



PROJECT MUSE®

---

Of Other Spaces and Others' Memories: Reading Graveyards  
in Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* and  
Regina Scheer's *Machandel*

Leila Essa

Comparative Literature Studies, Volume 58, Number 4, 2021, pp.  
744-779 (Article)

Published by Penn State University Press



➔ For additional information about this article

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/820440>

OF OTHER SPACES AND OTHERS' MEMORIES: READING  
GRAVEYARDS IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE MINISTRY*  
OF *UTMOST HAPPINESS* AND REGINA SCHEER'S *MACHANDEL*

---

*Leila Essa*

ABSTRACT

This article probes the relationship between spatial belonging and memorialization in Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) and Regina Scheer's *Machandel* (2014), examining how the focus on graveyards in both novels ties in with their equally shared emphasis on social outsiders forming communities in (formerly) partitioned nations. It reassesses Michel Foucault's idea of heterotopias—exceptional spaces that reflect back on the rest of society—and shows how both texts position the perpetually shifting nature of such “other spaces” in contrast to the fixed and exclusionary notions of belonging that buttress contemporary right-wing nationalist discourses in India and Germany alike. Scrutinizing the memorializing function of the depicted graveyards in light of Michael Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory, the article then demonstrates how *Ministry* and *Machandel* connect differently marginalized groups' histories and propose present-day solidarity between them. Reading heterotopia through multidirectionality and vice versa, this analysis showcases how Foucault's and Rothberg's respective concerns with discourse-destabilizing spaces and despatialized memory discourses productively complicate and complement each other. It is through the *interplay* of alternative material spaces and connective approaches to memory that Roy's and Scheer's novel develop visions of community centering on those otherwise marginalized.

KEYWORDS: Arundhati Roy, Regina Scheer, heterotopia, multidirectional memory, borders

---

DOI: 10.5325/complitstudies.58.4.0744

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE STUDIES, VOL. 58, NO. 4, 2021.

Copyright © 2021. The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.

Through their sprawling scope and fragmented narrative focus, Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) and Regina Scheer's *Machandel* (2014) attempt to capture a multitude of past and present injustices that mark contemporary India and Germany, respectively. In both novels groups of outsiders seek refuge, forge connections, and create homes nearby or even directly in spaces that seem far from homely: graveyards. This article scrutinizes the destabilizing qualities which Roy's much-anticipated second novel and Scheer's fictional debut ascribe to these burial sites and shelters, exploring the mutually illuminating ways in which the texts' settings align with their formal qualities and impact the alternative modes of community they envision. Significantly differing from the material and societal structures around them, these spaces, as I show in the first part of my analysis, facilitate renegotiations of belonging in both *Ministry* and *Machandel*. I then trace how the memorializing function of graveyards relates to the development of solidarity—of relations “forged through direct opposition to inequality and oppression”<sup>1</sup>—between differently marginalized people and groups in these novels that explicitly critique exclusionist discourses in their specific contexts of twentieth-century national partitions and twenty-first century nationalisms.

Both *Ministry* and *Machandel* contain numerous perspectives, but also present identifiable protagonists that help the reader to piece their “shattered stor[ies]”<sup>2</sup> together. In *Ministry* main character Anjum welcomes an eclectic group of individuals into her community at an Old Delhi graveyard, most notably a younger woman called Tilo whose strand of the narrative, in turn, introduces the Mazar-e-Shohadda, “the Martyr’s Graveyard”<sup>3</sup> in Kashmir. Between Anjum and Tilo, and Delhi and Kashmir, the novel tells a wealth of tales about marginalization and state violence. Anjum, born with ambiguous genitalia and raised as a boy named Aftab, leaves her family at fifteen to live with a group of *bijras* (a term specific to the South Asian context which refers to people who, having been assigned male at birth, identify as women or as neither women nor men). While life in the Khwabgah, “the House of Dreams,”<sup>4</sup> allows Anjum to free herself of familial constraints, she decides to leave this home, too, after she is caught up in the 2002 Gujarat massacre and finds herself unable to communicate the atrocities she has seen to the others.

It is then that she moves to the nearby graveyard and builds dwellings for herself and transitory as well as permanent guests. One such long-term guest is a young man who goes by the name of Saddam Hussain and carries his own traumatic memories with him, having watched his Dalit (lower-caste) father being lynched by an angry mob after being falsely accused of “cow-slaughter.”<sup>5</sup> Rather than characterizing him in more depth, however, the plot shifts away

from Saddam as well as Anjum shortly after this revelation, as Tilo—and an abandoned baby—appear. While the Kashmiri independence movement takes center stage via Tilo's story, the text eventually reveals the child's mother to be a communist guerrilla fighter from Southeast India and thereby adds the struggles of the Adivasi, India's indigenous population, to the matrix of injustices that bring people to the graveyard guest house.

Though *Machandel* also addresses pressing current issues such as xenophobia toward refugees and immigrants in Germany, it does not focus on the present day in the same way as Roy's text, but rather approaches these problems by revisiting different stages of the country's postwar past. The novel finds its frame through recurring accounts by Clara, an East Berliner born in 1960, alternating between her voice and those of other first-person narrators. Similarly crowded, but more regularly structured than *Ministry*, *Machandel* follows a one-perspective-per-chapter approach and facilitates multigenerational narration by including Clara's parents' viewpoints. Yet it is not an East German family saga like Uwe Tellkamp's *Der Turm* (2008) or Eugen Ruge's *In Zeiten des abnehmenden Lichts* (2011), but draws a wide range of postwar experiences together. In moving to the village of Machandel, Clara connects with characters such as Natalja, who has arrived as a forced laborer deported from Russia in 1941, and Wilhelm, who works as a warden for these laborers during the war and still manages to win the favor of the Soviet occupiers and the government of the German Democratic Republic afterwards.

As the novel contrasts such scenarios of suffering and complicity, it also traces how earlier wrongs of German history are used to justify later ones, especially—but not only—in the East. The moment of reunification is narrated as a complicated and by no means purely positive one, the back and forth between Berlin and the East German province providing multifaceted views of the political developments then and since. Ultimately *Machandel* reaches into the 2010s, significantly using the beginning of civil war in Syria as a final temporal marker and thereby emphasizing the links between past and present experiences of displacement in Germany where new characters begin to arrive as the text reaches its end.

This "Historie unserer Zeit" (history of our time), as East German author Christoph Hein describes *Machandel* in a quote printed on its cover,<sup>6</sup> portrays public protest culture alongside its personal narratives much like *Ministry* does. Given Roy's status as an internationally renowned author and left-wing activist, her second novel was instantly and controversially categorized as an overt contribution to these protest discourses upon its publication,<sup>7</sup> while Scheer's newness to the German literary scene did not

result in such direct political impact. The choice to promote the novel through a quote by Hein, however, marks a positioning of *Machandel* as a text that picks up the tradition of East German protest literature. As the publisher's short biography of Scheer reveals, the period of organized activism explored in the text also coincides with the author's own time as a writer for *Forum*, a student newspaper which was shut down due to its "counterrevolutionary" tendencies.<sup>8</sup>

In line with its examination of contemporary Germany via the GDR, *Machandel* provokes the reader to think about the current relevance of such engaged citizenship without directly addressing present-day German politics. *Ministry*, on the other hand, overtly criticizes the Indian government and all but names Narendra Modi. Through "thinly-veiled salvos at the one-time master of Gujarat"<sup>9</sup> and his party's Hindu nationalism, Roy's second novel addresses the state's failings much more directly than even her own fictional debut, *The God of Small Things* (1997), which focuses on the fate of one family. The far wider narrative scope of *Ministry* resulted in mixed critical reactions: on the one hand accusations that Roy has constructed a "Baedeker of headline events"<sup>10</sup> or a "gargantuan handbook to modern India and its injustices"<sup>11</sup> aimed at a Western readership, on the other hand praise for providing just the "call to arms" and "fearless antinovel"<sup>12</sup> which Modi's India requires.

*Machandel* received considerable critical praise for its insistence on connecting the different characters' wartime- and GDR-biographies with the present day,<sup>13</sup> particularly for emphasizing the plight of displaced people at a moment of new refugees arriving in Germany.<sup>14</sup> Yet Scheer's novel, like *Ministry*, also lays itself open to attack with this endeavor to tell multiple stories at once: "Das größte Problem dieses literarischen Geschichtsbaums," remarks Elmar Krekeler, "ist, dass Regina Scheer ihm zu viele Äste hat wachsen lassen." (The biggest problem of this literary history-tree is the fact that Regina Scheer let it grow too many branches.)<sup>15</sup> In both Scheer's and Roy's case, then, an actively demonstrated desire to comprehensively grasp complex national contexts is met with the accusation of plots "sprout[ing]"<sup>16</sup> out of narrative control.

This article shows how this supposed loss of structure on a formal level interacts with both the spatial settings and the processes of memorialization that these texts explore. In order to grapple with the interpretive possibilities that Roy's and Scheer's sprouting texts offer, I revisit a theoretical notion all too often accused of lacking defined boundaries itself—Michel Foucault's heterotopia—and combine it with Michael Rothberg's concept of memory itself "shooting in many directions, with memory-like weeds often popping up unexpectedly, disrupting easy systems for the ordering of the collective past."<sup>17</sup>

*Heterotopias and Multidirectionality*

When Foucault first mentions heterotopias, “other spaces,” in the preface to *The Order of Things* in 1966, he attributes them with the “disturbing” quality of “destroy[ing] ‘syntax’ [ . . . ], and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things [ . . . ] to ‘hold together.’”<sup>18</sup> This admittedly rather oblique definition resonates with the distinct lack of “holding together” reviewers perceive in *Machandel* and especially *Ministry*, and serves as a reminder of the textual and specifically literary roots of what would become a tool of spatial analysis. The latter notion—heterotopias disrupting the structures of cities rather than that of sentences—comes to the fore in Foucault’s famously vague lecture “Of Other Spaces” which defines heterotopias as “real places [ . . . ] that are a sort of counter-emplacements [ . . . ] in which [ . . . ] all the other real emplacements that can be found within culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted.”<sup>19</sup> Presented to a group of architects in 1967, but not published until 1986, Foucault’s short sketch of a theory has given rise to a whole host of interpretations, which, as Bernd Knaller-Vlay and Robert Ritter point out, are often “not only contradictory and opposed to each other but also in some cases completely incomparable.”<sup>20</sup>

Rather than presupposing one of these conflicting interpretations as a given, this article draws from—and contributes to—the ongoing critical debate on Foucault’s idea. Kelvin T. Knight proposes that we should return to the radio talk “Les Hétérotopies” that Foucault gave in between the publication of *The Order of Things* and the lecture for the *Cercle d’études architecturales* as a means to resolve the perceived paradoxes in Foucault’s own conception and to clarify its applicability in critical discourse.<sup>21</sup> “Les Hétérotopies” contains much of what Foucault would present in “Of Other Spaces,” but the former’s literary examples are transformed into historical urban ones only after Ionel Schein, one of the architect circle’s convenors, invites a surprised Foucault to talk on the topic.<sup>22</sup> Knight argues that “the decidedly literary tone and context” of the radio talk and the “peculiar circumstances of its subsequent adaptation for an architectural audience” allow the conclusion “that the heterotopia was never intended as a tool for the study of real urban space” but rather provides “a set of literary motifs used by writers to present an alternative configuration of space.”<sup>23</sup> This suggestion, which seems somewhat hasty in the light of Foucault’s continuous engagement with questions of architecture and urban planning,<sup>24</sup> sets up an unsatisfyingly dichotomous divide between concepts useful for the study of “real material

sites" and for that of literary, "semi-mythical" places.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless Knight's impetus to insist on the tension between the two enables a productive return to the heterotopian concept in all its literariness in order to interrogate the novels at hand, novels that fictionally represent real material sites.

Attention to the critical discussion around heterotopias furthermore highlights that the relationship between these spaces and ideas of subversive, alternative communities, which are crucial for the analysis of *Ministry* and *Machandel*, is by no means straightforward. Geographer and urban theorist Edward Soja's approach to heterotopias as part of a binary-defying "politics of (spatial) resistance that redraws the boundaries of identity and struggle,"<sup>26</sup> for instance, stands in contrast to the more recent work of scholars like Peter Johnson and Heidi Sohn, who vehemently argue against the automatic association between the actual Foucauldian concept and ideas of political resistance.<sup>27</sup> Apart from producing tension by referring to "discursive/linguistic site[s]" on the one hand and "actual extra-discursive locations"<sup>28</sup> on the other hand, the heterotopian idea thus also stirs up questions as to whether marginal spaces are always subversive and, as David Harvey raises in his polemical juxtaposition of potential heterotopias from "the cemetery and the concentration camp" to "the shopping malls and Disneylands,"<sup>29</sup> whether such subversion of the norm is always to be celebrated. I will draw on these debates and the fundamentally discourse-destabilizing nature ascribed to heterotopian spaces by both critics and defenders of the concept in order to challenge and enrich close interpretations of the specific "other spaces" explored in *Ministry* and *Machandel*, particularly that space which Foucault singles out as "highly heterotopian":<sup>30</sup> the cemetery.

The cemetery indeed occupies a unique position in Foucault's long list of heterotopias—from boarding schools and honeymoon hotels to psychiatric hospitals and prisons—which he bases on their shared function to accommodate individuals "who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis" or whose behavior is otherwise "deviant in relation to the mean or required norm."<sup>31</sup> For the cemetery not only fulfills Foucault's general heterotopia criterion of contrasting "ordinary cultural spaces,"<sup>32</sup> but also consistently connects his spatial to temporal concerns. After tracing changes in burial practices since the eighteenth century to illustrate the ever-evolving nature of heterotopias,<sup>33</sup> he later points to the cemetery when stating the principle that the "heterotopia begins to function fully when people find themselves in a sort of absolute break with their traditional time."<sup>34</sup> It is the direct connection to death—that most absolute break of an individual's time—which makes graveyards such "highly" heterotopian sites for Foucault.<sup>35</sup>

The idea of the heterotopia, however, does not engage further with the “slices of time”<sup>36</sup> preceding and succeeding the burial: one’s experiences in life or the way they are remembered by others after death. In light of the explicitly memorializing function of graveyards, I therefore also interrogate Roy’s and Scheer’s novels through theoretical approaches to memory work, most importantly Rothberg’s multidirectionality. The latter connects to the Foucauldian heterotopia both through its emphasis on the perpetual instability of discursive borders and through its impetus toward connection. He suggests a model of memory that considers it “as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative”<sup>37</sup>—a model that bears the potential to foster solidarity between seemingly separate groups. Rather than regarding the public sphere a “pregiven, limited space in which already-established groups engage in a life-and-death struggle,” multidirectionality rethinks it “as a malleable discursive space” in which “both the subjects and spaces of the public are open to continual reconstruction.”<sup>38</sup> Roy’s and Scheer’s novels, equally embedded in the always already spatial context of contested and changing national borders, show how literature can imagine such reconstruction in material and discursive space alike.

### *Border-Defying Spaces*

Both novels set up the importance of graveyards for their respective narratives in their first chapters. Observing ancient burial mounds on the one hand and a nearby forest cemetery on the other, *Machandel* protagonist Clara muses that she has become like the old women she used to meet in the village: “sie lebten mit Menschen, die nicht mehr da waren” (they lived with people, who were no longer present).<sup>39</sup> *Ministry* establishes such cohabitation with the dead as material reality rather than metaphor, as it introduces Anjum’s routine of sleeping “between two graves at night (as a private joke, never the same two on consecutive nights).”<sup>40</sup> Though the novel later suggests that the living and the dead might indeed be able to “mingle, like guests at the same party,”<sup>41</sup> *Ministry*, like *Machandel*, foregrounds the mingling of all sorts of *living* beings in and around cemeteries in order to reflect on society at large.

In Roy’s novel, the graveyard only develops into a space of community after it has become the marker of a specific moment of exclusion. “*Mussalman ka ek hi sthan! Qabristan ya Pakistan!* Only one place for the Mussalman! The Graveyard or Pakistan!”<sup>42</sup> a mob in Gujarat shouts, as its 30,000 participants torture, violate, rape, and kill all Muslims they come



across—except for Anjum as harming hijras is considered bad luck. While the text never explicitly makes a connection between the slogan and Anjum's decision to move to the graveyard, it is her trauma and her shame for bringing the perpetrators more good luck "the longer she lived"<sup>43</sup> that alienates her from the other members of the Khwabgah and even her adopted daughter Zainab and causes her to leave.

It takes years for her graveyard existence to turn from "ravaged, feral spectre"<sup>44</sup> to guest house host, yet even her latter role cannot be severed from the mob's grim prophecy. The fact of its fulfillment, of Anjum's retreat to the cruelly assigned space of the *qabristan*, serves as a reminder that the small, inclusive community she builds still exists in the context of militant Hindutva ideology growing in influence.<sup>45</sup> The heterotopian space inescapably stays "in relation with all the other sites."<sup>46</sup> At the same time, the inversion of "graveyard" from a signifier for death—only to be avoided by crossing the border to Pakistan—to a shelter for unlikely, border-defying alliances and friendships also distills the life-affirming tone to which *Ministry* continually returns and with which it ends.

The background story *Ministry* provides for Anjum's retreat to the graveyard appears even more significant when taking into account that Roy has modeled Anjum's character very closely on the life of a real person in almost every other aspect: Mona Ahmed. Ahmed, like Anjum in the novel, was frequently interviewed by international news outlets and is particularly well known for her portrayal in photographer Dayanita Singh's photojournalistic, (auto)biographical account *Myself Mona Ahmed* (2001) and feminist historian Urvashi Butalia's report "Mona's Story" (2017).<sup>47</sup> Though *Ministry* heightens the element of in-betweenness by writing Anjum as born with ambiguous genitalia, the novel fictionalizes Ahmed without straying far from actual biographical stages—familial and particularly paternal exclusion, hope of belonging in the hijra community, renewed outsider status living alone in an Old Delhi graveyard, and ultimately building a community there. Peculiarly, Roy does not mention this connection in her acknowledgments, but merely thanks "Dayanita Singh, with whom I once went wandering, and an idea was ignited."<sup>48</sup> As Ahmed's nephew Nasir Ali Khan has confirmed to me, Roy has indeed visited the graveyard, but never got in touch again to inform Ahmed about the fact that her life would form the basis of a novel.<sup>49</sup> The only aspect of Anjum's narrative that stands out as a clear deviation from Ahmed's biography is the fictional character's presence at the Gujarat massacre: an addition which overtly politicizes the graveyard as choice of dwelling place.

Ahmed's reason for finding shelter in Mehnediya Qabristan, where she lived over twenty years until her death at the age of 81 in September 2017, was her gurus' decision to exclude her from the hijra community during a conflict about her adopted daughter. Her life story provides plenty of insights into social and political issues in India, but by weaving it together with the public event of the Gujarat massacre, *Ministry* sets out to directly attack Modi. The novel contrasts Anjum's lasting despair with the lack of consequences Modi has faced for inciting anti-Muslim hatred and withholding intervention against the ensuing violence. While Anjum "knew very well that she knew very well that she knew very well," as the text syntactically reflects her cyclical self-loathing for being spared as a lucky charm, the subsequent sentence informs the reader that "[t]he Chief Minister with cold eyes and a vermillion forehead would go on to win the next elections."<sup>50</sup> The novel thus frames the defiance of living among the dead and of overcoming exclusion as defiance against the specific violence of a Hindu nationalist government.

In combining the binary-breaking aspects of Ahmed's biography—being a hijra in the first place and neither being part of her family's society nor, ultimately, of the hijra community—with an open criticism of exclusionary right-wing nationalist ideology, Roy's novel displays and plays with overt allegorization. "The [Hindu-Muslim] riot is *inside* us. The war is *inside* us. Indo-Pak is *inside* us,"<sup>51</sup> Nimmo Gorakhpuri, youngest member of the Khwabgah, explains when Anjum, then named Aftab, arrives. This sets up a violent internal conflict between binaries, which is also present in *Myself Mona Ahmed*: "Being neither here nor there became a torture for me."<sup>52</sup> In *Ministry*, however, this internal battle gives way to a liberating disintegration of fixed factions. "I'm not Anjum, I'm Anjuman. I'm a *mehfil*, I'm a gathering," an older graveyard-dwelling Anjum plays on similarities between her name and the Urdu word for gathering ("mehfil" is a more commonly used synonym): "Of everybody and nobody, of everything and nothing. [ . . . ] Everyone's invited."<sup>53</sup> Diametrically opposed to Nimmo's words, which allegorize the self through externally established conflicting categories, Anjum's self-conception posits an individual openness that allegorically suggests a breakdown of societal boundaries, not least since it later manifests in the physical invitation and housing of eclectic guests.

Anjum's creation of her guest house "Jannat" ("Paradise"),<sup>54</sup> in turn, is directly dependent on her position outside of the gender binary, for one of the reasons that the municipal officers who are responsible for keeping squatters out of the graveyard let her keep and expand her house is their fear of being cursed by a hijra.<sup>55</sup> Without presenting Anjum's excluded status as

a fortunate advantage, the text emphasizes the particular possibilities that come with her existence defying normative structures. The text furthermore shows this defiance itself to be constantly evolving, for neither Anjum nor the heterotopian site of the graveyard are static in their otherness.

Anjum, as a child named Aftab, is different to other boys; Anjum who wants to raise a child as personally hers is different to other hijras in her community, to whom she becomes yet more different after the Gujarat massacre which she survives due to being different to the other Muslims. Traumatized, she is other than—and closed off to—any other human who comes across her at the graveyard, where openness to human and animal guests later becomes the marker of her difference. The graveyard is initially merely other in the way every graveyard constitutes, as Foucault puts it, “the ‘other city,’ where each family possesses its dark dwelling”<sup>56</sup>—an undesirable location for most living people that therefore remains available to the othered Anjum. It becomes different to other graveyards once Jannat guest house comes into being, with each new guest introducing another set of otherness. This flux of difference destabilizes the fixity of each new delimitation and is arguably more profoundly heterotopian in character than the cemetery setting itself.

While this brief analysis makes Anjum sound more like a device than a character, Roy's novel does endow her with idiosyncrasies that also influence the space Jannat becomes. Her hospitality, for example, is not unlimited, but rather relies on her “whimsical and irrational” decisions whom to admit and whom to turn away, “often with unwarranted and entirely unreasonable rudeness that bordered on abuse (*Who sent you here? Go fuck yourself in the arse*), and sometimes with an unearthly, savage roar.”<sup>57</sup> Not everyone, then, is invited. This self-contradiction does not only serve to make Anjum a more complex figure, but also introduces “a system of opening and closing”<sup>58</sup> characteristic of the isolated yet penetrable heterotopia. This is particularly noteworthy, as it contradicts straightforward readings of Jannat as a haven for every disadvantaged being, as actual paradise, as that which Foucault defines as utopia: “society itself perfected, [ . . . ] society turned upside down.”<sup>59</sup>

Oeendrilahiri's review of *Ministry* mockingly speaks of the graveyard community as a “happy bunch” of “fallen pariahs [ . . . ] united to enact a rather Foucauldian ‘cemetery heterotopia.’”<sup>60</sup> While Lahiri's article is the earliest publication which also links this concept to Roy's text, her comment makes for a rather inattentive interpretation of both. As Sohn points out, a notion of heterotopias that endows “all spaces and human groups that deviate from the established order” with “all sorts of positive, utopian transformative powers”<sup>61</sup>—the notion which Lahiri sarcastically invokes—is incongruent

with Foucault's own presentations of the heterotopia as "an ambivalent formulation meant to destabilize discourse and language"<sup>62</sup> as well as "a restricted system liable to permissions, exclusions and concealment."<sup>63</sup> A few more recent readings of *Ministry*, and of Jannat in particular, also turn to the heterotopia, but while they do so in more detail than Lahiri's review, they invoke Foucault's concept predominantly in Soja's sense of denoting spaces of resistance and subversion.<sup>64</sup> On the one hand, the graveyard guesthouse undeniably displays positive, transformative qualities by emphasizing an optimistic notion of alterity, positing inclusion as a guiding principle, and offering a sense of belonging to its inhabitants. On the other hand, however, the depiction of Jannat not only aligns with the more ambivalent heterotopian principles of remaining in constant flux and retaining a degree of exclusivity, too, but it also merits attention where it frames this community of Others in terms of its fragility. Crucially, it does so even and especially when the text celebrates its defiant sense of safety.

*Ministry's* ultimate assurance that "things would turn out all right in the end," for instance, is preceded by the observation that "Guih Kyom the dung beetle [ . . . ] was wide awake and on duty, lying on his back with his legs in the air to save the world in case the heavens fell."<sup>65</sup> By endowing an insect with the task of holding entire systems of violence and injustice at bay, the text echoes the ending of *God of Small Things*. Here Ammu and Velutha, illicit lovers who know their relationship to be doomed, "[link] their fates, their futures"<sup>66</sup> to that of Chappu Thamburan, a spider: "They checked on him every night (with growing panic as time went by) to see if he had survived the day. They fretted over his frailty. His smallness. [ . . . ] They chose him because they knew that they had to put their faith in fragility."<sup>67</sup> Rightly aware "that things could change in a day,"<sup>68</sup> they spend their time together laughing at small things such as "overturned beetles that couldn't right themselves."<sup>69</sup> At this point the reader of *God of Small Things* already knows about Velutha's imminent violent death and the unhappy years left to Ammu before she, too, dies young. *Ministry*, however, opens up to a future beyond the text. The dutiful dung beetle is aware that its precautions about the falling heavens are unnecessary, "even he" knows that things would have to turn out well "because they had to," because "Miss Jebeen, Miss Udaya Jebeen, was come,"<sup>70</sup> the messianically announced Miss Udaya Jebeen being the baby which Tilo has brought to the Jannat community. By returning to the motif of beetles on their back but reframing their laughable helplessness as self-confident defiance, the novel signals the deliberately over-optimistic nature of its ending. The arrival of a child, of new life in its most innocent and fragile form at the graveyard, functions as a "small thing" strong enough

to grant the graveyard guests a stubborn hope for a future, though this future will unfold within the dangerous societal structures that have brought Anjum to the graveyard in the first place and that continue to govern the spaces in relation to which Jannat exists.

*Ministry* moves from Delhi to Kashmir, the contested Indian-Pakistani border region in which the consequences of Partition come to the fore most concretely, in what can best be described as a literary match cut to “[a]nother graveyard, just a little further north.”<sup>71</sup> Here burial sites do not carry any redemptive connotations. Even childish innocence is linked to death in the novel’s portrayal of Kashmir, where “[t]ombstones [grow] out of the ground like young children’s teeth”<sup>72</sup> and where one of the graves does indeed contain the mortal remains of Miss Jebeen the First—the child after whom Miss Udaya Jebeen is named. While *Ministry*’s main setting in Delhi shows life amid death, the graveyards in Kashmir show death encroaching on life as they become “as common as [ . . . ] multistory parking lots.”<sup>73</sup> Anjum’s guest house with its relative harmony and its “crack in the door”<sup>74</sup> to commune with the dead thus links to the graveyards of Kashmir, where “the living are only dead people, pretending.”<sup>75</sup>

In Kevin Hetherington’s analysis of space and social ordering he defines heterotopias as spaces which, containing the possibility of “total order” just as much as that of “total resistance,” reveal that “resistance and marginality cannot be seen as separate from, or opposed to, the process of ordering.”<sup>76</sup> *Ministry*’s graveyard guest house constitutes precisely such a space, inverting and contesting the dominant social order, yet not offering a stable opposite as much as a fragile alternative hovering in the tension between such binaries. The text heightens the heterotopian qualities of its materially existing setting, Mehnediya Qabristan, by fictionally linking it to politically significant spaces such as Gujarat and Kashmir and thereby making processes of social ordering in contemporary India all the more starkly visible.

What enables a productive comparison of Roy’s *Ministry* and Scheer’s *Machandel* is not merely their emphasis on graveyards as alternative sites, but this impetus to connect such border-defying spaces to the lasting legacy of borders caused by national partition and to the exclusionary order of contemporary far-right nationalism. Where *Ministry* continuously refers to political events that have unfolded relatively close to its publication, *Machandel* makes its first point about present-day notions of German nationhood by invoking the distant past: it links the burial mounds that mark the Mecklenburg landscape to current debates on belonging. Some of these mounds, Clara describes, “liegen versteckt in den Wäldern, die es vielleicht noch nicht gab, als vor mehr als tausend Jahren in dieser Gegend

die Obodriten gesiedelt haben, Slawen, die die Göttermutter Baba verehrten” (lie hidden in the woods, which did not even exist when the Obodrites settled here more than a thousand years ago, a Slavic people, worshipping the mother god Baba).<sup>77</sup> Beginning a 100-years-of-German-history narrative by evoking the pre-German past, the text quietly questions the idea of the nation as fixed claimant to clearly bounded territory from the outset. Clara then turns her attention to the boulders between the mounds: “man weiß nicht, liegen [die wie von Riesen hingeworfenen Steine] schon seit der Eiszeit da, sind sie Reste von Obodritengräbern oder haben die Germanen sie an ihre Plätze gerollt” (who knows, [these stones which look like giants threw them down] might have been there since the ice age, be rests of Obodrite graves, or have been rolled to their positions by Germanic tribes).<sup>78</sup> Ultimately she ironically breaks this enumeration by adding the possibility that it might have also been “der Landschaftsgärtner der Gutsfamilie” (the estate owner’s landscape gardener),<sup>79</sup> implying that the boulders, similarly to the German nation state, might be relatively new and unconnected to such histories.

Having thus marked the ground itself as much older than and by no means inseparable from the nation, the text approaches a more recent burial site, the Klabow forest cemetery, and engages with the way in which graves literally and figuratively connect people to soil irrespective of national designations:

[Natalja] pflegte [. . .] die namenlosen Gräber an der Friedhofmauer, die Russen und der erschlagene Pole sollen dort liegen. Und deutsche Flüchtlinge, die 1945 bald nach ihrer Ankunft [. . .] gestorben sind. [. . .] Jetzt hat sie dicht daneben [. . .] selbst ein Grab. [. . .] Natalja aus Smolensk liegt dort auf dem Waldfriedhof vor Klabow, als müsste das so sein, neben Wilhelm und Emma und all den anderen Nachbarn.<sup>80</sup>

(Natalja [. . .] took care of the nameless graves at the cemetery wall, where the Russians and the murdered Pole are supposedly buried. And German refugees, who died soon after their arrival [. . .] in 1945. [. . .] Now she has her own grave here, too. Here lies Natalja from Smolensk—at the forest cemetery of Klabow, as if that’s how it’s supposed to be, next to Wilhelm and Emma and all the other neighbors.)

Clara’s train of thought, which introduces a range of characters and events that the novel is yet to explore at this point, encompasses experiences of war, violence,

and displacement, but particularly—and somewhat incredulously—lingers on the strange fixity of posthumous belonging. Her friend Natalja was never quite granted this equal right to space in life, for she always remained “die Russin” (the Russian)<sup>81</sup> in the village. It takes the permanence of Natalja’s grave to overwrite this life-long definition via place of origin.

In “Of Other Spaces,” Foucault refers to the historical development of burial traditions in order to illustrate that “a society can make a heterotopia [ . . . ] function in a very different way”<sup>82</sup> at different points in time. *Machandel* acknowledges the evolving continuity of the cemetery but, in doing so, also emphasizes the changes, discontinuities, and heterogeneities that underlie the society or rather societies in question—across the millennium in the case of the burial mounds and across a mere generation when it comes to the forest cemetery. These heterotopias, linked to all other spaces, function independently of the national classifications people have chosen for the ground or the bodies in the ground. By implication they undo the assumed authority with which these classifications decide belonging.

The novel soon reveals these first depictions of burial sites to be part of a wider thematic web. As it jumps back and forth in time and space between the various narrators’ strands, graveyards function as common denominators between the chapters, much like they link the Delhi and Kashmir sections in *Ministry*. In line with its initial breakdown of national claims on space, *Machandel* links the Mecklenburg landscape to spaces beyond the German borders and, in doing so, connects past and present experiences of war and displacement: the burial mounds around the East German village develop a narrative relation to a graveyard on a hill in Northeastern Syria. In the 2000s, Clara assists with the reconstruction of Assyrian statues for the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, where she befriends Syrian conservators and learns about new excavations. A team of archaeologists plans on searching for further statues there “obwohl inzwischen Dörfer bis an den Hügel heranreichten und ein islamischer Friedhof über den Resten so vieler untergegangener Kulturen angelegt worden war” (even though villages were now surrounding the hill and a Muslim graveyard had grown over the rests of so many bygone cultures).<sup>83</sup>

These materially layered cultures carry connotations with the “geschichtete Erde” (layered earth)<sup>84</sup> of the Mecklenburg countryside and its stories of “Schichten der Zeit die ineinander übergehen” (layers of time that blend into each other)<sup>85</sup> which so fascinate Clara. She considers joining the excavation works, but the archaeologists face uncertainty: “ein Diktator [kämpft] mit Gewalt um seine Macht, ein Bürgerkrieg droht” (a dictator violently fights for

his power, a civil war threatens to break out).<sup>86</sup> Without naming Bashar al-Asad or narrating the actual break-out of the civil war, the text foreshadows the suffering that will force Syrian people to flee their country and thereby charges the already established spatial connection between burial sites in Germany and Syria with associations of war and displacement. *Machandel* thus directly links its depiction of displaced people who rebuild their life after 1945 to the reality of refugees newly arriving in Germany around the time of its publication. Its constant emphasis on the newness of the German nation in comparison to the history of the ground does not just critically comment on Nazi ideologies around German soil, but also on the absurdity of present-day xenophobia such as the Machandel children's declaration "Das ist ein deutscher See" (This is a German lake),<sup>87</sup> a claim that succeeds in stopping the Syrian conservators' children from swimming there.

In Scheer's novel it is not a graveyard that serves as a new home for those who have lost theirs, but a space no less "other" to the rest of the village: Machandel castle. Toward the end of the war Natalja, who had been forced to work here as a maid, seeks to blend in with the newly arriving refugees such as Clara's mother Johanna from Königsberg/Kaliningrad or her father Hans, a communist who has survived concentration camp and death march and will later make questionable choices as a GDR politician. Natalja hides her status as a former *Ostarbeiterin*, "Eastern Worker," so as not to be repatriated. She is pregnant after an affair with Grigori, a prisoner of war from what is now Ukraine, and does not want to be separated from her child. Not only might she be sent to a Soviet penal camp, she also hears that the children of other forced laborers, who might have German fathers, have to live in newly established children's homes in former prisoner-of-war-camps, where epidemic disease makes many of the children end up "auf dem Friedhof" (at the graveyard).<sup>88</sup>

The castle refugee camp indiscriminately juxtaposes these people's fates in a similar way to the forest cemetery. It does not constitute a community of outcasts banding together to spite the world around them, a heterotopia that resists hegemonic binaries via its positive sense of hybridity like that which Roy narrates in *Ministry*. Providing an exceptional space at an exceptional moment in time, the castle "represent[s]" rather than "invert[s]"<sup>89</sup> the multiple violences defining its inhabitants' lives, but is no less disruptive for it. The year 1945 arguably constitutes what Foucault calls a "heterochronism,"<sup>90</sup> a break with traditional time, and in portraying this moment's contradictory but simultaneous currents of victimhood and culpability, of liberation and oppression, the "chronic heterotopia"<sup>91</sup> of the castle destabilizes any neat postwar narratives.



It is after this transition phase has passed that the castle becomes a more markedly positive space. Characters like Clara's parents Johanna and Hans, who fully support the GDR government, settle into stable narratives and regular homes, but Natalja and her daughter Lena stay in the castle until Natalja's death in the 1990s. The villagers consider Lena to be as strange as her mother, equally calling her by a designation rather than her name: "Die Stumme" (the mute one).<sup>92</sup> Lena is not actually mute, but both she and Natalja are content to live a separate existence to the rest of the village, bonding only with those who explicitly seek their company. Here Clara's older brother Jan finds respite from the oppressive structures of his cadet training school, while Clara herself later discovers the details helping her to piece together their family's complicated past beyond the sparse information they receive from their parents.

After reunification the castle is privatized, sold, and redeveloped as a "Schlosshotel" (castle hotel).<sup>93</sup> This transformation from a shelter for outsiders to a commercial guest house certainly comments on the capitalist nature of reunified Germany, but the text instantly ironizes this heavy-handed metaphor. When Clara expresses uneasiness about the well-dressed hotel guests not fitting in, Lena laughingly retorts that none of them had fit in either, refusing to make any permanent claims to space.<sup>94</sup> Like *Ministry's* Jannat, the castle is in a permanent state of flux, but in contrast to Roy's novel, *Machandel* does not pit a heterotopia against one particular oppressive system governing the rest of society. Instead, it traces the development of such a space which, by changing, remains other to the shifting structures around it.

The graves nearby, while not serving as an actual dwelling place, remain in close relation to the castle, particularly when it is at its most crowded after the war, as they provide a space for semi-private sexual encounters.<sup>95</sup> The thirst for life implicated in the characters' sexual desire and the possibility of procreation stand in contrast to both their immediate surroundings and their historical moment. Death is omnipresent, but the burial mounds become sites of new beginnings: "Ich lebe, spürte ich," Hans narrates, "ich lebe, ich habe alles überstanden, erst jetzt konnte ich es fühlen, und ein Glücksgefühl durchströmte mich" (I'm alive, I felt. I'm alive, I've survived it all, only now could I grasp it—a feeling of happiness ran through me).<sup>96</sup> The emergence of new life in a space reserved for death does not mark the ending of *Machandel* like it does in *Ministry*. It merely represents one of the moments of hope that keep coming and passing in Scheer's novel, in its narration of the postwar period as much as in its portrayal of the processes around German reunification.<sup>97</sup>

Still *Machandel* is not a pessimistic text. The “sich ständig erneuerend[e] und doch seltsam gleich bleibend[e] Landschaft” (continuously changing and yet strangely constant landscape)<sup>98</sup> around the village, its grave sites and its convertible castle stage examples of violent exclusion as well as hopeful inclusion until the novel’s very end. While racist attitudes and incidents in *Machandel* make Clara question whether she wants to stay in the village,<sup>99</sup> she ends up inviting newcomers into her own house. Lena’s father has returned to Germany with his big family and Clara does not mind them taking over some of her rooms, for, as she decides in a statement rife with allegorical potential: “hier ist genug Platz” (there’s enough space here).<sup>100</sup> Each societal change and each redefinition of the spaces surrounding the novel’s characters contain the possibility of opening or closing their concepts of belonging to others, however precarious those concepts ultimately turn out to be.

Examining the heterotopian settings in *Ministry* and *Machandel* in light of each other, it thus becomes clear that the shelters imagined in both do not offer a stable alternative to oppressive structures as much as they offer an alternative to the stability of dominant discourses on belonging. In order to probe these positive visions of instability further, however, it is essential to think beyond space alone. For as spaces “that are linked with all others,”<sup>101</sup> Roy’s and Scheer’s heterotopias not only connect different locations, but also facilitate links across time. As I will demonstrate in the following, memories of seemingly separate groups become points of exchange in these texts which approach the act of remembering with as little regard for boundaries as the notion of belonging.

### *Memory and Solidarity*

As designated sites of remembrance, the graveyards in both novels function as motifs to explore the role of memory in exclusionist and alternative discourses. Apart from connecting living people via these spaces, *Ministry* and *Machandel* also highlight how burial sites inscribe connections between the deceased into landscape and collective memory. Scheer’s text, besides drawing attention to the dissolution of difference between people buried at the forest, further and more explicitly problematizes the way in which cemeteries literally set particular versions of the past in stone when it comes to a grave site that contains the remains of people who lost their lives during the death march from Sachsenhausen concentration camp in 1945. The GDR government puts up a memorial stone remembering the “Vorkämpfer für

Frieden und Sozialismus,”<sup>102</sup> omitting the fact that not everyone buried here had been interned based on socialist leanings. A pastor takes issue with the erasure of those among the dead who had been sent to the concentration camp because they were Jews or Jehovah’s Witnesses. He vows to rectify this misrepresentation and has the opportunity to do so after reunification, but rather than replacing the falsely generalizing statement with one that commemorates all victims adequately, he only generalizes it further. Widening the memorial site to include even the previously unmarked graves of Nazi soldiers who died among their prisoners, he puts up a new sign that suggests they were merely victims, too: “*Den Opfern von Krieg und Gewalt*” (*To the victims of war and violence*).<sup>103</sup>

Reducing nuance in memorialization for the sake of ideological purity on the one hand, turning a blind eye to perpetrators’ guilt on the other: the pre- and post-reunification signage at the memorial site exemplifies the respective ethical failings commonly associated with memory discourse in the GDR and the FRG.<sup>104</sup> While official discourse in the former emphasized its status as a “Volk der Märtyrer und Helden des Widerstandskampfes” (nation of martyrs and heroes of the resistance)<sup>105</sup> rather than reflecting guilt, West Germany positioned itself as “Land der Täter” (nation of perpetrators),<sup>106</sup> but accompanied this “Übernahme der Verantwortung [ . . . ] mit ihrer Reduzierung auf die NS-Führungseliten [ . . . ] sowie einer Viktimisierung der breiten Bevölkerung” (acceptance of responsibility [ . . . ] with its reductive application to leading Nazi elites [ . . . ] and a vision of the wider population as victims).<sup>107</sup> Clara, having met the pastor during peaceful protest against the GDR government and having shared his unease at the initial inscription, feels all the more disappointed with his supposed improvement: “Nun waren sie gleich, die Häftlinge und ihre Bewacher, die Soldaten und die Todesmarschopfer” (Now they were the same: prisoners and their guards, soldiers and victims of the death march).<sup>108</sup> Her frustration captures a wider disillusionment about reunified Germany failing to live up to the vision of a state that transcends the limitations of East and West Germany alike. At the same time, it points to the continued possibility of a third option in terms of memorialization: an encompassing yet nuanced approach that neither remembers one victim group at the cost of all others nor blurs differences to the perpetrators. The quest for such a mode runs through the entirety of *Machandel* and much resembles Rothberg’s multidirectional model.

Though Rothberg, specifically examining the memorialization of the Holocaust and that of colonialism and slavery, builds his notion of solidarity-generating multidirectionality on the collective memories of “different, and differently oppressed groups”<sup>109</sup> rather than negotiating memory

of perpetrators alongside them, his model provides an intervention in discourses of “memory competition”<sup>110</sup> that is relevant to—and evident in—Scheer’s text. In the instance described above, Clara does not, after all, call for a leveling of different groups’ experiences, but for a more accurate approach to remembering, an approach which ultimately enables her to see links between differently marginalized groups on a global scale. While she refuses to include the soldiers overseeing the death march in the category of victimhood and criticizes the pastor for doing so, she frequently ponders the memory of Germans whose perpetrator/victim status is more complex: *Vertriebene*, expellees who had lived in Central and Eastern Europe. Expellees’ experience of displacement and of marginalization in postwar Germany is a key issue in specifically German “memory contests,”<sup>111</sup> as memory of their suffering has frequently been pitted against that of German guilt.

Since reunification, the task of negotiating two German states’ memories as well as their different approaches to their shared Nazi past has brought about what Anne Fuchs and Mary Cosgrove call an “emerging pluralism of memory cultures”<sup>112</sup> and given rise to a number of heated public debates on the question of German victimhood. It is in this context that scholars such as Aleida Assmann have sought ways to dismantle the discursive “dead-lock”<sup>113</sup> of an either/or approach to memory of German guilt and suffering. Assmann is careful to trace the history of revisionism and self-exculpation that has accompanied references to German civilians through the postwar decades and is wary of approaches which seek to “[push] aside memories of the Holocaust and [blunt] the consciousness of German guilt.”<sup>114</sup> “One memory,” she proposes, however, “does not have to challenge and eliminate the other, as long as they are not in a competition for the master-narrative.”<sup>115</sup>

This suggested hierarchical narrative that prioritizes German responsibility for Nazi atrocities over German suffering relies on Assmann’s clear distinction between memory on “an individual and social” and memory on a normativized “national and political level,”<sup>116</sup> the latter expressed, for instance, through official memorial sites and dates. This conclusion certainly leaves the reader with unanswered questions concerning the unacknowledged influence of “social” on “political” processes and the long-term feasibility of the proposed normativization in the face of the increasing influence of far-right political movements. Yet it is Assmann’s argument against an either/or debate which is of particular interest here, as this approach enables a multidirectional vision in the charged context of remembering German civilians.

Insisting on the post-unification emergence of a “social framework [ . . . ] in which German sufferings [ . . . ] can be separated from reactionary and revisionist arguments,”<sup>117</sup> Assmann echoes Fuchs and Cosgrove’s call for a

critical discourse which accommodates diverse and competing memories in the German context. A similarly inclusive impulse is evident in Rothberg's model of memory as "ongoing negotiation."<sup>118</sup> Though both notions foreground the unstable nature of memory discourse as a positive force, they do so in very distinct contexts and ways. Where Assmann celebrates a broader discursive framework that "free[s]" memories of German suffering from the "danger of political exploitation"<sup>119</sup> by revisionists, Rothberg, with his explicit focus on oppressed groups, goes beyond the mere coexistence of their memories and articulates a positive vision of connection and solidarity. Scheer's *Machandel* weaves these differing strands of thinking together by attempting to open up the competing memories of German civilians' guilt and suffering to the "productive, intercultural dynamic of multidirectional memory."<sup>120</sup>

This becomes particularly apparent in the way *Machandel* connects the experiences of newly arriving Syrian refugees to those of German expellees, for the latter group otherwise features heavily in right-wing narratives around German victimhood in circles that very much oppose refugees entering the country. A prominently controversial institution is the *Bund der Vertriebenen* (Federation of Expellees). It has repeatedly made headlines because of its founding members' Nazi past,<sup>121</sup> and it establishes a highly visible association between expulsion narratives and revisionist, right-wing ideas in the German public, not least due to its attempt to found a "Centre Against Expulsions" in proximity to the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.<sup>122</sup>

Given this context, *Machandel's* multidirectional approach to memories of flight and expulsion goes beyond the mere possibility of looking back on German suffering, as Assmann suggests, "with empathy"<sup>123</sup> instead of revisionist motivations. The empathy which the text extends backward to refugees and expellees must be read in conjunction with the empathy it extends to the foreshadowed future of Syrian refugees arriving in Germany. Rather than instrumentalizing memories of German suffering to relativize German guilt, the novel "exploits" or rather reappropriates them for a different kind of politics, one very much in line with Rothberg's vision of solidarity between victim groups. The text's engagement with memory thus follows a similar pattern as its spatial imagery, where the recurring focus on soil reverses rather than ignores right-wing rhetoric in showing that "German soil" has not actually been German for very long.

In addition to the German civilian experience of suffering, exemplified by Clara's mother Johanna who has fled from Eastern Europe, or neighbor Emma who has lived through the Hamburg bombing, Scheer's novel includes references to non-Jewish victims of the Nazis. Though these groups' memorialization does not carry connotations of right-wing revisionism like that of

expellees does, it has equally been considered to stand in competition with Jewish Holocaust memory.<sup>124</sup> *Machandel* includes references to Roma and Sinti<sup>125</sup> and, much more elaborately, explores the fate of forced laborers like Natalja. It is, however, not the memory of Jewish experience against which the novel pits these narratives, but, as also evident in Clara's aforementioned conflict with the pastor, the politically instrumentalized remembrance of socialist victims of the Nazis in the GDR.

This imbalance in memory work also comes to the fore in Clara's own family. Only during the funeral speech for Johanna does Clara realize how little she knew about her mother's past. Since her father had dismissed stories of flight and expulsion with the blanket statement, "man könne nicht über die Folgen klagen, ohne die Ursachen zu benennen" (that you cannot talk about the consequences without talking about their cause),<sup>126</sup> Johanna's personal traumatic experiences remain completely excluded from familial communication.

Die Geschichte meines Vaters war es doch, die in meiner Kindheit so schwer und bedeutungsvoll in der Luft lag, dass sie einem den Atem nahm. Er war im KAZETT gewesen und hatte gelitten, er war ein Opfer des Faschismus, aber mehr noch als ein Opfer war er ein Widerstandskämpfer und ein Held. Wer war meine Mutter gewesen?<sup>127</sup>

(It was, after all, my father's story which weighed upon my childhood so heavily and meaningfully that it was hard to breathe. He had been in a concentration camp, he was a victim of fascism, but more than a victim he was a resistance fighter and a hero. Who had my mother been?)

The heavily gendered dynamics of silencing at work in Clara's family serve to emphasize the problems of her father's approach. While *Machandel* embeds Hans' insistence to disregard any experience of German suffering in the context of his own experiences of Nazi atrocities, this passage particularly highlights its effect of disconnecting Johanna from her "human right to one's own memories"<sup>128</sup> and—whether consciously or not—strengthening Hans' own position as the central figure of the family.<sup>129</sup> He and the ruling GDR elite for which he stands in this novel perpetuate the inflexible approach to memory that Rothberg's multidirectionality model criticizes, one that sees a "direct line run[ing] between remembrance of the past and the formation of identity in the present" and accordingly understands "articulation of the past in collective memory as a struggle for recognition in which there can

only be winners and losers.”<sup>130</sup> Following this mindset, there is as little space on an official memorial sign for non-socialist victims of the Nazis, as there is space for Johanna’s stories in private conversation.

*Machandel* thus criticizes the idea of narrative space as a limited resource, yet the novel enacts limitations to narrative space in other ways, for it bears noting that none of its five narrators are Jewish. While the text includes different Jewish characters’ experiences during the war as well as in the GDR,<sup>131</sup> the omission of a major narrative around a Jewish character in a text that otherwise accommodates so many perspectives draws attention to a central problem in German and other memory contests: that the remembrance of different groups necessarily does take up space—even if only on the pages of a novel—and that tensions around the historically charged negotiation of this space do not simply dissolve in the discursive freedom of multidirectionality.

Within the parameters Scheer has chosen for her novel, however, *Machandel* engages with memory in a way that continuously foregrounds solidarity with oppressed groups and aligns with Rothberg’s endeavor to demonstrate “how [ . . . ] multidirectional memory is often the very grounds on which people construct and act upon visions of justice.”<sup>132</sup> Beyond the link to Syria, the novel also introduces protest movements of the Wajāpi and the Yanomami, indigenous peoples in Brazil. In following the traces of Clara’s older brother Jan, his former schoolmate Herbert ends up by the banks of the Amazon, where Jan, having left the GDR in 1985, has continued his work as a photojournalist and captured the indigenous population’s efforts to hinder a dam project.

Since neither Clara nor Herbert have heard from Jan since his departure, the discovery of the latter’s engagement in Brazil evokes memories of their own protest activities in the late 1980s: “Aber wer von uns,” Herbert writes to Clara, “hat sich in diesen Wochen und Monaten für eine Kundgebung [ . . . ] in dem brasilianischen Provinzstädtchen Altamira gegen einen gigantischen Staudamm am unteren Xingú interessiert?” (But who among us was interested—in those weeks and months—in a rally [ . . . ] in the provincial town Altamira in Brazil against a gigantic dam at the lower Xingú?).<sup>133</sup> For them, connections between the different movements only come into being with hindsight, when historian Herbert traces Jan’s emotive press photos. In rendering the visual impact of existing footage of the Altamira meeting into detailed descriptions, the text draws its reader into Herbert’s emerging sense of international solidarity.<sup>134</sup>

Herbert first comes across pictures with the signature “MACHANDEL”<sup>135</sup> in a Brazilian newspaper article covering the funeral of activist Paulo César Fonteles de Lima, who was part of the resistance against the military regime.

Again the commemoration of death catalyzes an engagement with wider memory in the text. In his letters, Herbert chronicles the stages of Paulo's life and political activism, drawing attention to the parallels to Jan's and his own biography. He highlights their shared interest in the same works of "Weltliteratur" (world literature)<sup>136</sup> in their student years as well as their experiences of state power: Jan's months in the Stasi prison Hohenschönhausen in 1968 and Herbert and his wife Maria's arrest and expulsion in 1988 bracket Paulo and his wife Hicelda's two and a half years of imprisonment and torture from 1971 onward. Apologizing for the mixture of literary references, political events, and personal experiences in his letter, Herbert explains his inability to unsee the links: "in meinem Kopf ist das alles gleichzeitig" (it is all happening simultaneously in my head).<sup>137</sup>

The interconnectedness he senses in looking back mixes with regret at the missed opportunity to see one's own political struggles in conjunction to other movements, at being too caught up with one's own despair, "mit unserem kleinen ummauerten Land" (with our little walled country),<sup>138</sup> to look beyond it. Due to their shared experiences in the GDR, Herbert is sure of Jan's personal support of the struggles against the military dictatorship and against the capitalist jumbo project of the Bela Monte dam. Since the construction of the dam was taken up anew at the time of Herbert's (and Scheer's own) writing, the belatedly triggered solidarity with protests in 1989 directly channels into an outrage concerning current events.

Rothberg locates the source of memory's ability to forge unlikely allegiances, "to build new worlds out of the materials of older ones," in its "anachronistic quality—its bringing together of now and then, here and there."<sup>139</sup> In clearly foregrounding the act of merging seemingly disparate elements in Herbert's letters, *Machandel* reflects and justifies the anachronistic and coincidental links it establishes between Berlin and Belém as a literary illustration of associative memory processes. The protest movement against the GDR regime has no tangible connection to the indigenous peoples' anti-dam activism in early 1989, and yet the concurrence of dates is enough to function as a trigger for memory and, by extension, solidarity for Herbert. Thus adding multidirectional associations to the "frenzied memory work of unified Germany which had to deal with multiple pasts, ranging from the old theme of National Socialism to the role of 1968 and the assessment of the legacy of the GDR,"<sup>140</sup> Scheer's text uses the unrestricted possibilities of literature to capture memory's movements.



Carefully examining the ethics of remembrance and its present-day implications throughout, *Machandel* keeps returning to burial practices, to the question of which groups got and get to publicly commemorate their dead.<sup>141</sup> Clara's fight with the pastor, which showcases this issue most elaborately in the text, does not just revolve around his sign that blurs the difference between victims and perpetrators, but also concerns the wooden cross he puts up by the graves. She reminds him of a Hungarian Jew amongst the dead, "dessen Zeichen das Kreuz doch gewiss nicht gewesen sei" (who certainly did not have the cross as his sign):<sup>142</sup> while his specific identity had formerly been hidden by the sign exclusively commemorating socialist victims, it is now overwritten by Christian imagery that the pastor regards as the norm. At the graveyard the politics of commemoration—the tensions between ideological, pseudo-inclusive, and multidirectional memory practices—materialize and become discussable.

In *Machandel*, these discussions focus on victims of past atrocities and operate within a framework, in which resources for working toward an adequate mode of public remembrance are indeed available: when Clara points out that the Jewish man did not choose to be buried by a cross, she marks the pastor's failure of providing a different form of commemoration. In *Ministry*, on the other hand, a similar observation on people's lack of influence on their representation in death, occurs in the drastically different context of ongoing violent conflict: "Miss Jebeen was not a member of the Committee that decided what should be written on the signboard. But she was in no position to argue with its decision."<sup>143</sup> The signboard in question, "*We Gave Our Todays for Your Tomorrows*," marks the entrance to the Martyr's Graveyard in Kashmir, where Miss Jebeen the First was buried after being shot by Indian soldiers aged three years old, becoming "one of the Movement's youngest martyrs" without "having notched up very many Todays to trade in for Tomorrows" and "without being consulted on the matter."<sup>144</sup>

This resigned, witty tone distances and thereby jarringly highlights the gravity of the young child's death. In a context in which the existence of a graveyard for the rapidly growing numbers of corpses is an achievement, "an act of defiance"<sup>145</sup> in itself, the narrator marks the implicated wish for adequately remembering an individual child as wishful thinking. In a similar tone, the text goes on to explore rumors that the first martyr buried at the Mazar-e-Shohadda was actually an empty duffel bag and the question of what this might mean for the movement. Ultimately, however, humorous musings give way to the conclusion that "the question [ . . . ] turned out to be of no real consequence" in the face of the "substantive truth [ . . . ] that a relatively new graveyard was filling up, with real bodies, at an alarming pace."<sup>146</sup>

Thus deeming debates on memorialization a luxury which the people of Kashmir cannot afford in the thick of the conflict, *Ministry* emphasizes the ongoing reality of death and violence “after the government declared that the insurrection had been contained (although half a million soldiers stayed on just to make sure).”<sup>147</sup> Through similarly repetitive sentence structures as those used to express Anjum’s personal trauma,<sup>148</sup> the text summarizes the years that have passed since as a period in which “the insurrection rose again and was crushed again and rose again and was crushed again and rose again”<sup>149</sup> before looping back to Miss Jebeen the First. The circumstance that her grave has “remained single-deckered”<sup>150</sup> in spite of all the deaths that have followed hers, leads the narrator to conclude that the three-year-old “drew a lucky straw,”<sup>151</sup> once again using a cynically light-hearted tone to convey the quotidian omnipresence of death in Kashmir.

Similarly to Scheer’s novel, *Ministry* keeps returning to the issue of different groups’ uneven access to commemoration of their dead.<sup>152</sup> One of the ways in which Jannat Guest House constitutes a hopeful counterweight to killings without funerals and funeral processions that turn into massacres in Kashmir, is its double-function as a funeral parlor for hijras, sex workers, and anyone else “whom the graveyards and imams of the Duniya,” the world, “had rejected.”<sup>153</sup> Besides counting an imam as a member of their community and constructing facilities for ritual bathing, Anjum and Saddam provide crucial resources: space and, with “a steady supply of gravestones,”<sup>154</sup> material markers for memory.

The link between taking up physical space on the graveyard and taking up space in memory makes for *Ministry*’s most multidirectional moment, which occurs when Jannat hosts a series of symbolic burials toward the end of the novel. Due to the fast expansion of Delhi, a mall has taken up the place of Saddam’s home village, covering the spot where his father was killed as well as that where he was buried. Anjum decrees that her friend’s father should have a second funeral, in which a shirt bought at this very mall represents the man who had died at the hands of a mob in 2002, a mob different than, but related to the one Anjum herself had survived in the same year.

Saddam’s father, born into a family of skimmers and therefore considered “untouchable” by the upper-caste village population, had fallen victim to the whims of a police officer who demanded more than his usual cut of the little money earned by taking care of cow carcasses. Unable to pay, he and three others were arrested for “cow-slaughter” and delivered to an over-excited, angry crowd that had just returned from celebrating the Hindu festival of Dussehra, increasingly hijacked for Hindu nationalist propaganda.<sup>155</sup> The second funeral of Saddam’s father—or rather, of the shirt substituting for

his remains—thus already broaches the issues of casteism and corruption, Hindu nationalist violence, and, in the eradication of the village, unbounded capitalism and gentrification.

When Tilo asks to bury the ashes of her already cremated mother alongside the shirt, the double funeral includes the memory of a Syrian Christian feminist from a small, conservative village in Kerala whom the church refused to bury for having had a child with a Dalit man out of wedlock. The slightly reluctant, but ultimately willing imam says the burial prayers for Tilo's mother and Saddam's father, even though neither were Muslims. Shortly before, Saddam, who used to pretend to be a Muslim to mask his caste background, and Anjum had voiced their views as to whether "they" had tried "to finish off the Muslims and Christians" and were now "going for the Chamars"<sup>156</sup> (lower-caste skimmers like Saddam's family) or whether it was the other way around. No further discussion ensues: solidarity between these groups, however unintentional or unorganized, is the only viable option in the graveyard community and the order of oppression irrelevant.

The two funerals, symbolic both in their respective representative nature and in their combination, are followed by a third one shortly after: that of a letter buried in the stead of Miss Jebeen the Second's biological mother Revathy, who has died fighting the State Armed Police Forces as a member of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army in Southeast India. The letter, delivered and read out to the Jannat inhabitants after Revathy's death, sums up her life from the racist rejection through her father's lighter-skinned family which she experienced as a child, to the state violence against the Adivasi population that have led to her joining the guerrilla forces, her torture and rape at the hand of six police men, her temporary exclusion from the guerrilla army due to the ensuing pregnancy, and her decision to leave her baby daughter Udaya at a protest in Delhi, where Tilo had picked her up.

Upon hearing the last words of the letter, "Red Salute! Lal Salaam!," Anjum "inadvertent[ly], instinctive[ly]" responds with "Lal Salaam Aleikum"<sup>157</sup> and thereby fuses the communist salutation in India with the Muslim greeting. The narrator jokingly inserts that this "could have been the beginning of a whole political movement,"<sup>158</sup> but highlights the intuitive, non-programmatic quality of Anjum's affirmation. For rather than providing a vision of organized solidarity between differently oppressed groups within India, the text emphasizes the acknowledgement of existing interconnectedness: "Each of the listeners recognized, in their own separate ways, something of themselves and their own stories, their own Indo-Pak, in the story of this unknown, faraway woman who was no longer alive."<sup>159</sup> Causing them to "close ranks around Miss Jebeen the Second," to merge into

“an impenetrable fortress in which she, unlike her biological mother, would grow up protected and loved,”<sup>160</sup> the individually recognized similarities enable the collective conviction that they can form an alternative unit. The sphere of complete safety that they envision seems unattainably detached from the oppressive structures that brought each person to Jannat, yet the moment of joint memory affirms solidarity within their heterotopian realm that remains connected to but perpetually different from wider societal mechanisms.

In *Ministry*, the memories at stake do not reach as far back as in *Machandel*, which connects the Nazi and GDR past to the present. Roy’s text gathers narratives of differently oppressed groups’ experiences in more recent decades and the increasing pressures they are facing under the present government. Gathering here means both collecting and connecting: once material markers for remembrance come into play, they make multidirectional movements possible. Just as the establishment of the Martyr’s Graveyard in Kashmir “[becomes], in itself, an act of defiance,”<sup>161</sup> Anjum’s demand for a “proper funeral”<sup>162</sup> for Saddam’s father articulates resistance against the erasure of his memory, which has been materially covered up by a new shopping mall and ideologically masked as deserved mob justice. The text situates this desire for individual commemoration in the context of a threat to collective knowledge of the past by repeatedly pointing out governmental efforts to distort histories like those of indigenous and Muslim rulers in favor of an official “story of Hindu glory.”<sup>163</sup>

Neither Saddam’s father, Tilo’s mother, nor Revathy fits into this story, yet the defiance inherent in each one of their belated burials still increases through their spatially and temporally joint nature. Their connection fosters a multidirectional memory discourse that refuses participation in the competition of official memory politics, defying not just the latter’s contents but its very structure. Just as the heterotopia of the graveyard guesthouse contests the binaries previously discussed, this space destabilizes the winner-or-loser logic of competitive memory and creates alternative group identities like that of the “formation of trees, or adult elephants”<sup>164</sup> protectively closing around Miss Jebeen the Second. Reminiscent of Rothberg’s vision of a malleable discursive sphere in which groups do not operate from firmly established standpoints but rather “come into being through their dialogical interactions with others,”<sup>165</sup> Jannat becomes a site of nonhierarchical solidarity that grows between and beyond each of its inhabitants.

In the recognition of each person’s “own Indo-Pak” in the communist fighter’s life, the military border conflicts between the two post-Partition nations again become a metaphor for personally experienced struggles, this

time going beyond the hijra community and including the multifarious challenges the guesthouse inhabitants have faced. Structural injustices receive as much attention as atrocities committed in armed conflict in this text: *Ministry* continuously brings up divides like those defining life in Delhi where there is “no war other than the usual one [ . . . ] of the rich against the poor”<sup>166</sup> and like the deeply entrenched casteism and sexism that permeate all societal spheres from the Indian military to the supposedly egalitarian guerrilla army.<sup>167</sup> It is the offer of respite from any form of “Indo-Pak” at Jannat which enables exchange and “proper”<sup>168</sup> memorialization in the midst of an otherwise ongoing set of conflicts.

*Ministry* and *Machandel* mutually highlight how their depiction of space complements and enhances the interpretive potential of their engagement with memory and vice versa. In its memorializing function, the graveyard is set apart from other “other spaces” due to its inescapable links to the past, while simultaneously—and just as unavoidably—tying memory discourses to the question of available space. While the ideas of heterotopian spaces and multidirectional memory throw into relief how Roy’s and Scheer’s novels develop their critiques of spatial and memory-related territorialism, the combination of these concepts with each other as well as the novels also enables fresh insights regarding Foucault’s frequently dismissed theoretical sketch and Rothberg’s widely celebrated memory studies intervention.

“Of Other Spaces,” as mentioned earlier, links heterotopias and time when mentioning that these spaces can be most productively thought about in conjunction with radical temporal ruptures such as the “strange heterochronism”<sup>169</sup> of death. In spite of emphasizing the graveyard as a space that therefore demonstrates heterotopian qualities particularly strongly, Foucault only refers to the “quasi-eternity in which [the individual] incessantly dissolves and fades away”<sup>170</sup> after death but neglects the fact that this break in time also demands remembrance of an individual’s life up until that point. By drawing on Rothberg’s ideas on a malleable memory discourse, it becomes possible to think about the temporal stretch before death in a way that remains in line with the heterotopian notion of incessant dissolution. If heterotopias in general and the graveyard in particular constitute the destabilizing realms Foucault envisions, this necessarily has to affect the graveyard’s function as a space that facilitates memorialization as, in fact, it does in Roy’s and Scheer’s novels alike.

Rothberg, on the other hand, presents a compelling case against false dichotomies in memory debates but implies a degree of despatialization as he does so. He signals his awareness of this in *Multidirectional Memory*, acknowledging that his argument against a reductive “real-estate development

model"<sup>171</sup> of memory does not change the fact that "conflicts of memory converge with contests over territory"<sup>172</sup> in cases such as the struggles of indigenous peoples or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This qualification, however, presents space only in terms of its potential as claimable territory. While both *Ministry* and *Machandel* narrate space in contexts in which such claims to space are of utmost significance, they crucially also set up alternative spaces which do not operate according to fixed notions of belonging to any specific group. Where Rothberg's memory model can enrich engagements with such heterotopian spaces, the latter can thus expand the former's conceptualization of space.

It is, after all, in these very spaces that the memory-based solidarity Rothberg envisions can thrive: the breakdown of spatial and discursive syntax Foucault locates in the heterotopia allows for unforeseen and multidirectional connections. In Roy's and Scheer's novels these restructurings of space and memory are deeply intertwined: they provide literary spaces that contest clearly contained restrictions of belonging and remembering alike.

#### *Conclusion: Alternative Structures*

Seeing how these texts work through questions of shared spaces and connected memories, their multitude and unevenness of narrative branches does not suggest the lack of organization that some reviewers have criticized,<sup>173</sup> but rather a deliberate representation of less stable structures. In the case of *Ministry*, the relationship between its scope and its authors' objectives has drawn much attention, not least due to these lines, which are visually scattered across one of the final pages of the novel and prominently cited on its book cover: "*How / to / tell / a / shattered / story? / By / slowly / becoming / everybody. / No. / By slowly becoming everything.*"<sup>174</sup> Critics have cited this passage to decry the failure of an overburdened text that "appears to be composed by several minds and hands, unable to decide its tone and texture."<sup>175</sup> Others praise Roy's shattered story for managing the feat of doing the fragmented nation justice while also embedding a "quarrel with the genre of the novel."<sup>176</sup> In the polarized reception of a long-awaited, guaranteed bestseller, either position overstates the unconventionality of a novel that ultimately draws seemingly disparate strands together. What does prove productive, however, is a closer look at the "slow becoming" rather than the shattering.

The lines cited above appear in the text as a quote from one of the notebooks that Tilo fills at Jannat. Having compiled a “peculiar, ragged archive”<sup>177</sup> of events in Kashmir and transcribed volumes’ worth of her mother’s cryptic, hallucinatory deathbed ramblings in Kerala,<sup>178</sup> Tilo continues to document her surroundings and thoughts after her return to Delhi.<sup>179</sup> Though Tilo—with her South Indian Syrian Christian background and her architecture degree—is easily identifiable as “the Roy alter-ego,”<sup>180</sup> the “chaos”<sup>181</sup> of her writing differs significantly from Roy’s novel. Tilo creates an overwhelming excess of information and merely hints at possible consolidation in the final, unbroken line of her musings on storytelling, whereas *Ministry* slowly becomes a textual whole in a manner that resembles the quiet recognition of each other’s memories and organic growth of cohesion at Jannat.

*Machandel*, on the other hand, suggests a whole which comes into being through the restoration of precisely fitting fragments, “ein Puzzle,” as Andreas Platthaus lauds the novel, “das an Komplexität gar nicht überschätzt werden kann” (a jigsaw puzzle of a complexity that cannot be overestimated).<sup>182</sup> With each chapter the novel grants its reader an increasing sense of omniscience, occasionally exploring the same events from different narrators’ perspectives.<sup>183</sup> This process of piecing rather than growing together also comes to the fore in the way *Machandel*, like *Ministry*, self-reflectively engages with questions of fragmentation and its reversal. Herbert likens Clara’s “Kartierungsarbeiten” (mapping works)<sup>184</sup> for the reconstruction of the destroyed Assyrian statues to the “Puzzlearbeit” (jigsaw puzzle work)<sup>185</sup> of the Stasi archive, while Clara associates the process of reassembling the debris with the subject of her previous doctoral research: in the fairytale of the Machandel tree, a girl has to gather her murdered and eaten brother’s scattered bones and bury them under the tree in order to enable him to reincarnate as a bird.<sup>186</sup>

This fairytale, in turn, accompanies Clara’s thoughts on familial and national memory work, as she examines its implications for the memorialization of Nazi pogroms<sup>187</sup> while also probing how it has traveled to or from other languages and regions.<sup>188</sup> The sister’s insistence on collecting her brother’s remains becomes a metaphor for Clara “dass meine Erinnerungsbilder auch Teile eines Ganzen sind, die man bewahren, aneinanderreihen muss, auch wenn die Knöchelchen abgenagt und einige für immer verloren scheinen” (that the images of my memory are parts of a whole that need to be preserved, strung together, even when the bones are gnawed off and some are lost forever).<sup>189</sup> The pieces of rock that once made up the statues, the scraps of papers that are left of letters intercepted by the Stasi, the brother’s

bones, and individual memories all demand their collectors' careful attention even though it is clear that the former entities—the stone gods, the letters, the person, the past—cannot be restored as they were. Not only are there missing pieces, but the process of engaging with the available ones brings about new connections and transformations: the work on the statues leads to friendship with the Syrian conservators; Herbert's archival research leads him to Brazil; the dead brother returns as a bird; and Clara's memory work reorganizes her understanding of her family and cultivates her sense of solidarity with people newly arriving in Germany.

Similarly to Tilo in *Ministry*, Clara evokes the impression of being "Scheer's Stellvertreterin" (Scheer's deputy)<sup>190</sup> due to shared characteristics such as age and political leanings and, like *Ministry*, *Machandel's* structure echoes but ultimately goes beyond the alter ego figure's efforts to collect memory. Through its multiple narrators, the text provides insights inaccessible to Clara, like her father's unspoken answers,<sup>191</sup> and others which she had not enquired about, like Emma's private recollections.<sup>192</sup> The new formations achieved through memory work in *Machandel* and the textual whole of the novel itself do not correspond to a neatly completed jigsaw-puzzle, but to one that could be continuously expanded, each loose end bearing the potential for further multidirectional links. Suggestions that some "Zurückschneiden"<sup>193</sup> (trimming) might benefit *Machandel*, fail to acknowledge that the untrimmed nature of the text's form precisely mirrors the ideas on deliberately unstable and open discursive structures it puts forth.

Thus fusing form and content to counter clearly bounded notions as to who belongs where and whose memories belong together, *Ministry* and *Machandel* implicate their readers in the process of their gradually developing alternative imaginaries. Though they set out to narrate differently arranged, more accommodating configurations of belonging than the existing ones, neither novel seeks to cover up the structures they contest and invert. Instead of burying past injustices—*Ministry*, in fact, is dedicated to "The Unconsoled"—they propose adequate memory as a catalyst of solidarity. In these texts teeming with graveyards, the continuous negotiation of the past does not manifest in the form of specters, but that of alternative communities.

LEILA ESSA is a lecturer in Comparative Literature at Utrecht University. She has previously taught in the Department of Germanic Studies at Trinity College Dublin and holds a PhD from King's College London (awarded 2020). Her thesis "Partitioned Nations, Shared Narratives: Contemporary Novels on India and Germany" scrutinizes the allegorical potential of shared spatial motifs in novels on the colonial partition context of India and the



Cold-War border shifts in Germany, exploring how contemporary texts envision present-day belonging and future progress within and beyond the post-partition nation. In her current research project, she rethinks the theoretical significance of authorial intention by focusing on the specific conditions faced and strategies developed by authors from marginalized communities in Germany and Britain who seek to collaboratively intervene in ethno-nationalist discourses.

### Notes

1. David Featherstone, *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2012), 12.
2. Arundhati Roy, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2017), 436.
3. *Ibid.*, 310.
4. *Ibid.*, 19.
5. *Ibid.*, 88.
6. See Regina Scheer, *Machandel* (Munich: Penguin, 2014). All translations from German are my own.
7. See Neha Bhatt, "Arundhati Roy's new book has gone straight into the Ministry of Utmost Media Criticism," *Scroll.in*, June 10, 2017, <https://scroll.in/> (accessed November 19, 2017).
8. See Scheer, *Machandel*, 2.
9. Brinda Bose, "A fearless antinovel," *Biblio: A Review of Books* 22 (2017): 5.
10. Sunil Menon, "The Book of Perilous Sanity," *Outlook*, June 12, 2016, <https://www.outlookindia.com/> (accessed November 20, 2017).
11. Somak Ghoshal, "Book Review: The Ministry of Utmost Happiness by Arundhati Roy," *The Huffington Post India*, June 2, 2017, <http://www.huffingtonpost.in/> (accessed November 20, 2017).
12. Bose, "A fearless antinovel," 5.
13. See Andreas Platthaus, "Die Gerechte unter den Schriftstellerinnen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 25, 2014, <https://www.buecher.de/> (accessed November 23, 2017).
14. See Sabine Vogel, "Was hat der Engel gesehen?," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, August 22, 2014, <http://www.fr.de/> (accessed November 23, 2017).
15. Elmar Krekeler, "Sing von Deutschland, Vogel," *Welt N24*, November 8, 2014, <https://www.welt.de/> (accessed November 22, 2017).
16. Ghoshal, "Book Review."
17. Jonathan Judaken, "Sartre, Multidirectional Memory, and the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization," *Modern Intellectual History* 8 (2011): 492.
18. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), xviii.
19. Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," in *Heterotopia and the City: Public space in a postcivil society*, eds. Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Caeter (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 17.
20. Bernd Knaller-Vlay and Robert Ritter, "Editorial," in *Other Spaces: The Affair of the Heterotopia*, eds. Knaller-Vlay and Ritter (Graz: Haus der Architektur, 1998), 14.
21. See Kelvin T. Knight, "Placeless places: resolving the paradox of Foucault's heterotopia," *Textual Practice*, 31 (2017): 141–58.
22. See *ibid.*, 144–47.
23. *Ibid.*, 147.
24. See Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 147.
25. Knight, "Placeless places," 142.
26. Soja, *Thirdspace*, 153.

27. See Peter Johnson, "Unravelling Foucault's Different Spaces," *History of the Human Sciences* 19 (2006): 82; Heidi Sohn, "Heterotopia: anamnesis of a medical term," in *Heterotopia and the City*, 48. For a direct demarcation from Soja, see Guido Seywald, "Foucaults Heterotopien, gegen Edward Sojas Rezeption verteidigt," *Le foucauldien* 7 (2021): 1–17.
28. Benjamin Genocchio, "Discourse, Discontinuity, Difference: The Question of 'Other' Spaces," in *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*, eds. Sophie Watson and Katherine Gibson (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995), 37.
29. David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 184.
30. Foucault, "Other Spaces," 20.
31. *Ibid.*, 18.
32. *Ibid.*
33. See *Ibid.*, 18–19.
34. *Ibid.*, 20.
35. See *ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 2.
38. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 4.
39. Scheer, *Machandel*, 11.
40. Roy, *Ministry*, 5.
41. *Ibid.*, 389.
42. *Ibid.*, 62.
43. *Ibid.*, 63.
44. *Ibid.*
45. See also Alex Tickell, "Writing in the Necropolis: Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*," *Moving Worlds: A Journal of Transcultural Studies* 18 (2018): 107.
46. Foucault, "Other Spaces," 16–17.
47. Dayanita Singh, *Myself Mona Ahmed* (Zurich, Berlin, and New York: Scalo, 2001); Urwashi Butalia, "Mona's Story," *Granta Magazine*, May 9, 2011, <https://granta.com/> (accessed January 9, 2018).
48. Roy, *Ministry*, 441.
49. Nasir Ali Khan in conversation with me on February 10, 2018.
50. Roy, *Ministry*, 63.
51. *Ibid.*, 23.
52. Singh, *Myself Mona Ahmed*, 53.
53. Roy, *Ministry*, 4.
54. *Ibid.*, 68.
55. See *ibid.*, 67.
56. Foucault, "Other Spaces," 19.
57. Roy, *Ministry*, 68.
58. Foucault, "Other Spaces," 21.
59. *Ibid.*, 17.
60. Oeendrilla Lahiri, "'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness' Is Timely but Not Deserving of the Booker," *The Wire*, September 1, 2017, <https://thewire.in/> (accessed January 31, 2018).
61. Sohn, "Heterotopia," 48.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*, 47.
64. See Swapna Gopinath, "Gendered Spaces Captured in Cultural Representations: Conceptualising the Indian Experience in Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*," *Humanities* 9 (2020): 1–10; Sherine Allena Joseph and Ann Thomas, "Heteropic Spaces as the Space of the 'Other' in Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*," *Research Journal of English Language and Literature* 8 (2020): 96–99; Arun Dev Pareek, Sony Kulshrestha, Khushboo Sharma, Katha Mathur, and Mani Pratap Singh: "Rhetoric of Trans-Identity and Trans-Nation: The Trans-Gender Fault Lines in The Ministry of Utmost Happiness," *Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology* 17 (2020): 6094–95.

65. Roy, *Ministry*, 438.
66. Arundhati Roy, *God of Small Things* (London: Flamingo, 1998), 339.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., 338.
70. Roy, *Ministry*, 438.
71. Ibid., 306.
72. Ibid., 314.
73. Ibid., 319.
74. Ibid., 437.
75. Ibid., 343.
76. Kevin Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and social ordering* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 139.
77. Scheer, *Machandel*, 10.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., 11–12.
81. Ibid., 22, 329, 401.
82. Foucault, "Other Spaces," 18.
83. Scheer, *Machandel*, 434.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid., 467.
87. Ibid., 437.
88. Ibid., 280.
89. Foucault, "Other Spaces," 17.
90. Ibid., 20.
91. Ibid.
92. Scheer, *Machandel*, 298.
93. Ibid., 465.
94. See *ibid.*, 465–66.
95. See *ibid.*, 345–57, 396–98.
96. Ibid., 397.
97. See *ibid.*, 318.
98. Ibid., 465.
99. See *ibid.*, 437–39.
100. Ibid., 469.
101. Foucault, "Other Spaces," 17.
102. Scheer, *Machandel*, 180.
103. Ibid., 181.
104. See Katrin Hammerstein, "Schuldige Opfer? Der Nationalsozialismus in den Gründungsmythen der DDR, Österreichs und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in *Nationen und ihre Selbstbilder: Postdiktatorische Gesellschaften in Europa*, eds. Regina Fritz, Carola Sachse and Edgar Wolfrum (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008), 40.
105. Ibid., 41.
106. Ibid., 40.
107. Ibid.
108. Scheer, *Machandel*, 181.
109. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 246.
110. Ibid., 11.
111. Anne Fuchs and Mary Cosgrove, "Introduction: Germany's Memory Contests and the Management of the Past," in *German Memory Contests*, eds. Fuchs and Cosgrove (New York: Camden House, 2006), 2.
112. Ibid., 17.

113. Aleida Assmann, "On the (In)Compatibility of Guilt and Suffering in German Memory," *ibid.*, 196.
114. *Ibid.*, 193.
115. *Ibid.*, 198.
116. *Ibid.*, 197.
117. *Ibid.*, 198.
118. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 3.
119. Assmann, "On the (In)compatibility," 198.
120. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 5.
121. Michael Schwartz, *Funktionäre mit Vergangenheit* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013).
122. See Anne Fuchs, "From 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' to Generational Memory Contests in Günter Grass, Monika Maron and Uwe Timm," *German Life and Letters* 59 (2006): 174–75; Assmann, "On the (In)compatibility," 197.
123. Assmann, "On the (In)compatibility," 198.
124. See *ibid.*, 187.
125. See Scheer, *Machandel*, 65, 315.
126. *Ibid.*, 376.
127. *Ibid.*
128. Assmann, "On the (In)compatibility," 196.
129. For further discussion of the generational memory contests within Clara's family, see Edward James Weintraut, "Regina Scheer's *Machandel*: The Crossroads of Unforgetting, Remembrance, and Forgetting," *Monatshefte* 113 (2021): 173–76.
130. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 3.
131. See Scheer, *Machandel*, 86–88, 139, 248, 371–72, 408.
132. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 19.
133. Scheer, *Machandel*, 451.
134. See *ibid.*; photo "Tuira Kayapó, Altamira Gathering, 1989" by Paulo Jares, published in "A Knife in the Water," *International Rivers*, July 3, 2008, <https://archive.internationalrivers.org/pt-br/node/1613/> (accessed April 26, 2018).
135. Scheer, *Machandel*, 450.
136. *Ibid.*, 447.
137. *Ibid.*, 448.
138. *Ibid.*, 449.
139. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 5.
140. Fuchs and Cosgrove, "Introduction," *German Life and Letters*, 59 (2006): 163.
141. See Scheer, *Machandel*, 103, 179–82, 217–18, 445–46.
142. *Ibid.*, 181.
143. Roy, *Ministry*, 310.
144. *Ibid.*
145. *Ibid.*, 311.
146. *Ibid.*, 312–13.
147. *Ibid.*, 319.
148. See *ibid.*, 63.
149. *Ibid.*, 320.
150. *Ibid.*
151. *Ibid.*
152. See *ibid.*, 5, 78–80, 173, 218, 317–18, 322–26, 386–87.
153. *Ibid.*, 80.
154. *Ibid.*, 79.
155. See *ibid.*, 85–89.
156. *Ibid.*, 403.
157. *Ibid.*, 426.
158. *Ibid.*
159. *Ibid.*

160. Ibid.
161. Ibid., 311.
162. Ibid., 413.
163. Ibid., 401, see also 86–87.
164. Ibid., 426.
165. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 5.
166. Roy, *Ministry*, 329.
167. See *ibid.*, 317–319, 425.
168. Ibid., 313.
169. Foucault, “Other Spaces,” 20.
170. Ibid.
171. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 310.
172. Ibid.
173. See Ghoshal, “Book Review;” Krekeler, “Sing.”
174. Roy, *Ministry*, 436.
175. Ghoshal, “Book Review.”
176. Bose, “A fearless antinovel,” 5.
177. Roy, *Ministry*, 270.
178. See *ibid.*, 251.
179. See *ibid.*, 435.
180. Sunil Menon, “The Book of Perilous Sanity,” *Outlook*, June 12, 2016, <https://www.outlookindia.com/> (accessed November 20, 2017).
181. Roy, *Ministry*, 429.
182. Platthaus, “Die Gerechte.”
183. See Scheer, *Machandel*, 343–47, 394–99.
184. Ibid., 433.
185. Ibid., 452.
186. See *ibid.*, 433–34.
187. See *ibid.*, 260–62.
188. See *ibid.*, 115–16.
189. Ibid., 261.
190. Krekeler, “Sing.” See also Weintraut, “Regina Scheer’s *Machandel*,” 169.
191. See Scheer, *Machandel*, 388.
192. Ibid., 341.
193. See Krekeler, “Sing.”