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Lieux de Mémoire and Sites of De-Subjectivation

Summary

This essay consists of four different elements that approach the nexus of memory, place/space and subjectivity in different ways. I start out with a description of the concept of *lieux de mémoire* as formulated by Pierre Nora, its connections to Marc Augé's "non-places" and a critique of these ideas. I then discuss the postcolonial notion of Third Space as an alternative approach to the nexus of memory and space. Finally, an archaeological example of a megalithic site in Jordan illustrates the advantages and difficulties of mobilizing the idea of Third Spaces in archaeological contexts.

Keywords: *lieux de mémoire*; non-place; Third Space; subjectivation; postcolonialism; megaliths; Jordan.

Dieser Beitrag zeigt vier verschiedene Aspekte auf, unter denen die Verknüpfung von Erinnerung, Ort/Raum und Subjektivität in unterschiedlicher Weise aufgegriffen wird. Ich beginne mit der Beschreibung des Konzepts der *lieux de mémoire* von Pierre Nora, seinen Bezügen zu Marc Augés „Nichtorten" und einer Kritik dieser Ansätze. Das postkoloniale Konzept des Third Space bildet einen alternativen Ansatz zum Verständnis der Verknüpfung von Erinnerung und Raum. Abschließend zeige ich an einem Fallbeispiel eines Ortes mit Megalithen in Jordanien die Vorteile und Schwierigkeiten der Anwendung des Third Space in archäologischen Kontexten.

Keywords: Erinnerungsorte; Nichtort; Dritter Raum; Subjektivierung; Postkolonialismus; Dolmen; Jordanien.

I.

Drowning in the raging river of time, we try desperately to hold on to the last stems of memory that protrude near the shore. This is the feeling one gets when reading Pierre Nora's plea for 'memory sites'. His principles specified in the introductory paper to a massive set of seven edited volumes on this topic[1] are dominated by a juxtaposition of memory and history that seems at times Manichaean. On one side are the *milieux de mémoire* that envelope the past in a gentle way and underwrite identities, on the other the acrid, corrosive criticism of academically based history that destroys even the optimistic views of the French Revolution and throws all traditions into question. History demystifies the world so thoroughly that the perpetrator-historians are called upon by Nora to come to their senses. They ought to limit the damage by conceptualizing and developing *lieux de mémoire* as an antidote to the damage they have inflicted on social integration.

Nora's argument proceeds in a romanticizing yet colonialist fashion: he imputes to societies that preserve their memories without the medium of writing a happy, innocent "ethnological slumber";[2] they keep the deep past in the present through sacralization and its full inclusion in quotidian life. Specific places are treated with particular respect, so that they develop a thick mantle of aura. For Nora, this stands in contrast to the present, which is described as "uprooted", attacked by collectivization and transfixed by superficialities that correspond to its shallowness, democratic tendencies and mediatizations.

Even if the critical diagnosis of the present may have some value, the criticism concerning collectivization and democracy has an unsavory elitist flavor and is politically highly disquieting. The glorifying description of the non-Western *Other*, however, is completely unacceptable. Nora imagines "people without history" in the worst colonialist manner by merging past societies and those of our days that oppose modernity. The background for these ideas is the old cultural pessimism of Oswald Spengler bound up with social evolutionism: ultimately, the contemporary condition still remains the 'pinnacle of evolution', although historians and others have the duty to mitigate the excesses and problems of long-term developments that have led the West to where it is today.

The problem which Nora observes is the increasingly skeptical questioning of firmly anchored historical convictions of entire collectivities. The idea of 'identities' is thrown fundamentally in doubt when critical questions are asked about what it means to share a common background. Nora's concern is this effect at the core of critical histories.

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1 Nora 1984–1992.

2 Nora 1989, 7.

Long ago, Friedrich Nietzsche expressed himself similarly.[3] I see Nora's program of *lieux de mémoire* as an attempt to compensate for a widespread disappearance of collective identity. Nora locates responsibilities for this loss with those who give an account of the past, who construct it. These penitents should, according to him, repair the damage they have inflicted on an innocent public. This can be done through a discourse of truth claims (including those produced by historical sciences). Such a discourse is designed to anchor identities by offering the public a hold in a world marred by forgetfulness, the cause of which is history's critical attitude. Nora aims at nothing less than a modern, secular version of a canonization of memorable events, monuments and objects. The believers are not a church community but the citizens of a nation with their collective memory. Nora uses a clever procedure to try to achieve his goals. He does not advise establishing truth claims; rather, the goal is to write the history of the mnemonic *topoi* that are supposed to stand for a nation. This history of memory is a deeply affirmative one.

We can study the success of this state-supporting historiography and the ensuing European-wide epidemic of *lieux de mémoire* by taking a look at the books of the German publisher C. H. Beck. In addition to a three-volume set of 'German' *lieux*,[4] we find voluminous collections on *lieux de mémoire* of Roman[5] and Greek antiquity,[6] Christianity[7], the Middle Ages,[8] and even the German Democratic Republic.[9]

Since Nora's explicit goal is the reconstitution and reproduction of the nation, his whole enterprise shows a substantial degree of reticence towards the future. I suggest three reasons for this. First, the basic unit for memory cultures that are reflected in *lieux de mémoire* are nations. For Nora, more precisely, France. Reviews of his monumental collection in most cases neglect this fundamental political dimension: the framework 'nation' is seldom questioned, critiques are concerned mostly with whether the selection of memory sites is appropriate. However, it is almost a truism that we live in an era of globalization in which nations, originally conceptualized as identitarian and political units, are dissolving and giving way to networks dominated by finance capital, NGOs and other players.[10] The process of globalization may well go through convulsions and regressions,[11] but there is no sign yet that the disappearance of borders for global capital and attendant large-scale migrations, both forced and self-interested, are slowing down. Insofar the normative framing of the whole project of *lieux* is anachronistic. The Hölkeskamps'[12] application of the idea to ancient Greece is inadmissibly de-

3   Nietzsche 1969 [1874], 230–231; but see Hübner 1996, 42–47.
4   François and Schulze 2001.
5   Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp 2006.
6   Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp 2010.
7   Markschies and Wolf 2010.
8   Fried and Rader 2011.
9   Sabrow 2009.
10   Abélès 2010, 52.
11   Ong 1999.
12   Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp 2010.

historicizing: ancient Greece was never a 'nation'. However, as an assemblage of memory sites it is misremembered as a past mirror of a kind of 19th century European nation.[13]

Second, the success of the concept in historians' circles has led to a proliferation of frameworks for *lieux de mémoire*. Many entities can serve as containers for places of memory, not just nations. To remain within the German-language academic industry, one example is Silesia,[14] another the German colonies,[15] a third simply ecology.[16] Such frameworks essentialize certain units by attributing to them a unified memory, and thus a collective consciousness. However, it is presumptuous of historians to set these units *a priori*. The decision to produce a collection with the title *lieux de mémoire of X* stabilizes and objectifies what one purports to explore.

This brings me to a third, somewhat more specific critique that refers to the selection of memory sites to be included in a collection. What are 'German' sites of memory? Only those within the boundaries of present-day Germany? That would be too easy, and François and Schulze correctly included a chapter on Auschwitz.[17] When we look into the chronological framework, things become blurrier. How far back should the conceptualization of a national or other (id-)entity reach in time? Historians, and even more archaeologists, tend to imagine memory spaces with a greater depth than do other people. This is an obvious effect of their profession. However, the result is a tableau of collective memory that focuses at least in the two compendia on France and Germany on the late 18th to early 20th century, creating a guide to and idealization of collective memories that can only be considered deeply conservative.

The conservatism of Nora's approach is even more apparent in another dimension of the selectionist decisions that underlie these volumes. Conceptualizing a network of memory sites in a region such as Baden-Württemberg compels the editors of this volume[18] to condense in a set of geographical places and discursive *topoi* what is deemed to be 'typical' for a construct such as 'Baden-Württemberg', which was first constituted in 1952. Today, one would certainly include Stuttgart's train station, following the logic of two chapters of that book that deal with Stammheim (a massive prison complex built specifically for the Red Army Fraction) and Wyhl, the site of a successful fight against a nuclear power station. But what about the 'Hessentaler Todesmarsch' of 1945? Is this 'death march' of the last survivors of the concentration camp Hessental less relevant than a chapter on "entrepreneurial personalities"?[19] Another example from another collection of essays illustrates this well: if one proceeds normatively as the *lieux de mémoire* concept otherwise does, would not the migrant household in a 'cité HLM' be one of the most important *lieux*, a core component of French social identity since the 1960s?

13 Marchand 1996.
14 Czaplinski, Hahn, and Weger 2005.
15 Zimmerer 2013.
16 Uekötter 2014.

17 Reichel 2001.
18 Steinbach, Weber, and Wehling 2012.
19 Hentschel 2012.

These are the "abject places" vividly described by González-Ruibal,[20] places that remain silenced in the discourse unleashed by Nora. To take a less material *lieu:* where is *Le Deux-ième Sexe*,[21] and where are women generally in the seven volumes of French memory? Except for Joan of Arc, the 5700 pages compiled by Nora are largely devoid of women. This could be justified by the fact that they simply do not play a role in collective perception. But if that is the *modus operandi* of memory spaces, then such a history aims to capture the *status quo* and to cement it as the basis for the formation of collective identities.

With this observation I come to the central problem of Nora's work: a national or federal state, or any other framing in terms of a collective, denies that European societies have always been plural entities, that they had highly diverse forms of memory that do not and did not necessarily coincide with political, linguistic, cultural or geographical boundaries. Here one might think of the Europe-wide communist aspirations before 1917 or the Polish immigration to the Ruhr region in the 19th century. European nations have always been multi-ethnic, a trend reinforced in today's age of globalization. If the historical study of *lieux de mémoire* follows the ideas of a collective memory à la Halbwachs and its changes over time, it runs counter to historical realities according to which geographical units, whether regions, nations or empires, are made up of many different collective memories. This reality is pushed aside by Nora's obsession with the nation as the framework for *lieux de mémoire*. Ultimately, he promotes a 'memory from above'.

These specific features of *lieux de mémoire* are well suited for a particular political effect: exclusions. This happens in two ways, by the framing and by the choice of 'sites'. The definition of the frame leads to the naturalization of specific geographies – usually spaces with political boundaries that turn into containers for a common memory. This memory is assumed to be identical for all those who inhabit such a territory. 'Goethe', it is insinuated, has the same identificatory value for a peasant family with partly migrant roots as for an older bourgeois citizen of Goethe's hometown Frankfurt; 'Canossa' is an anchor for a German restaurant owner with Lebanese Shi'ite background just as much as for a Catholic priest. The framework glosses over heterogeneity and interpellates people as unified on the level of synchronicity, all the while paradoxically assuming diachronic dynamics.

The selection of memory sites itself is not only subjective, but a praxis involving highly specific exclusion. Especially in the field of cultural history, we see that the memorable is what elites claim as their culture. The German experimental band 'Einstürzende Neubauten' would not make it to that status, nor of course such objectionable writings

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20 González-Ruibal 2008.   21 Beauvoir 1949.

as the 'Göttinger Mescalero';[22] in the case of François and Schulze's compilation of *lieux de mémoire* for Germany, not even the Communist Manifesto is included! Overall, Nora's program is not research into existing memories of a collective, but the imposition of an official memory.

What, then, about those who 'remember differently?' The collection of German sites of memory, for example, positions Heinrich Heine (included) above Erich Müh-sam and Bertolt Brecht (excluded); it has a chapter on Beethoven but none on Heino, weaves specific memory strands and consciously omits others. Such a procedure creates a new historicist orthodoxy. Strangely enough, contributing academics seem to have willingly subjected themselves to this program of canonization.[23] They must be of the view that there is no difference, or at best a negligible one, between this kind of project and any other edited volume. It is as if I were to provide a contribution to a book on 'innovation' believing that the entire collection's content and structure would ultimately set the limits of what belongs to the field of innovation. History and its praxis mutate from a more or less incisive interference in a dynamic discourse into the presumption of setting standards as well as limits both for the validity of a collective (usually a nation) and for a scientific community.

Perhaps in Nora's defense, however, we must acknowledge that his project has failed – paradoxically because of its success. The *lieux* were created as a specific national project, not as a concept that could be transposed onto a variety of other geographic and social scales (see above). The proliferation of collections on memory sites makes the catchword ubiquitous; in this way, the initially intended exclusivity dissolves. The multiplication of frames and scales from local to regional to international ('Europe') betrays the will for *Staatsraison* which is overly apparent in Nora's introduction to his massive original work on French memory sites. Still, the problematic ideological background alluded to above is the basis for the creation of a diversity of framing-dependent memory orthodoxies.

In Nora's rhetoric, the spatial metaphor 'site' clearly plays a more important role than the term 'memory' itself. The site functions as a means of memory and is the mooring for the diachronic narratives. The reason is easy to find. Stasis, a resting point, is directly related to a collective identity that is anchored in a site. Since time and diachrony produce change, 'identity' and staying the same despite changes requires endurance, even if some change in meaning occurs. This type of history lives from the need to give an account of sameness that dominates and minimizes change.

Thus, each memory site is a diachronic-discursive construct that is part of a much larger assemblage. Memory sites operate on two levels. As individual entities, chapters on the *Marseillaise* or Alesia give an account about their inclusion in narrations of the

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22 Brückner 1977.

23 But see Saint-Gille 2007.

collectivity 'France' – therefore, they are deeply constructivist in nature. But as an assemblage of many sites they are imbued with essentialism. The goal is to generate an immutable collective identity through mutability in the detail. The interpellative character of individual places is the ideological frame for such books, and it remains unclear to what extent they subjectivize people as 'being called upon' before the production of such books, and to what extent the books are supposed to create the interpellative power in the first place.

II.

A critique of the concept can easily start from the selectivity and exclusionary background of *lieux de mémoire*, as a way to unveil the hidden political agenda.[24] However, I will turn instead to a deeper level, drawing on Halbwachs' theory of collective memory. As a faithful student of Durkheim, Halbwachs assumed that a society as a whole can display its own modes of action, and therefore that it can also develop a memory of its own. This conviction is firmly anchored in the sociological ideas of the first half of the 20th century. In the fields of history and cultural anthropology, the nexus of memory and identity has turned into an almost unquestionable dogma. Although there are some critiques of Nora's project, Halbwachs' undergirding perspective remains largely unchallenged.

Halbwachs bundled the three notions of memory, identity and collectivity into a complex assemblage. At his time, his thought was unusual as he conceptualized memory – in contrast to Freud[25] – as outside of the individual, located instead in relationships. These relationships are not necessarily restricted to intersubjectivity but can also include relations between people and places, as Halbwachs[26] graphically describes in his book on pilgrimage sites of Palestine. His argument considers multifarious links between memories of different (mainly Christian) communities and one place. In many instances, his ideas foreshadow later writings on oral history.[27] While his perspective is more differentiated than Nora's, he also regards selectivity generally as a fundamental characteristic of collective memory. However, he compares different strategies of selectivity, rather than elaborating on a dominant one. Another important complement to memory sites is anthropologist Marc Augé's[28] concept of "non-places", which he borrowed from Michel de Certeau.[29] He describes non-places as typical for 'supermodernity' which is permeated with them. They are places of transit where a human subject

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24 Rousso 1987.
25 Niethammer 2000, 342–366.
26 Halbwachs 2008 [1941].
27 Hutton 1993, 87.
28 Augé 1995.
29 Augé 1995, 64–65.

is not addressed as a specific, singular person, but rather as a generic entity. An individual may have to identify her/himself in such sites by credit or shopping card, passport or other means, but still remains only a generic passenger, consumer, motorist or the like. Non-places interpellate subjects in a transitory state, in an experientially temporary subject position that is not part of an individual's self-understanding. "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place."[30] The diagnosis of our time is that clearly defined identities, collective or other, are slowly dissolving. In a somewhat similar fashion, Laclau and Mouffe describe the dissolution of the subject and the transition to temporary subject positions as a hallmark of our present condition.[31]

Non-places are paradoxical if one considers their interpellative character:[32] they no longer interpellate a stable subject as s*ub-iectum*, subordinate, as a believer, a housewife, a bourgeois, etc. in order to create fixed and hierarchized relations of subjugation. Rather, these interpellation spaces aim at isolation and gradual desubjectification: subjects are supposed to be so flexible as to abandon all permanent positioning, and to remain incapable of self-positioning. The 'non-place' ultimately corresponds to a 'non-subject' that neither has nor needs any personal or collective identity. Augé illustrates this tendency with examples of the TGV, airports and highways that cut across France. In his analysis, he clearly refers to Nora's initial diagnosis of the loss of *milieux de mémoire* in modernity. However, Augé uses the notion of "anthropological places"[33] for this long-lost world and not that of 'milieu'. For him, *lieux de mémoire* are explicitly the result of a fundamental split of "anthropological places" into sterile and clearly delimited memory sites on the one hand and non-places on the other. These two categories of place complement each other structurally. In reality, each memory site and each non-place likely retains a few traces of what once were 'anthropological spaces'.

Augé's reading reduces Nora's *lieux de mémoire* to artificial memory elements such as cultural heritage centers and museums, whereas Nora ascribes to these memory sites the last elements of embeddedness in real life. Augé's conceptual reduction can also be found in González-Ruibal's work and his transfer of non-places into archaeology.[34] The reason for this fundamental difference in understanding of collective memory and its sites may lie in the assessment of today's sensibilities. Augé clearly opposes a condition which he calls supermodernity but retains some optimism for a different future. Nora, however, works on a nostalgic project of return to the lost nation as a framework for a renewed foundation of a collective subjectivity.

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30 Augé 1995, 63.
31 Laclau and Mouffe 1985.

32 On the notion of interpellation see Althusser 1971, 170–177; Charim 2002, 139–161.
33 Augé 1995, 41–43.
34 González-Ruibal 2008.

Reaching this point, a parallel in the ideas of the historian Nora and the ethnologist Augé seems to me more important: both insist on the categorical difference between a non-modern world and modernity. This repeats on a subliminal level the traditional argumentation of European intellectuals from colonial times. Whereas Nora characterizes the alleged twilight of a non-modern world with the contemptuous vocabulary of "slumber",[35] Augé is far less prejudiced in his rhetorical boundary drawing. However, his criticism of the super-modern retains its sharp edge only because he denies any possibility for the construction of 'non-places' for non-modernities. Augé's starting point is the idea of a coherent identity in all non-modern societies and cultures. This flies in the face of insights derived from research by cultural anthropologists, such as Strathern and Sökefeld.[36] They show that it is exactly those non-European cultures that have developed multifarious understandings of the self, for example as a 'dividual'. These concepts of the self remain outside the standard narrative of social identities characteristic of Western concepts of subjectivity and identity.

III.

In October 2010, Angela Merkel announced: "The approach to multiculturalism has failed, absolutely failed!"[37] Not long thereafter, David Cameron gave a speech in Munich in which he said, among other things, that:

> under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives. […] It's that identity, that feeling of belonging in our countries, that I believe is the key to achieving true cohesion.[38]

Six days after Cameron's speech, Nicolas Sarkozy opined that "le multiculturalisme est un échec".[39] These quotes, stemming from a period of only a few months, uttered by the then most powerful politicians in Europe, have on the surface nothing to do with non-places and places of memory. They seem to run counter to the theoretical considerations of Augé, but can easily be set into the image that Nora is painting – if his constructivist stories came together successfully within an essentialist framework. Merkel et alii insist that we live in an era in which the nexus of culture, history and identity is not a purely

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35 See above; the direct quote is "reveillées par le viol colonial de leur sommeil ethnologique", Nora 1984, XVII.

36 Strathern 1988; Sökefeld 1999.

37 http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/integration-merkel-erklaert-multikulti-fuer-gescheitert-a-723532.html (visited on 15/02/2017).

38 https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference (visited on 15/02/2017).

39 http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2011/02/10/01002-20110210ARTFIG00709-sarkozy-nouvelles-mesures-pour-les-mineurs-delinquants.php (visited on 15/02/2017).

academic topic. Powerful European politicians spread their opinions on culture, identities and their supposed need for cohesion as truths without further analytical support.

We as archaeologists are investigators of culture and are bound to critically evaluate discursive worlds of cultural exclusion such as those created by the aforementioned speeches. We ourselves have a tendency to do research on identities. It may seem at first sight as if exclusionary rhetoric from the centers of power in Europe politicize and polarize, whereas our archaeological research on past identities is harmless in nature. We only talk about the long-gone Celts, the Trichterbecher culture, the Greek colonies in Sicily, and others. But such scholarly statements are necessarily part of a larger political context that bridges the gap between academic and non-academic worlds because they support the idea that groups have fixed identities which are anchored in religious centers, towns, in remarkable natural features, buildings and other localities. Ultimately, therefore, archaeological statements reach far deeper into the ideological foundations of present societies than short-term political tirades. The peculiarity of archaeological discourse is that general assumptions such as a firm link between identity and locality, when they enter discursive constructions of a culture's deep past, give the impression that they are independent of the details of any individual case. This is also the point where talk about memory qua *lieux de mémoire* becomes politically virulent: the particular exclusionary historical constructivism drives European debates about foreigners and their alleged threatening nature. However, archaeological and other academic discourses ultimately lay the foundations that undergird the present deportation regime and the 'passive killing' of more than 10 000 of people in the Mediterranean since the turn of the millennium. Such discourse is a toxic mix of supposedly ahistorical principles of clearly identifiable features of group membership, and political performances and acts of national pride and discrimination against distressed and needy refugees.

A fundamental criticism of these kinds of identitarian considerations emerged with one of the most famous intellectuals in post-colonial circles, Homi Bhabha. Interestingly, spatial metaphors play a fundamental role in his writings, especially in his understanding of the notion of 'Third Space'. Such Third Spaces are neither identitarian *lieux* nor Augé's non-places. Rather, Bhabha claims that subjects, and for him particularly postcolonial subjects, actively occupy sites from where a discourse emanates, "spaces of enunciation".[40] Third Spaces are thus first and foremost positions from where to talk, and Bhabha is preoccupied with their insertion into relations of power.

He explains his views with reference to a central aspect of Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*,[41] the master-slave example. I give a very brief account of Hegel's complex argument since the postcolonial critique of Bhabha revolves around this core text. Hegel discusses the struggle for recognition between a master and a servant, elaborating on a

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40 Bhabha 1994, 50, 55.　　41 Hegel 1970 [1807], 113–137.

hierarchical relationship of recognition. Despite the antagonism that is fundamental to the relation, Hegel assumes a basic potential for mutual recognition. While the master is dependent on the recognition of the slave for the confirmation of his role, for the slave his own labor, the practical transformation of nature, is just as important. The master derives his self-consciousness from a purely intersubjective relation, while the slave's self-consciousness is less dependent on intersubjectivity. Labor and the object of labor are two externalities that take on a decisive role in a mediation and overcoming of the hierarchical antagonism. Labor is constitutive for the slave's independent self-consciousness. This text has received widespread attention, from Marx to Kojève, Butler, Žižek and Buck-Morss.[42]

One of those who engaged with Hegel's text was Frantz Fanon, the radical and foundational intellectual of post-colonialism. He compares the master-slave parable with the relationship between colonizers and colonized and claims that the colonial relation denies the colonized even the possibility of recognition and thus of the development of a self-consciousness. The colonial subject is forced to position her- or himself solely towards the colonial master, so that a sublation of the antagonism, the core of Hegel's idea of dialectics, is rendered completely impossible. The enslaved subject is not perceived by the colonialist as a subject and Other who is in principle on a similar ontological level. In turn, Fanon interprets Hegel's "work of the slave" as work on the death of the master-colonialist:

> To work means to work for the death of the settler. This assumed responsibility for violence allows both strayed and outlawed members of the group to come back again and to find their place once more, to become integrated. Violence is thus seen as comparable to royal pardon. The colonized man [sic] finds his freedom in and through violence. This rule of conduct enlightens the agent because it indicates to him the means and the end.[43]

Where Hegel's dialectic identifies a relation of slave and work as a condition for the genesis of self-consciousness, Fanon claims violence as the basic constitutive element for the colonized subject.

Bhabha pacifies Fanon's radical interpretation of Hegel's recognition as a praxis of violence. He follows Fanon's critique of Hegel and notes the impossibility for the colonized to form a stable subjectivity. However, instead of searching for ways to reframe Hegelian dialectics, Bhabha asserts that the whole scheme is misconceived: the colonized ought to take up a position outside of the master – slave antagonism. He relies not so much on Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, but more heavily on his earlier work *Black*

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42 Kojève 1947; Butler 1997; Žižek 2000; Buck-Morss 2009.

43 Fanon 1963, 84–85.

Skin, White Masks in which Fanon gives an account of the psychological consequences of the absurdity that the color of the skin is discursively imposed on black, colonized people as always already hateful, resulting in a desire to be different, a desire that can never be realized.[44] Bhabha proposes that the colonized should appropriate this requirement of self-contempt imposed by the colonial masters as an advantage: they should actively occupy a paradoxical 'Third Space' of displaced subjectivity, outside of the master – slave dichotomy, since recognition is an impossibility in the colonial sphere. Compared to dominant Aristotelian ways of thinking, but also to European dialectical thought, a Third Space marks an outside, to be distinguished from any intermediate position between two antagonistic poles. This is what Bhabha refers to when he characterizes the Third Space as 'hybridity', a standpoint from which the world appears in a completely different perspective, neither that of the slave nor master nor even the potential of taking one of these two positions.

Bhabha's 'enunciatory space' is this Third Space, which he encircles in his works in many different formulations but never clearly defines. This lack of clarity is not a conceptual problem. Rather, Bhabha interprets the desire for clear definitions and terminological boundaries as a means to produce power relations and fundamental scientific positions, a sphere in which he aims to act subversively. He wants to challenge the large- and small-scale categorizations that disciplinary traditions impose on us. For the logic of the Third Space, it would be inappropriate to continue with arguments that are based on dialectical reasoning, definitional dichotomies and associations, or clear-cut categorizations in the form of knowledge frameworks. Bhabha mounts a well-deserved attack on unreflected frames and structures of knowledge, particularly scientific ones.

To illustrate the issue, we can draw on the above-mentioned quotes by politicians on the supposed failure of multiculturalism. Diversity must always already be divided into a sharply delimited Self and Other to produce that kind of discourse. This chasm of Self and Other is also a precondition for the assumed integration of the foreign and a precondition for requesting from the Other that she/he assimilate, acculturate, disappear – at the same time claiming the impossibility of exactly that assimilation/acculturation. Western thought is strongly colonialist when it separates identity from alterity, and imposes on alterity and otherness a structural parallel to the identitarian. The result is a paradox. The Other as a subject is supposed to be split into a potential for sameness and an essentialized otherness, and these two elements are then inextricably linked. This condition is forced upon the colonized as well as those refugees from former colonies who seek protection for their lives in Europe. Political demands for integration aim at 'remaining different' in the process of 'becoming similar': they force a conflicted, decentered subjectivity on transnational migrants in the post-modern world.

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44 Fanon 1963; Fanon 1967.

Bhabha attacks these very ideas, a set of precepts that are driven by the fear of a split subjectivity while simultaneously demanding it. He calls for post-colonial, fugitive and migrant people to accept the position of a decentered subjectivity in a productive manner. He discusses this process in a variety of ways, with metaphors from the practice of translation, biologistic terms such as hybridity, and the idea of a "paradoxical community", adapted from Julia Kristeva.[45] Fundamental is his insistence that the sphere of a Third Space does not allow a stable, unambiguous position. Rather, Bhabha as well as James Clifford productively mobilize the metaphors of the way, the route, aimless movement and diaspora. The colonized know no identitarian topoi or places of memory. For them, the whole world is a non-place. Nostalgic terms such as *Heimat* ('homeland') are no longer commensurable with the present world. Bhabha refers to Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation when he elaborates enunciatory Third Spaces, positions that interpellate subjects as fundamentally ambiguous. As a literary critic, Bhabha draws on works such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or contemporary artists such as Emily Jacir. Goethe and Hafez, Toni Morrison and Salman Rushdie are cited again and again. This has led to the accusation that Third Space is theorizing without practical relevance for the destitute who live in the abject conditions of uprootedness. Is Third Space a purely metaphorical discursive concept?

To ask for operationalization of a concept such as Third Space smacks of the addiction of our present age to turn everything into an entity that can point beyond itself. Can an idea such as that of Third Space, formulated out of reflections on a position that is irreducibly outside, ever be made 'useful' without destroying it? In the present context, I advocate a moderate functionalization. The reason is Nora's and Augé's conviction that pre- and non-modern cultures are characterized by a close intertwining of place, identity and memory. The advent of capitalism and its development up to post-modernity, accompanied by the emergence of a critical historical discourse, are the causes for the dissolution of this dispositive. I will try to show with a case study that this categorical difference of the non-modern cannot and should not be upheld; rather, in pre-modern times, there were also non-places that interpellated people into/as decentered subjects. To investigate this possibility, we can only rarely resort to written records of pre-modern times, for textual documents tend to reduce the ambiguity of the quotidian world through a simplifying reductionism. Archaeological evidence is more suitable for this task – even if academic archaeology has developed an almost instinctive drive to classify and categorize. Third Spaces can be identified in four archaeological spheres.

First, we often deal with borderline phenomena outside of established categories, both in the concrete sense of physical space as well as in metaphorical-discursive fields. For example, liminality is a well-known phenomenon in archaeology.[46] Liminal spaces

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45 Bhabha 1994, 139–170.

46 See Schreiber 2013, 59–61.

remove subjects from an orderly space-time grid. They are architecturally and ideologically designed to produce a de-subjectivizing effect. The difference to Third Space as conceptualized by Bhabha is that liminal regions are temporary phenomena.

Secondly, the 'out-of-betweenness' of Third Space is certainly applicable to archaeological things and the categories imposed on them. One might even think that Bhabha's theory accords well with archaeological tendencies since he insists on "splitting". But he uses this word solely for the internal split of subjectivity, not for cladistic routines in an academic field. Since we sometimes create absurdly detailed typologies that are far removed from any past daily life, we would be well advised to follow Bhabha's thoughts on the hybrid, on ambiguity as a constitutive element of reality – rather than surrender to the typical drive for clear-cut classes and definitions. In Bhabha's terminology, Third Spaces are simply ambivalent. A recognition of this possibility would be the first step toward reflecting on past subjectivities that might have been connected with ambiguities of the material world.

Furthermore, Third Space is not primarily a physical space, but a metaphorical one of translation and dislocation. This needs to be taken into account for one of the basic elements of archaeology, the temporal dimension. The contradictions between the *then* and the *now* would not be so relevant, nor would the sheer temporal difference between the present and a past, but rather temporalities that are (sometimes radically) different from linear time, each one a 'chrono-logic' that operates with a specific relation of experiences and expectations.

Bhabha's concept of a Third Space develops its full complexity and attraction if we follow his discussions on subjectivation through interpellation. Specific elements of material culture that display the characteristics of a Third Space, that therefore refuse to be easily inserted into our classificatory schemes and dichotomous thinking, can be connected with past hybrid subjectivities.

IV.

The northernmost edge of the Jordanian capital Amman borders on a field of dolmens called Maqam Issa (*Tomb of Jesus*; Fig. 1. 2).[47] The area of southern Syria, Jordan, and the Golan heights includes large numbers of such dolmens.[48] They have been studied archaeologically for about 80 years, starting with Moshe Stekelis' ground-breaking work.[49] Attempts at systematizing have had varied results. In spite of continued research efforts,

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47 The site is located at 32° 5' 31,5" N, 35° 54' 10,1" E.   49 Stekelis 1935.
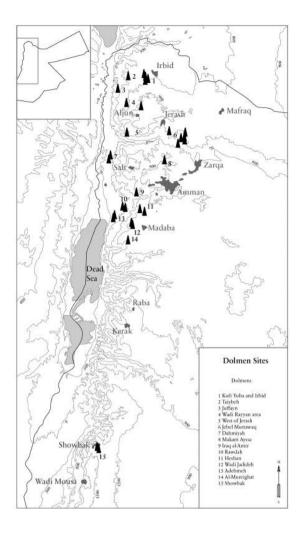48 Steimer and Braemer 1999; Scheltema 2008.

these megaliths still remain an enigmatic archaeological phenomenon because archae-ologists have been unable to agree on a coherent set of variables to characterize them. Discussions of recent field research return so often to the holy trinity of space, time and function of these monuments that the affirmation of secure knowledge is a sign of the opposite.[50] The extant literature rarely includes the (postprocessual) question of the dol-mens' meanings for their past and present users. I am of the opinion that these dolmen

50   For example Polcaro et al. 2014, 2–3; Steimer and
     Braemer 1999, 176.

Fig. 2 An overview of the western part of the dolmen field of Maqam Issa, as seen from the south.

fields resist temporal and other determinations not only because of insufficient research. Rather, this vagueness will remain, regardless of how much money is spent on surveys and excavations to enlighten us about their original contexts. The reason for this apparent problem is that they are ancient non-places. These megaliths did not mark spaces of identity, as I will try to show by commenting on their chronology, spatial distribution and supposed function(s).

Jordanian dolmens can only rarely be clearly dated. In very few instances, objects are found in their surroundings, underneath or within these megaliths, and if there are, they usually consist of small sherds or fragments of bone that are unsuitable for clear dating. Where one finds relatively good preservation, ceramics can be typologically determined to belong to a period that reaches from the late fourth to the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE.[51] But if one takes seriously finds around the dolmens from the Iron Age and more recent periods, the continued use of dolmens in the Roman or

51 Steimer 2004–2005, 38–41.

Byzantine period, in the Islamic Middle Ages up to the 19th century cannot be ruled out. Individual references show that these structures have been used in many epochs.[52]

Chronologically, dolmens are situated in a Third Space, namely outside of a supposedly uniform time of origin and the time of the researcher, perceived as two end points in a linear chronological scheme. They elude any clear chronological determination and thus the interpretation of belonging to a single social, religious or political context that would lend itself to one of the usual interpretations: the tombs of a nomadic group in early urban societies, the political center of a tribe in a specific period, etc. Cornelius Holtorf has drawn attention to a similar situation for European dolmens.[53] How then to proceed with further research? In my view, an appropriate approach would start from the premise that each of these buildings has its own biography, so that a field of dolmens is an assemblage of multitemporalities, a locality that does not lend itself to the creation of collective identities. Dolmens are places of transitory occupation, as was observed for two dolmens in Maqam Issa in 2003, and in 2009. One was used as a shed for agricultural tools, including a long garden hose (Fig. 3). Another dolmen showed many signs of temporary habitation, probably by a shepherd (Fig. 4). In front of the entrance to this box-like megalith, we found a cup, and the entrance itself had been protected from rainwater by a small earthen dam. Neither was built specifically for these uses.

For documentation of the spatial occurrence of megaliths, GIS-based maps seem to be the best means. It is clear that the Jordanian dolmens are often found in accumulations, so-called dolmen fields. However, those fields are not clearly delimited; rather, they show signs of merging into each other, resulting in difficulties of description when geographical framing and mapping are attempted.[54] Jordanian fields of megaliths are landscapes without definite boundaries, without an *inside* and *outside*, without the possibility to mark inclusion and exclusion.

On the campus of Jordan University in Amman, a single dolmen was erected, torn out of its original surroundings at Damiyah (see Fig. 1) and transported to a place where it is suddenly charged with the prominence of a *lieu de mémoire* that was lacking before. A similar attempt is currently being undertaken at Ludwig Albrechts University, Kiel, in northern Germany.[55] Dislocation and re-embedding in a university context, and thus professional production of memory discourses, implies a stable, primordial meaning that can be transported with the material. However, what if the monuments lack exactly this imagined original meaning?

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52 For example Zingboym 2009; Savage 2010, 40.

53 Holtorf n.d. https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/citd/holtorf/1.1.html (visited on 22/03/2017).

54 See Scheltema 2008, 7 Map; Steimer and Braemer 1999, fig. 1.

55 Under the title "Megalithsite CAU", several organizations are setting up the monument on 14/05/2015: http://www.cau350.uni-kiel.de/termine/events/show/megalith-site-cau/ (visited on 22/03/2017).

Fig. 3 Maqam Issa. Dolmen in a field of olive trees, used as a shed for tools.

The topographic situation of most dolmen fields deserves attention as well. In search of meaning and significance of archaeological places, we are often inclined to tap into strategic-economic or political 'factors'. For this purpose trade routes, boundaries between ecotopes, waterways or other features are invoked and analyzed with GIS and other complex procedures. But what happens when these traditional archaeo-logics fail because they simply ask the wrong questions? What if there are no specifiable utilitarian reasons for the location of monuments, and there never were? I suspect that the Jordanian dolmens are a good example of anti-utilitarian and therefore unexplainable locations. They occur in uncharacteristic spaces in topographically variable areas: not on ridges, nor in valleys, not aligned, but rather strewn along slopes. Maqam Issa is a good case in point. One result is that they are in peripheral landscapes where neither agriculture nor major building activities occurred until very recently.

Fields of megaliths produce a secondary non-place, which has been rarely studied in Jordan: the terrain between these monuments. The regularly observed lack of clearly

Fig. 4 Dolmen at Maqam Issa, used as an overnight place, likely by a shepherd; containing remains of food, pieces of wood and a plastic bottle.

identifiable and datable finds has led to intensified search for objects that are directly associated with dolmens, in the hopes of finding traces of temporal and functional relevance.[56] The wider surroundings remain completely neglected. This research strategy leads to a Third Space of second degree. If one were to design a research strategy for those in-between spaces, only a microarchaeological approach could be successful, since it is highly unlikely that substantial material remains are preserved in a landscape left open since hundreds if not thousands of years.

In a broader sense, fields of megaliths constitute a complex spatial Other. At present, for example, the groups called Maqam Issa and al-Rawda are located in areas that are encroached upon by fast urban expansion of the Jordanian capital, Amman. Following a massive influx of migrants, especially refugees, in the aftermath of the Western occupation of Iraq in 2003, and after 2010 as an outcome of the Syrian civil war, rich city dwellers have resorted to the construction of new villas on surrounding ridges, in the case of ar-Rawda also of a whole settlement that covers the southern part of the former dolmen field. Infrastructure, including asphalted roads but also trails cleared by bulldozers for the ubiquitous land cruisers, have destroyed large numbers of dolmens. One such road crosses the Maqam Issa field and goes straight up the hill (Fig. 2).

Elderly men from the village at the foot of the slope of Maqam Issa to whom we spoke in 2003 still called the dolmens *beit al ghoul*, houses of evil spirits. The various discourses produce a clash between hyper-modern rational secularism of the villa owners and traditional ideas of the villagers. While one side keeps a respectful and safe distance

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56 Yassine 1985; Polcaro et al. 2014.

from the stone monuments, the other sets out to brutally destroy them with heavy machinery. But even here there are third positions that I mentioned above, outside of the divide between respect and lack thereof: the use of dolmens as protectors against inclement weather, as an overnight lodging, or as a playground, a great variety of uses that remain to be explored in detail. The relationship of today's inhabitants of the area around Maqam Issa to these megaliths is therefore not reducible to a simple antagonism between the positions of *traditional* and *modern*. In addition, we have urgently to ask what kind of histories present-day uses as playground, shed and shelter have; and what kinds of material traces are associated with these monument histories.

Dolmens are not only Third Spaces today, they likely had the same aspect in antiquity. Despite their size, they are hidden in the surrounding landscape of huge natural rocks and cliffs. Attempts at 'grasping' their function and meaning are part of the archaeological labor of typologizing.[57] Again, among these and other attempts, none can be considered definitive, because they are all based on the Weberian concept of the ideal type(s), which reduces real multiplicity and variability to a few schematic entities at the detriment of many 'deviant cases'. Structuring and listing of types have been attempted many times, but their usefulness as convincing interpretations remains to be demonstrated. In this particular case, I contend that the ordering episteme of the archaeological discipline turns into science for science's sake.

One research goal of investigating the megaliths is to ascertain their function. According to the current interpretations of most experts, these monuments were tombs,[58] inscriptions of meanings into a landscape that served as identity markers,[59] or both.[60] Terminologies such as *nécropole* leave no space for any other function, while questions about specificities of burial rituals remain.[61]

If one follows the dominant opinion of a primary function of dolmens as tombs, the next concern is, who was buried there? Hierarchies of more or less rich dolmen tombs could not so far be established, since the number of dolmens with human remains is too small and the finds are not specific enough. Dolmen fields that are directly associated with settlements could only be detected in a few cases.[62] It is therefore often assumed that these megaliths were monuments of nomadic groups that supplied herd animals to an urban or rural sedentary population.[63] Attempts have been made to interpret the complexity of types of dolmens as an indicator of sociopolitical differentiation within mobile groups. These have not met general acceptance,[64] although recent

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57 Zohar 1992; Kafafi and Scheltema 2005.

58 For example Prag 1995.

59 Lyonnet 2004; in general see Tilley 1994; Tilley 2004.

60 Steimer and Braemer 1999.

61 Steimer and Braemer 1999, 184–185.

62 Steimer-Herbet 2006; Polcaro et al. 2014.

63 For example Zohar 1992; Prag 1995.

64 Steimer and Braemer 1999, 187.

finds show some differentiation between individuals in a megalithic tomb from Jebel al Mutawwaq.[65]

However, the function 'tomb' has been identified for a comparatively small number of dolmens. All other dolmens without such functional indications have simply been declared to have been looted. While this is certainly the case for some of them, so that an unknown proportion of these structures can be said to have been tombs, the assumption of monofunctionality seems far-fetched.[66]

Could it not be a fallacy to separate the production of dolmens from their function? Instrumentalist modern thinking may reject the idea that the act of erecting a large stone structure is both purpose and objective. However, the aforementioned megalith construction at Kiel university is certainly a case in point. Others have made similar arguments for other kinds of monumental structures.[67] Despite a materiality whose main characteristic seems to be duration, the possibility should be entertained that the collective carrying out of a task was of greater import than its result. Thus, the presumed primary function of a tomb could have been a secondary effect.

The results of research on dating, regional contexts and functions of Jordanian megaliths can be synthesized in one word: enigmatic. In my view, an emerging impression of 'clarification' in the last decennia of academic labor is less due to accumulating knowledge than to a traditional procedure of constructing knowledge through pairs of oppositions and associations. Dolmens often are supposed to fit *somewhere* into a town-hinterland scheme, into the field of conflicts between sedentary and mobile groups, into rites of passage from life to death and so on. I would not deny that they may partly have had these purposes, but most of the time they likely held ambiguous positions in relation to passersby, just as much as the passersby related varyingly to the enduring materiality of the monumental stones.

How would it be if dolmens are an instance of past Third Spaces, owing their existence to activities that are not graspable in known discursive systems of domination and subalternity, city and countryside, the monumental and everyday life, agriculture and nomadism, life and death, past and present, periphery and center? Can they be read as an Outside, as non-places that would ultimately connect with hybridity and unstable subjectivities, with 'dividuals' external to any identitarian conceptualizations? Might they be grounds of interpellation that inscribe themselves into human beings as an anti-remembrance, where de-subjectivizing powers emanate from the stone rather than holding a potential for fixed meanings and historicization?

If we answer in the negative, dolmens can be regarded as *lieux de mémoire*, past and present. Then, they lead to the familiar set of questions mentioned above: when were

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65 Polcaro et al. 2014, 11–12.

66 See also Scheltema 2008, 49 and especially Al-Shorman 2010.

67 Johnson 1987; Pauketat 2000; Joyce 2004; Bernbeck 2013.

the megaliths at Maqam Issa built? By whom, and for how long were they in use? We might want to know whether we can isolate different chronological layers of dolmens by extricating period-specific types from an initially chaotic multiplicity. The growth of a dolmen field through time could perhaps be determined with ever more precise microarchaeological methods. We could search for objects that are perhaps associated with some of these monuments in order to elicit links to nearby settlements. Our archaeological practice would consist of describing, delimiting, categorizing, defining, comparing. With a lot of methodological skill, but especially with some luck in the selection of soundings, we might even succeed in ascribing to the former builders and users a cultural identity, whether as Early Bronze I temporary urban settlers[68] or as nomads of a collapsed urban society in the Early Bronze IV period.[69] It is easy to imagine that we would find some of the items and contexts cursorily imagined here, because we have been educated to believe firmly in the potential of ordering all archaeological materials, and because we can construe statistical regularities out of available, if very small samples.

However, if we start from the possibility that Jordanian megaliths constitute an ancient set of non-places, we cannot follow such an approach. Instead of imposing order onto materials, we would aim to demonstrate their ambivalence. Is this possible? Starting with the familiar procedures of fallibilism or other rule-based logics, the endeavor would fail. Not de-scription, but circum-scription would be an appropriate goal. Not a praxis of delimiting, but of *entgrenzen* and de-territorialization; not of defining, but of de-concretization and ambiguation. The detection of ambiguities in archaeologically preserved pasts has become an extremely difficult task because this approach is diametrically opposed to the all-pervasive cladistic, analytical and classificatory ideology of the discipline. Our eternal return to questions of identity is due not just to a specific interest driven by today's political realities, but also by a methodological cage that does not even allow us to explore materialities that de-subjectivize. One day, archaeology will follow cultural anthropology and accept narratives that emphasize the diffuse, fuzzy and blurry elements of past multitudinous realities. Reductionism, the royal road to archaeological accounts, awaits its complementary Other.

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68 Prag 1995; Lyonnet 2004.   **69** Zohar 1992.

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