria as subservient to imperial rule. Accordingly, Bauche analyses the German anti-malaria policy as a tool of empire, as an insightful take on the establishment of modern statehood, and not as a study in historical medicine.¹⁰

Just as Lerp, Bauche interprets her object of study both in Germany and in Africa. She focuses on five towns where malaria was endemic at the time: Dar es Salaam and Tanga in German East Africa, Duala in Cameroon, and Wilhelmshaven and Emden in East Frisia. All three areas had recently been acquired by the German imperial respectively Prussian state. Like Lerp, she consistently poses the same questions, addresses the same

9 For reviews of this book, which do not assess it as a German-African entangled history, see W. Bruchhausen, Rezension zu: Bauche, Manuela: *Medizin und Herrschaft. Malariabekämpfung in Kamerun, Ostafrika und Ostfriesland 1890–1919*. Frankfurt am Main 2017, in: H-Soz-Kult, 30.03.2018, <www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/reb-25972>; R. Forsbach: Rezension von: Manuela Bauche: *Medizin und Herrschaft. Malariabekämpfung in Kamerun, Ostafrika und Ostfriesland (1890–001919)*, Frankfurt/M.: Campus 2017, in: sehepunkte 18 (2018), Nr. 7/8 [15.07.2018], <<http://www.sehepunkte.de/2018/07/29908.html>>.

10 In his review for H-Soz-Kult, Walter Bruchhausen regrets that the book primarily deals with the establishment of statehood rather than with health and medical care. His personal expectation comes along with a misreading of Bauche's central argument, assuming that statehood was established in order to enable epidemic control, rather than the other way around.

problems, and follows the same heuristic logic for all her cases. She avoids creating a German-African dichotomy, also highlighting differences between Wilhelmshaven and Emden and between Duala and Dar es Salaam/Tanga as well as similarities and connections between the malaria campaigns in German, Cameroonian and Tanganyikan towns. More explicitly than Lerp, Bauche draws inspiration from post-colonial critique on European history – rather than mere critique on colonialism – and more successfully than Lerp, she manages to uncover direct personal connections rather than only parallels and similarities. Nevertheless, she also has difficulties giving an active voice to the “objects” of the anti-malaria policies. Despite being aware of this problem (see for instance p. 38–39), the sources do not allow her search for subaltern voices to reach beyond dissident bacteriologists, German nurses in East Frisia and East Africa, local elites in Duala, anonymous assistants and intermediaries in the malaria campaigns in East African towns, and equally anonymous inhabitants of the workers’ neighbourhood “Transvaal” in Emden.¹¹ Overall, in showing how the malaria control policies buttressed the establishment of modern statehood, the author makes sense of the entanglements between colony and metropole and of the construction of difference through knowledge production and population control as two sides of the same story. Both in the colonies and in the metropole there are centres and there are peripheries. Grasping this, is the fruit of writing an entangled history.

Manuela Bauche identifies her approach as one of entanglement (p. 17 and footnote 20 in particular). She distinguishes between personal, practical and discursive connections between her different cases (p. 26). When it comes to boundaries, she likewise acknowledges that these are spatial and discursive at the same time. These conceptual and theoretical reflections make clear that her findings have a relevance beyond the “German” cases at hand. She furthermore highlights the present-day relevance of her research by pointing to the importance of a critical understanding of long-lasting views of the world. After a theoretical and methodological introduction, the book has four chapters: “Malaria” framing the history and practices of malaria campaigns, “Bewegung” highlighting the importance of travelling and stations, “Neuordnung” dealing with the local implementation of new governing orders, and “‘Modernität’ und Exklusion” addressing the social and spatial divisions implemented through modernization discourses. In the chapter on malaria control, the author demonstrates how making people free of disease is substituted for making spaces free of disease, thus illustrating a profound entanglement of people and spaces which goes well beyond the (separate) entanglements of people and entanglements of spaces Eppler and Lindner called for. Not healing the sick, but making the sick harmless for people in other places turns out to be Koch’s imperial aim. Controlling people’s bodies, controlling their living spaces, and controlling their movements together with spatial and discursive dividing become the backbone of disease control (p. 54–56). For the sake of establishing modern statehood, a spatial order with Berlin at the

11 It is noteworthy that this unhealthy part of town, across the canal, is named after an African – more specifically South African – land.

centre and diverse peripheries as fields of experimentation was installed (cf. p. 62).¹² The Berlin-based Robert Koch and his *Königlich Preussische Institut für Infektionskrankheiten* was the spider in the web as far as malaria was concerned.

However, in order to implement this centralized statebuilding policy, the German imperial state relied on local intermediaries and depended on the obedience or acceptance by subordinate masses. Bauche stresses “race” and class much more than nation and ethnicity as decisive divisive criteria – although class and national difference in fact often converge, as in the case of Dutch and Italian immigrant workforce in Transvaal (Emden). “Against this background, it becomes clear that it is not so much a question of defining specific practices as essentially colonial or essentially metropolitan, but rather of looking at the intricacies of knowledge and practices in which the metropole and the colony coalesce to one coherent field.” (pp. 120–121).¹³ Summing up, Manuela Bauche delivered a convincing and consistent entangled history of coloniality, integrating one German imperial space of action and redefining its (relative) centres and peripheries beyond a misleading European-African scheme (p. 345).

Empirically, this study could be qualified as inner-German (also the policies in Africa were German policies), yet by being postcolonially reflexive, contributing to the mission of provincializing Europe, the book’s relevance reaches well beyond German history. This being said, it should be noticed that entangled history is not only about reaching beyond national histories, it is also – and importantly so – about finally properly understanding national histories, by no longer putting them in an epistemological quarantine, which blends out decisive parts of what constituted that history. Thus, entangled history is both a way to overcome and to enhance national histories.

3. Collective Entangled History Projects

Complementing the monographic entangled histories reviewed above, there are several initiatives trying to address the entanglement of colonial histories in cooperation. Rather than researching entanglement, research itself is entangled or at least juxtaposed and confronted between German researchers and researchers from former German colonial territories. Moreover, the question in how far the shared or divisive colonial past is still present in the public space today, is addressed in dialogue. Entangled history is thus not only a heuristic approach to a research object but also an organizational challenge to come to terms with entangled pasts together. There are two dimensions to this togetherness: (1) bringing researchers from Germany and from former German colonies in

12 This observation is reminiscent of H. Tilley, *Africa as a living laboratory. Empire, development, and the problem of scientific knowledge, 1870–1950*, Chicago 2011, although this work does not figure in the book’s list of references.

13 German original: “Vor diesem Hintergrund wird offenbar, dass es weniger darum gehen kann, spezifische Praktiken als essentiell kolonial oder essentiell metropolitan zu definieren, sondern vielmehr das Geflecht an Wissen und Praktiken in den Blick zu nehmen, in dem sich Metropole und Kolonie zu einem zusammenhängenden Feld konstituierten.”

Africa (and the Pacific) together, and (2) bringing researchers and public together, both in Germany and in Africa.

There have been several initiatives over the past couple of years addressing this convolution of entangled history in one way or another. Similar to the monographic research projects already assessed, it is remarkable that these initiatives are spatially specific, tackling more or less well-defined regions or towns like Westphalia, Hamburg, the Cameroonian Grasslands, the German Rhineland, or the South Pacific.¹⁴ I address two projects, tackling German-African entangled histories of colonialism collectively.

In the beginning of 2018, Jürgen Zimmerer convened a conference on Hamburg's colonial legacies and memories under the title: *Confronting the Colonial Past! 'Askari', Lettow-Vorbeck and Hamburg's entangled (post-)colonial legacies* (28 February–2 March 2018).¹⁵

Not a two- or more-sided relation was at the heart of this conference, but Hamburg and its manifold colonial and postcolonial entanglements were. This fits the aforementioned observation that entangled history is not only about comparison and about overcoming dominant frames of reference, but also about enhancing our knowledge about a specific town (or region or nation) by considering its entanglements.

All the same, entanglements with Africa figured prominently and there were several contributors from Africa. Oswald Masebo from the University of Dar es Salaam delivered one of the conference's keynote lectures on "Entangled Histories of Dar es Salaam and Hamburg". An artistic ensemble from Windhoek presented a visual art project about the Herero-Nama genocide in Namibia.

The conference also included a public part on how to deal with Hamburg's (post-)colonial legacy. The combination of reaching out to the public, prominently including African partners, addressing the present-day consequences of colonial legacies (including how to deal with colonial art collections or with human remains), and indeed taking a specific space (here Hamburg) as vantage point characterize this collective take on colonial and post-colonial entanglements.

Probably the most elaborate collaborative example of German-African entangled history, is the research project on topographies of transcultural memories between the history department of the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf and the department of applied foreign languages at the University of Dschang (Cameroon). The project started in 2015 and resulted in two exhibitions (in Düsseldorf in 2016 and in Dschang in 2018), a website (www.deutschland-postkolonial.de), a documentary film and city tours, as well as a collective publication *Koloniale Verbindungen – transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien*:

14 I mention Westphalia and the South Pacific, referring to the volume: S. Hensel/B. Rommé (eds.), *Aus Westfalen in die Südsee: Katholische Mission in den deutschen Kolonien*, Berlin 2018. As the book neither concerns German-African entanglements nor involves cooperation with partners in the South Pacific, I do go deeper into this project. Nevertheless, it does underscore some characteristics of collective entangled history projects: the regional focus, the combination of research and public activities (in this case an exhibition in Münster), and an interest in colonial traces (in this case ethnographic and photographic collections).

15 For a conference report, see M. Hedrich, *Tagungsbericht: Confronting the Colonial Past! Askari, Lettow-Vorbeck and Hamburg's entangled (post-) colonial legacies*, 28.02.2018 – 02.03.2018 Hamburg, in: *H-Soz-Kult*, 21.08.2018, <www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-7823>.

Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns (transcript, 2019), edited by Albert Gouaffo and Stefanie Michels.¹⁶ The value of the project lies primarily in the interdisciplinary, transnational and multimedial collaboration, much more than in direct research results.

The cooperation between historians and linguists, between Germans and Cameroonians brought this project close to tackling Epple and Lindner's fourth path towards an entangled history of colonialism: the meta-level of entangled conceptualizations of coloniality and postcoloniality. Drawing on Britta Schilling, who in turn is inspired by Ann Laura Stoler, the editors argue against an idea of "colonial amnesia" (having forgotten the colonial past) and instead argue to recognize "colonial aphasia" (lacking the vocabulary to speak about the colonial past). This project demonstrates that the conceptual entanglement, the exchange of memories and understandings, provides a path to escape the speechlessness on colonialism.

This collaborative project set the example to face the challenge of coloniality and postcoloniality together, entangled between the German Rhineland and the Cameroon Grasslands. The book gives a good idea of the partners involved in the project, but is more valuable as a collaborative format to emulate, than as a convincing contribution to research on colonialism and postcoloniality. What comes out is a project between equal partners in different disciplines and areas, spatially specific both in Germany and in Cameroon, implemented in both places, used for educational purposes and reaching out to the public through multiple media, as well as paying attention to colonial collections and recollections in Dusseldorf and in Dschang.

4. Conclusion

Ten years along the road since Epple, Kaltmeier, and Lindner made their call for entangled histories of coloniality and postcoloniality, several convincing entangled histories have been undertaken. On the one hand, the monographs by Dörte Lerp and Manuela Bauche put entangled history into practice by choosing precise thematic and spatial foci, consistently posing the same questions and addressing the same problems for the different areas under scrutiny. Whereas Lerp managed to draw interesting parallels in comparing population control in Prussia's eastern provinces and in German South West Africa, Bauche could identify both direct connections and differences between anti-malaria campaigns in German, Cameroonian and East African coastal towns.

On the other hand, collaborative projects centred around specific places or areas in Germany and in Africa used entanglement as a method to cope with (post-)colonial legacies. Confronting German and African takes on coloniality and postcoloniality, combining

16 For a review of this book, which does not assess it as a German-African entangled history, see J. Häfner: Rezension zu: Gouaffo, Albert; Stefanie Michels (Hrsg.): *Koloniale Verbindungen – transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien. Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns*. Bielefeld 2019, in: H-Soz-Kult, 20.09.2019, <www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/reb-28158>.

academic disciplines but also arts and archival and museum collections, and exchanging with the public and in the public space illustrate that entangled history is not only a research approach but also a public performance and a political statement.

Having written this review article at a time when fruit and vegetable harvests, textile workshops and meat processing factories, cramped with exploited workers from Africa and Eastern Europe, led to COVID-19-lockdowns in German, Spanish and English districts, and at a time when Black Lives Matter-protests manifest themselves across Europe (and beyond), I cannot help but being baffled by the parallels between Lerp's and Bauche's research and the present-day situation. The task is not to divulge the truism that the world is entangled, but to scrutinize how it is entangled, which asymmetries underpin global entanglements, and how they are reproduced over and over again. Entangled history is not merely a way to make comparisons or see connections between the own town, area or nation and some outside counterpart, but entails a fundamental revisiting and reinterpretation of the own history in light of its entanglements. As such, an entangled history of colonialism is at the same time a postcolonial history of the self.