

*Integrative and Collaborative Imperialism in Modern Europe* is a refreshing, inspiring, if somewhat heterogeneous volume both in terms of the complexity of intellectual ambition and quality of the resulting scholarship; most chapters develop intriguing arguments while some others yield fewer original insights. The overall agenda the volume proposes is certainly worthwhile and could be extended further in several relevant directions (as the editors themselves briefly note, religious, gender, and environmental histories are among the obvious candidates in this regard). What would require further reflection in the case of such extensions is whether the ambiguous positionality and complicit practices of many of the protagonists studied here are sufficiently captured by the concept of marginality: what this volume has aptly demonstrated, at least to me, is that phenomena and actors that tend not to fit into “the sanitized notion of Europe” (Manuela Boatcă) may in fact have been far from marginal in imperial history and the *longue durée* history of European integration.

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Josephine Hoegaerts, *Speaking, Stammering, Singing, Shouting. A Social History of the Modern Voice* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2025). 264 pp. ISBN 9781512827736.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52024/26gzxb11>

Featuring stammerers, singers, speakers, and shouters, Josephine Hoegaerts’s social history of the voice in the nineteenth century highlights how the voice can be studied as part of the history of the body, identity, and exclusion. Based on sources such as scientific treatises, singing manuals, self-help therapies and visual representations of the voice (mostly from Britain, France and Germany), this book aims to show, firstly, how the relationship between the voice and the body, as viewed by different experts, changed in the nineteenth century. Between 1790 and 1860, physicians searched for those body parts in which the voice is located, such as the larynx, the tongue, and the lungs, culminating in the invention of the laryngoscope around 1855. This instrument, developed by physicians and canto teachers, relied on the use of mirrors in combination with natural and artificial light sources to detect the vocal folds, thus exposing the voice to observe it as a living thing.

The first half of the nineteenth century was therefore characterized by the rise of vocal physicality and materiality. French neurologist and anthropologist Paul Broca's discovery of the speech center in 1861, however, inaugurated a new paradigm that located vocal management in the brain: physicians now came to regard voice production as involving the whole body. Hoegaerts analyzes these changing views of the relationship between voice and body from the perspective of the history of knowledge: she outlines how different experts - singing instructors, stammering coaches, evolutionary biologists, psychologists - claimed the voice as topic of research and thus performed 'boundary work'. These experts included scientists but also lay persons such as voice teachers. The boundary between lay knowledge and expertise turns out to have been fluid: not only did many people, like singers or stammerers, have knowledge about their own voices, but sometimes the expert writing a book about training the voice would document and analyze the experiments with their own voice. The latter is a good example of the importance of seeing researchers themselves also as embodied, not as somehow detached from their field of study.

A second aim of the book is to demonstrate how various practices of vocalization were inextricably connected with performing social distinction in modern Europe. Perceived variations in voices were bound to - and helped construct - class, gender, ethnic, national, and age differences. While the white, middle-class European voice functioned as the norm, lower-class 'coarse' language, women's supposedly weaker voices or local dialects were disparaged as 'improper' speech. And throughout the nineteenth century, distinctions between humans and animals were explored by looking at speech as a potentially defining feature of humanity, a claim that became more complicated with the arrival of the discourse on evolution.

While it functioned as a marker of social distinction, nineteenth-century experts also began to regard the voice and vocal practices as reflections of the inner, individual self, sometimes comparing the voice to the human face and its expressions. Paradoxically, this individual voice was at the same time both qualified as natural and as a bodily feature that needed work to shape it into the right form. The discipline required to mould the voice becomes particularly clear in the example of Benjamin Beasley, a man who stammered but developed a method to combat his affliction. In his many public lectures, he presented himself as a successful and strong-willed therapist, rather than as a patient.

Beasley as well as the laryngoscope, Nina d'Aubigny - a female author of a manual for the musical education of girls - and 'simian sounds' receive attention in the four 'intermezzos', containing four extensive case studies. These spruce up the main text consisting of five erudite, if at times somewhat dense, chapters. All in all, this book provides an important, thoroughly researched study of the historically changing corporeality of the voice which was lacking in much historiography, often limited to aesthetic performance or reception of sound. Thus, the book on the one hand is more than a social history of the modern voice, since it devotes much attention to cultural representation and history of knowledge, and on the other hand makes the reader long for an even broader social history of speech in daily life. Fortunately, Hoegaerts suggests a number of ideas for further research in the field of the history of sound, speech, emotions, and human rights.

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Giacomo Macola, *A Violent History. Power and Conflict in the Congo Basin from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2025). 244 pp. ISBN 9789462704510.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52024/j551k922>

*A Violent History* uses a *longue durée* approach to help readers understand how violence has been at the center of power dynamics and social relations since the nineteenth century. This violence has always had clear motives. While motivations for using violence were often very different, they nevertheless forge connections between the different actors and periods. The author, Giacomo Macola, traces a history of communities and their social and political transformations. Macola highlights the maneuvers, trajectories, and paths of the actors who marked different eras and parts of the Congo Basin, the geographical area on which this book is focused. He does not forget to emphasize the impact all this has had on populations over the years: abuses, torture, mutilations – in short, chronic suffering.

Monographs focusing on Congo and adopting a *longue durée* perspective are not very numerous, especially when dealing with this particular subject matter. However, adopting a *longue durée* perspective allows for a more refined understanding of the historical complexity