

DECOLONIZING NATIONAL AND IMPERIAL MEMORIES

Introduction

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Abstract

Building on Frantz Fanon's insights into the intricate entanglements of colonialism, nation-states, and memories, there have been increasing calls to decolonize national and imperial memories. This introduction sketches the wider historical context within which these calls emerged, the collaboration that led to this special issue, and the contributions it makes to the wider debate. The introduction observes a general rise in calls for decolonization around the globe. The appeal to decolonize national and imperial memories was a response to at least three significant historical developments. First, the insight that mid-twentieth century decolonization remained incomplete, second, the widespread "memory boom" of the late twentieth century, and third, concerns stated upon the founding of the Memory Studies Association in Amsterdam in 2016 that it would reproduce old imperial structures. The special issue is the product of a larger project seeking to advance transformative inclusivity and belonging in the field of memory studies and beyond. By meeting regularly to collaborate across continents, cultures, and disciplines, the collective not only seeks to decolonize memories, but also the ways in which such memories are studied. It is important, therefore, that the, in total, three special issues on decolonizing the study of memory, that are among the first outcomes of our initiative, are published on three different continents—Africa, Asia, and Europe—beginning with this one in the Philippines in an open-access journal. Reflecting on one's own positionality

and how it shapes one's research interests and professional pursuits is an ongoing question discussed by both the guest editors in the introduction, and the contributors in their articles. While the contributions to this special issue speak to one another and the challenges of decolonizing national and imperial memories in diverse ways, they are presented in three sections: first, history and society, second, literature, and third, museums and art. Building on the lead article, the introduction shows how the contributions articulate the process of decolonization in twelve different ways. However, the editors encourage readers to establish further connections, open new pathways, and in this way take up and advance the project of decolonizing national and imperial memories.

Keywords

colonialism, decolonial practice, Global South, imperialism, memory studies, nation-states

About the Authors

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After over ten years in Ateneo de Manila University, **Jocelyn S. Martin** is presently associate professor (maître de conférences) in the Faculty of Humanities at the Université catholique de l'Ouest, Angers, France, where she co-manages an MA in Conflict and Mediation. She researches on postcolonial literature in Southeast Asia, memory, trauma, translation, the politics of listening, and the Environmental Humanities, among others. Holder of a PhD in languages and literatures from the Université Libre de Bruxelles, she is author of "Memory/Memory Studies" (Bloomsbury), "The Vernacular as Method for Memory and Time" (*Memory Studies Journal*) and a series of articles on the Marcos dictatorship. Forthcoming productions will be published by DeGruyter Brill, *Public Humanities* (Cambridge), and the Australian National University Press. Advisory Board Member of the Memory Studies Association, former

University of Ohio Zumkehr Lecturer, and former Visiting Scholar at the National University of Malaysia, she received a “Most Outstanding Scholarly Award in the Humanities” in 2020 and a “Scholarly Work with the Most Social Impact Award” for the book *Triggered* in 2022.

Mary M. McCarthy is a professor of politics and international relations at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, USA, and coeditor of *Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*. She specializes in Japan’s domestic and foreign policies, with a current focus on the legacies of its late 19th and early 20th century wars, occupations, and colonization on Japan’s present-day foreign relations. She was guest editor of the *Memory Studies* special issue, “Finding Place in Northeast and Southeast Asia: Collective Memory Construction of the Marginalized, Disenfranchised, and Dislocated” (February 2024). And her most recent publications also include “The US-Japan Alliance in an Era of Geopolitical and Domestic Change” in Leszek Buszynski, ed. *Handbook of Japanese Security* (Amsterdam University Press, 2024). She is a member of the Transformative Inclusivity Initiative of the Memory Studies Association (MSA), as well as a member of the MSA Ethics Committee. Dr. McCarthy received her B.A. in East Asian studies and her Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University.

Ruramisai Charumbira resides in London, Ontario, Canada, within the Dish With One Spoon Territory, the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnton Nations. A closeted poet trained as a historian (Yale University), Ruramisai works at Western University in said territory. African indigenous knowledge systems inform her work, which include her first book *Imagining a Nation: History and Memory in Making Zimbabwe*. (Series: Reconsiderations in Southern African History, University of Virginia Press), a finalist for the Berkshire Conference of Women’s Historians Book Prize. Her anticipated second book, *Legacies of British Colonialism in Southern Africa: The Hole at the Heart of Ubuntu*, will be published by Bloomsbury. She coedits the journal *Safundi*. She is an active member of among others, the Memory Studies Association (MSA), where she currently serves on its Executive Committee. She initiated the MSA’s Transformative Inclusivity (MSA-TII) whose collaborative endeavors within the Association inspired this special issue. She writes a monthly praise-poetry blog for the Earth at *The Animist*: <https://ruramisaicharumbira.com/blog/>

INTRODUCTION

Such history we write
is stripped and torn
by whip, by wind, worn
by the wave from heart,

from memory, from book,
and look;
blue chains of islands
break; freedom surrounds us

like the wave round rock;
enchants, encircles, isolates us from
that fear, that hope, that protest,
that was our common ground.
(Brathwaite 216)

In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to ignore demands for decolonization. They call forth from protest movements, literature, art, and academic discourse. As Edward Kamau Brathwaite's epic poem *The Arrivants*, quoted above, suggests, they emphasize that history needs to be rewritten, that memories need to be reconsidered, and that freedom is as difficult to attain as it is desired.

Frantz Fanon described the intertwining of colonialism, nation-states, and memories in the complicated process of liberation. He wrote that colonialism is “not content merely to impose its law on the colonized country's present and future,” but with “a kind of perverted logic . . . turns its attention to the past of the colonized and distorts it, disfigures it, and destroys it” (Fanon 149). This special issue builds on Fanon's insight and goes one step further by underlining that the foundations of national and imperial memories also demand to be approached as sites deserving of decolonization.

The urgency of this issue was born out of a number of complex historical developments. One of these was the insight that political decolonization throughout the twentieth century and especially since the 1960s did not necessarily entail discursive and epistemological decolonization in the postcolonial world, including what is commonly referred to as “the West” (Said; Scott; Tamale). Another important stimulus for this project is the “memory boom” emerging in the late twentieth century. Against all odds, it shows no signs of receding, but rather a continuing increase (Erll; Huyssen; Mignolo). A third, out of innumerable possible

ones, is the circumstance that the founding of the Memory Studies Association in 2016, raised concerns and critiques that this new institution might reproduce old colonialist paradigms, theories, and methods (Charumbira; Olick, Sierp and Wüstenberg; Wegner).

This special issue thus responds to increasing calls to decolonize national and imperial memories in the face of colonial and imperial history around the world, in a time when memories are gaining in importance across academic disciplines, and the study of such memories is becoming increasingly institutionalized. What eventually crystalized in the shape of a “special issue” grew out of critical, passionate, and ongoing conversations across disciplines, countries, and continents. The editors sought ways to decolonize not just the subject of memory studies, but the very conditions that enabled these studies to take place and gain shape. From initial conversations, to the call for papers, and regular online meetings, the project was from the beginning and at every moment in various ways transdisciplinary, transnational, and transcontinental. It was our expressed hope that through this critical, caring, and curious practice we would be able to create a forum for this, indeed, special issue of decolonial memory debates from all over the world, especially from communities, regions, and disciplines that are often marginalized, ignored, or forgotten.

As the guest editors of this issue, we came together with others in a collective, all eager to make transformative inclusivity a reality through solidarity across gender, class, race, color, and so on. Our call for papers on “Decolonizing the Study of Memory” was born out of that collaboration. We were particularly delighted that from early on, this endeavor was supported by the prestigious international, peer-reviewed journal *Kritika Kultura*. The journal’s name itself already indicates what the essays collected in this issue seek to achieve in multiple new and daring ways: to engage in, enhance, and advance cultural critiques. Furthermore, it is important to us that this debate finds a home and a platform in an open-access journal which will allow academics, activists, and all concerned to access and use these interventions in what is, of course, only a very small contribution to a much larger discourse and movement around the world. Last but not least, as this special issue is one of three emerging from our ongoing collaboration across disciplines, countries, and continents, we welcome the fact that this one—the first one to be published—is based in Asia, more specifically, the Philippines, a far too often marginalized collection of islands which in more ways than one call for decolonization. We also want to highlight in this way that scholars, artists, activists, and ‘ordinary people’ in the Philippines, the Global South, and around the world continue to tell their stories that are then often taken up as case studies for others’ theories. As the three special issues are set to find their homes on three different continents, each with different foci, strategies, and contributions—*Kritika Kultura* focusing on national

and imperial memories, *Safundi* in Africa focusing on ecocritical memories, and *Memory Studies* in Europe focusing on memory theory—, we hope that all of them contribute to the ongoing, diverse, and dynamic processes of decolonizing (the study of) memories.

We, the four guest editors came to this endeavor from different regions, disciplines, and trajectories. Jarula M.I. Wegner is currently a Hundred Talents Young Professor at Zhejiang University, China. One of his first university courses introduced him to literatures and cultures of the Caribbean, where he has been returning in-between stints in Germany, China, the USA, and England. He is compelled to write about memories due to their omnipresence throughout the Caribbean and the region's near absence in memory studies. Associate Professor in anglophone literatures, Jocelyn Martin commutes between France and the Philippines. For her, transformative inclusivity means solidarity, especially with those from the Global South. Observing how production of knowledge is influenced by one's context, she publishes on linguistic hegemony, post/decolonial literatures, climate emergency, and dictatorships. She is also sensitive to issues regarding unequal accessibility to scholarship, workload, and differences in worldview. Mary M. McCarthy is a political scientist based at a US institution who specializes on the impact of domestic politics and transnationalism on foreign policymaking and foreign relations in Asia. Her entry into the field of memory studies came through the puzzle of why and how Japan's early and mid-20th century military and civil expansionism had disparate political and social legacies in various countries and among different groups. Ruramisai Charumbira approaches "Decolonizing the Study of Memory" through the lens of (southern) African indigenous knowledge systems. Her first book examines the uses and abuses of history and memory in Zimbabwe's nation-building. Her forthcoming second book explores memory, the personal practice of colonialism, and legacies thereof in British Southern Africa. This special issue is a product of our collective effort to listen, learn, and share.

The interventions collected in this volume advance the project of decolonizing national and imperial memories by building on a variety of approaches across diverse issues. They demonstrate that there are countless paradigms, theories, and methods that can help advance this common goal. To begin with, we would like to emphasize the wide-ranging regional spread of these essays, including contributors from and contributions about Africa, America, Asia, and Europe, coming in comparable numbers from the Global South and the Global North. Disciplines range from anthropology and art history via history and philology to political science and sociology. While these contributions reveal many productive intersections, we decided to arrange them, broadly speaking, according to the subject matters they analyze. Although many of them speak to more than one of these categories, we nonetheless believe that the first group is highly illuminating in

relation to the fields of history and society, the second to that of literature, and the third to museums as well as art, especially as the last one itself presents a work of art. Building on works like Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, C. L. R. James's *Beyond A Boundary*, and Audre Lorde's *Zami*, we insist that projects of decolonization not only connect different disciplines, but also expand the possibilities of what can be considered suitable for cultural critiques in academic discourse.

The contributions further the diverse, dynamic, and open pursuits of decolonizing national and imperial memories in various ways (discussed in more detail in this issue in Wegner). They do so first of all by moving beyond what are often considered “Western” theories and methodologies, for instance, by focusing on vernacular languages (Benitez; Claros), on non-Western aesthetic concepts (Luca), as well as Black and South American indigenous traditions (Calvacanti and Amormino). All but the lead article come at theory in less traditional ways, focusing on and narrating specific historic cases in detail. In so doing, they interrogate and step beyond the boundaries of “Western” modernity, for instance by challenging its assumptions of civilization (Alvarado), the validity of its aspirations, including the desirability of capitalism (Luca), and the sufficiency of its mnemonic strategies (Calvacanti and Amormino). Central to these interventions is the idea of transcending national memories, for instance through transnational collaborations (Bendix and Werner), transnational research foci (esp. Alvarado; Chou; Wang) or transnational research material (esp. Bendix and Werner; Calvacanti and Amormino; Wegner). The essays furthermore expand the scope beyond a focus on European imperialism, by investigating nationalist and imperialist projects, for instance, in China, Japan, and Russia (Chou; Luca; Melnikov, Mitrofanova and Riazanova; Wang). They even more radically exceed imperial trajectories and cartographies by opening up to and tracing, for example, South-South relations (Alvarado; Calvacanti and Amormino). In decolonizing memories of nation and empire, it is vital to identify and analyze their intersections with constructions of race, class, gender, and so on, as do numerous contributions (Calvacanti and Amormino; Chaterji; Chou). Radicalizing this pursuit leads some to depart from anthropocentric perspectives and focus on the role as well as the force of more-than-human memories (Benitez; Wegner). The contributors not only consider their own positionality in history, society, and academia, some also experiment more specifically with academic form (esp. Bendix and Werner). This short overview of strategies to decolonize national and imperial memories is, of course, not exhaustive, but simply highlights the widely diverse ways in which these compositions approach, theorize, and present pursuits of decolonization.

CONTRIBUTIONS

More specifically, the special issue offers three sections. After the lead article's outline of a historical shift from postcolonial to decolonial critiques, the first section with three essays focuses on history and society through historical, anthropological, and linguistic analyses. The second section consists of three texts engaged in close readings of literature, highlighting the relevance of language, and discussing the potential of literary genres. The third section, composed of four contributions on museums and art, engages the often still unrealized potential for decolonization in museums, the ways in which museums can be simultaneously de- and neocolonial, as well as attempts to rethink the museum through new ways of ownership and art creation.

In the lead article "Decolonizing National and Imperial Memories: From postcolonial to decolonial and beyond," the critical theorist Jarula M. I. Wegner identifies a historical transformation from postcolonial to decolonial debates and asks what this shift means for cultural memories. He outlines twelve preliminary implications of this transformation in relation to Hazel V. Carby's historical biography *Imperial Intimacies* published in 2019. This narrative traces Carby's genealogical ancestors on the black Jamaican and the white Welsh side from the twenty-first back to the eighteenth century, and presents many of the attributes associated with the contemporary calls for decolonization. In his critical and constructive analysis of the shift, Wegner offers an overview of the itinerary of concepts, thinkers, and debates from the postcolonial to the decolonial. In the end, Wegner questions whether it is important that the movements and debates rally around the concept of the postcolonial or the decolonial, or rather that they jointly confront the complex, dynamic, and interlocking challenges they make visible.

The first section on history and society presents three essays employing historical, anthropological, and linguistic analyses. In this way they approach questions of decolonizing national and imperial memories from the perspective of history, society, and language.

The historian Christian Alvarado opens the section with the essay "Ghosts at the Banquet: Mau Mau and Global Memory" to ask, through a global historical approach, what insights into the study of memory and decolonization can be gained by analyzing the changing dynamics in national and global memories of the Mau Mau movement from the late 1950s to the present. Considering the subject through Hayden White's concept of "practical pasts," Alvarado looks at speeches, autobiographies, music, and historical works in Kenya, Great Britain, and the USA to track similarities, differences, and historical transformations. Particularly noteworthy, according to Alvarado, is the fact that memories of the historical

Mau Mau uprising, although originally disseminated as colonial myths to achieve imperial goals, came to serve African and African diasporic decolonial pursuits for land and freedom on a global scale by the 1960s and 1970s.

The essay entitled “War, Violence, and Womanhood: (Re)membering Women’s Military Narratives in China’s Revolution and Civil War” by gender studies expert Szu-Nuo Chou asks how ordinary women in China (across classes and ethnicities) suffered from war-related violence, not only on the frontline but especially in domestic spaces, during the years of China’s revolution and subsequent inter-party conflicts. To investigate this question, she employs historical feminist gender criticism. More precisely, Chou engages oral history through women-centered narratives based on interviews with Chinese women and Chinese diaspora women. Her investigation spans a time period from the 1920s until today to reveal substantial dissonances between official narratives and muted or ignored female voices when it comes to gender-related trauma and violence during China’s revolutionary period. Chou’s anthropological research highlights the critical importance of the specific historical moment in which the decolonization of memories of certain national and imperial pasts becomes possible—what Walter Benjamin would call the “irretrievable image of the past which threatens to disappear” (391)—, due to age, death, and dislocation.

Last in the section on history and society is the philologist Christian Jil Benitez’s intervention “Alaála: Tropical Memory,” which asks how the Tagalog vernacular, in particular, the term *alaála*, convey and question our currently dominant understanding of memory. Benitez combines a range of theories, including ecocriticism, posthumanism, thing theory, and tropicality to analyze the myth of Bernardo Carpio, and Jose Rizal’s novel *El Filibusterismo*. Through close readings, comparative philology, and etymologies found in Filipino and Spanish dictionaries, the analysis spans the time period from 1896 to the present, with a focus on the Philippines under Spanish rule. With this philological consideration of the Filipino term *alaála* (remembering), the essay offers a vernacular conception of memory that is not simply a recollection of relations to the past, but at the same time a “remembering” of a certain future configured by the material present encompassing both human and non-human aspects. Benitez thereby provides an analysis of tropical memory, rendered as *alaála*, that centers on tropicality, memory, and ecocriticism enabling philology to trace the temporal and ecological nuances of what it means to remember, as well as, more specifically, the tropical nature of memory.

The close investigation of language, the vernacular, and the etymology of words leads to the second section of this special issue which is dedicated to the field of literature. Just as in the preceding one, this section also curates three essays. It

continues the pursuit of decolonizing national and imperial memories by paying close attention to memories in the Philippines under US rule, to then delve into the complex language issues in Nagaland of northeastern India after British rule, before it arrives in post-1989 Romania after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In “Paabat: Provincializing Postmemory in Merlie Alunan’s Poems on the Balangiga Encounter of 1901,” the philologist Ian Harvey Claros engages in literary criticism to combine Filipino etymology, post- and decolonial theory, memory, and trauma studies. The study focuses on the Philippines under US rule and spans a period from 1901 to 2017. Claros engages Merlie Alunan’s *Running with Ghosts and other poems*, a Waray dictionary, and history books on the Balangiga massacre through a close reading and discourse analysis to deploy *paabat*, the Waray word for haunting, apparition, and feeling. In so doing, he appropriates Marianne Hirsch’s concept of postmemory and negotiates questions of intergenerational empathy. The essay draws from the vernacular Waray language as an epistemological starting point to examine the infamous Balangiga massacre by US American troops against Filipinos. It provincializes and, simultaneously, offers a fresh take on postmemory and spectrality via Alunan’s poetry. Here as in the preceding essay, vernacular languages serve as wellsprings to decolonize national and imperial memories.

The subsequent essay by literary scholar Paloma Chaterji is entitled “Decolonizing Memory and Examining the Naga Identity in the Works of Eastern Kire.” Engaging with literary and linguistic theory, it asks how a Naga woman writer can disrupt the two-fold colonial narratives imposed by British and Indian national powers. More specifically, Chaterji presents the provocative question whether the English language—that is, “the colonizer’s tools”—may function as a resource in the pursuit of decolonization. To investigate these questions, she draws on novels by the Naga woman writer Easterine Kire; namely, *Bitter Wormwood* and *Sky is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered*. While these texts were published in 2011 and 2018, respectively, the essay covers the history and memory of British colonization and Indian internal colonization after independence from Britain, thus, describing the postcolonial lives of Nagas. The essay demonstrates how Naga writers can push back against hegemonic narratives of supposed Naga homogeneity and a warlike nature. In this way, it addresses the complexities of multi-layered colonization which the Nagas in northeastern India have been facing through their experiences of British colonization, Japanese invasion, and Indian national control. Chaterji shows that an oral culture can make use of written forms introduced through colonialism to confront current day marginalization and discrimination rooted in the colonial past.

The last essay in the second section continues to look at literature to unravel the complexities of colonial and postcolonial times, complicating ideas of

straight-forward trajectories towards decolonization. The literary expert Ioana Luca argues in “Decolonizing Memory: Omnibus Life Writing in post-1989 Romania” that the genre of omnibus life writing may under certain circumstances function as a means to decolonize memory cultures in Romania, while it nonetheless poses the question: what memories are recorded, selected, and collected, and by and for whom? Luca builds on a growing field of research that combines post-socialist and decolonial theory to look at the paratexts, such as prefaces and reception, and the memory representations in anthologies she defines as omnibus life writing. It is especially her historical analysis linking pre-communist, communist, and post-communist times in Romania that shed light not only on the gradual transformation of the genre, but also on the possibilities of decolonizing national and imperial memories through that means. In a self-reflexive turn of reading autobiographies as analyzing self and society, Luca highlights the emergence of cultural memories in post-socialist societies, a concomitant understanding of their significance as something to be studied, and argues for the importance of a relational, pluri-versal understanding of cultural memories as expressed in the genre of omnibus life writing.

The third and last section continues addressing the question of how to collect, combine, and present works in order to enable decolonial endeavors of national and imperial memories as it turns to the subject of museums and art. This section offers three different engagements with museums and art, spanning four different continents. Beginning in Japan with an art historical investigation, the section moves on to museums in Kazakhstan from the perspective of political science to then turn toward online museums and art projects in Latin America through art historical analysis before it ends with a graphic narrative set in central Europe and southwest Africa. In the end, this section suggests, art itself may become the source and site of critical reflection, to decolonize national and imperial memories, but that institutions and structures may inhibit this.

In “Reimagining Decolonization in East Asia: The Mingeikan and Memories of Japan’s Colonization in Korea,” art historian Christina Mengying Wang asks whether an art museum historically rooted in colonialism may become a site for processes of decolonization. Wang approaches museums and exhibition materials from a decolonial perspective of new museology to engage these in critical observational and content analysis. Through careful examination of the museum exhibitions, the collections, and arrangements, she teases out the possibilities and limitations of such colonial spaces to serve as sites of decolonization. The essay investigates current museum exhibits about folk arts collected since the 1930s in Korea and Japan. Wang highlights the challenges of formerly colonial museums to facilitate decolonization and the ways in which contemporary political situations complicate such pursuits. She sheds light on how the study of a non-Western

imperial power, like Japan, through theories of decolonization created within a Euro-American context, can contribute to theoretical robustness.

The political scientists Dmitriy Melnikov, Anastasia Mitrofanova, and Svetlana Riazanova ask in “Deimperialization of Difficult Heritage: Museums of Political Repression in Kazakhstan” how sites associated with state-induced violence use memorial museums to convey ideas about national history and identity in the aftermath of colonization. More specifically, they investigate what promotes or impedes these museums’ ability to deimperialize such messages. To answer these questions, the authors combine theories of transitional justice with decolonial analysis to analyze museum visits and exhibition materials through observational and content analysis. The museums are located in Kazakhstan, situated in Central Asia with strong links to Russia, revealing the traces of the era of Soviet control. In the context of these museums, the authors ask which voices are heard and which perspectives are represented in the museum exhibitions. Melnikov, Mitrofanova, and Riazanova analyze the complexities of memorialization at sites of state-induced violence in a time when the government and society face the dual challenges of preserving what is deemed positive from the colonial era as well as nation building under a new regime. These dual goals often leave out the voices of minority perspectives.

“Decolonizing the Future Through the Memory of Subalternized Knowledges: Looking at the Production of Three Latin American Artists from a Decolonial Perspective” by communication studies experts Anna Cavalcanti and Luciana Amormino ask how individual artworks by Cecilia Vicuña, Moara Tupinambá, and Rosana Paulino present memories, and what kinds of futures emerge from a close engagement with these. More specifically, the authors employ a historical materialist analysis of a feminist South-South constellation to look at Vicuña’s quipus, Tupinambá’s *Museu da Silva*, and Paulino’s “Parede da Memória” in order to reclaim black and indigenous epistemologies and, what they describe as, ancestralities. In their selection of two artists from Brazil and one from Chile, two with indigenous and one with black ancestry, the authors intentionally seek to open up new vistas through a specific historical constellation. The three female artists’ engagement with Black and indigenous memories of the past reveal potentially restorative political futures. They introduce the Quechua and Aymara concept of *Bem Viver* to emphasize the interconnectedness of all beings with the earth.

The section and the special issue end with a graphic narrative created in transnational, transcontinental, and transdisciplinary collaboration by the political scientist Daniel Bendix and the artist Hangula Werner with the title “Tracking Trauma: German Genocides at Home and Abroad.” This artwork asks the question of how to imagine, narrate, and resolve entangled histories of genocide and trauma.

It does so by narratively connecting the German genocide against the OvaHerero and Nama in Deutsch-Südwestafrika (today's Namibia) and the Jewish Holocaust in Germany. In this way the story connects the European and the African continent, spanning a time period from 1904 until today, asking whether the alternative of forgetting may not necessarily be remembering but rather justice. This artwork further shows that the multiple layers, the various connections, and the openness of meaning enabled by graphic narratives may function as critical, exploratory, and imaginative strategies towards decolonization, in terms of both means and aims.

The final contribution not only presents an artwork fitting into the last section on museums and art, but it also relates to historical and social questions connecting the past with the present, thus relating equally to the first section on history and society. As a graphic narrative, however, this work, of course, also inherently connects to the second section on literature. It could thus have been placed in any of the three sections. In this way, the last contribution highlights the diverse, dynamic, and open entanglements across all sections and essays of this special issue. The articles are in implicit dialogue with each other even as they are also independent, stand-alone pieces of scholarship. As the editors, we would like to encourage readers to browse through this special issue's contributions, identify and explore new connections and, thereby, further the project of decolonizing national and imperial memories.

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