



Trabajo de Fin de Máster

Estudios Literarios y Culturales Ingleses y su Proyección Social

Vulnerability and Other Spaces: Dislocated Subjects in Anne Michaels' *Fugitive Pieces*

Trabajo de Fin de Máster realizado por

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bajo la supervisión de

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Facultad de Filología

UNED

Convocatoria de Septiembre

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ABSTRACT

“Vulnerability and Other Spaces: Dislocated Subjects in Anne Michaels’ *Fugitive Pieces*”

María Jennifer Estévez Yanes, 2016

This work analyses how the subjectivity of dislocated subjects finds its fundamental purpose in the ethical responsibilities over other lives and its interdependency with them. Taking as a point of departure Judith Butler’s theories on vulnerability, I argue that, to experience the vulnerability inherent to our social formation, the ideal space is the Foucauldian heterotopia: a space open to other realities, across time and spatial boundaries, in which dislocated subjects experience a sense of “place” that they were denied before. I illustrate my thesis statement through the protagonist of Anne Michaels’ novel *Fugitive Pieces* (1996), Jakob Beer.

The concepts of diaspora and transnationalism are introduced to provide a background to address the sense of movement and contact between cultures that characterise dislocated subjects. The importance of space in defining our sense of belonging to the world is examined: is it still important in the era of displacement that we are living? Then, our physical being in the world, the body, and its connection with space, are considered to argue that they are both accumulative. This connection is explored through memory: our capacity to recover previous states of our being in the world. Dislocated subjects are taken into consideration as those whose lives have been downgraded to what Giorgio Agamben calls *bare life*, as their lives do not count in a social or political sense, but in a biological one: they are considered a threat to structures of normativity, thus, their deaths are not grieved. Subsequently, I discuss the spaces in which dislocated subjects emerge. In this paper, heterotopic spaces are considered as counter-sites that help the protagonist of *Fugitive Pieces* to connect to other realities and to contest the silences of bare lives. The importance of embracing relationality as a social being becomes the central part of his narrative.

Keywords: *Fugitive Pieces*, heterotopia, vulnerability, bare life, memory, Anne Michaels

RESUMEN

María Jennifer Estévez Yanes, 2016: “Vulnerabilidad y espacios otros: sujetos desplazados en *Piezas en fuga*, por Anne Michaels”

Este trabajo analiza cómo la subjetividad de los sujetos desplazados encuentra su propósito fundamental en las responsabilidades éticas sobre otras vidas y su interdependencia con ellas. Centrándome en las teorías sobre la vulnerabilidad de Judith Butler, argumento que la heterotopía foucaultiana es el espacio ideal para experimentar la vulnerabilidad inherente a nuestra formación social: un espacio abierto a otras realidades más allá de límites espaciales y temporales en el que los sujetos desplazados experimentan un sentido de “lugar” al que antes no tenían acceso. La tesis planteada se analiza por medio de Jakob Beer, el protagonista de *Piezas en fuga* escrita por Anne Michaels.

Para abordar el sentido de movimiento y contacto entre culturas que caracterizan a los sujetos desplazados, se proporciona un contexto en el que se introducen los conceptos de diáspora y transnacionalismo. La importancia del espacio que define nuestro sentido de pertenencia es cuestionada: ¿sigue siendo importante en la era de desplazamiento en la que vivimos? A continuación, nuestro ser físico en el mundo, el cuerpo, y su conexión con el espacio, se argumentan como acumulativos. Esta conexión se explora a través de la memoria: nuestra capacidad de recuperar estados previos de nuestro ser en el mundo. Los sujetos desplazados se consideran como aquellos que han sido degradados a lo que Giorgio Agamben califica de *nuda vida*, ya que sus vidas no cuentan en sentido político o social, sino de manera biológica; se les considera como una amenaza para las estructuras de la normatividad, por lo tanto, sus muertes no se lloran. Posteriormente se examinan los espacios en los que los sujetos desplazados emergen. En este trabajo, los espacios heterotópicos se consideran como contra-emplazamientos que ayudan al protagonista de *Piezas en Fuga* a conectar con otras realidades y rebatir el silencio de la nuda vida. La importancia de aceptar la relacionalidad como seres sociales, se convierte en la parte central de su historia.

Palabras clave: *Piezas en Fuga*, heterotopía, vulnerabilidad, vida nuda, memoria, Anne Michaels

1. INTRODUCTION

I have always been moved by how the past and the present have an influence on who we are. How even the events that have not occurred to us condition our lives, and as a consequence these events make us feel connected with people that we have not had the chance to meet, eventually marking us across time-space boundaries. Equally important for me has been the limits and constraints that, over time, have set us apart and have restricted these connections. This is why, in an era of displacement in which many have either been forced away from their homes or have deliberately decided to move away from them, it is interesting to analyse how these subjects exposed to the effects of dislocation are capable of seeing and acknowledging connections that others are not even able to appreciate.

In the first semester of this Master in English Literature and Culture, I took a subject on Literature and Transcultural Relations. The content was organised in several countries and we approached the corresponding literatures of those countries. It was when we approached Canada that I decided on the topic of this Master Thesis: the story of Jakob Beer, the protagonist of the novel *Fugitive Pieces* (1996) by Canadian author Anne Michaels, was moving enough to become the centre of my project. As I read the novel I discovered that he was the perfect figure to illustrate how these connections I discussed above influence us, and beyond that, how displaced subjects constitute the best example of the vulnerability human beings are exposed to. In other words, following Judith Butler, the recognition of suffering as an ethical responsibility towards others.

Given that the main events in the novel derive from the times of the Holocaust, this novel has been extensively analysed from the point of view of Trauma Studies (see Whitehead 2004; Tsai; Verwaayen). Many of these works approach the novel on the manifold effects of such a shameful crime for those who have suffered it either directly or indirectly. That notwithstanding, such approaches sometimes disregard the whole development of the subject as derived from his situation within, or rather at the margins of society. It is true that it is inevitable to discuss Jakob without alluding to the unsettling development he undergoes as a consequence of the Holocaust. Nevertheless, my interest extends beyond this fact, trying to analyse how certain subjects, because they have been treated as outcasts, and they have been marked by society, undergo a different kind of process. Thus, as they do not belong anywhere in particular and they cannot reclaim being

from here or there, they relate to a different kind of space, not limited, while their connections grow deeper and wider in time as well as in a continuous process. So, it is not only as a consequence of the Holocaust in itself that Jakob's subjectivity is constructed, but it is also determined by previous circumstances as well, a conglomeration of circumstances that made him become who he is.

The aim of this project is to portray the experiences of subject formation of dislocated subjects taking into account their involvement with others in a social and historical background. This paper starts with an opening section in which I reflect on the tendency to apprehend the world through concepts that by establishing borders and constraints limit our perception of its variety. Borders are psychological but they are also geographical, and, since this paper engages with notions of 'space' and 'place,' their definitions are provided from this early section: both are socially appropriated and normally associated with questions of identity and sense of belonging. In discussing these two concepts a question arises: given the continuous circulation of people in the world, are spaces still important in defining identity? Then, I resort to schools of literary theory that have analysed the limits imposed on the representation of reality. Linda Hutcheon's theories on Postmodernism consider the influence of the past in the present and the recovery of lost accounts from the past. In a different perspective, Cheryll Glotfelty's ideas on ecocriticism concentrate on the human being in its environment and the difference ways of representing reality. As an alternative to the experience of a bordered world, the concepts of 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' are introduced in order to establish a background in which the experiences of subjects that do not adjust to the reality of categories and borders are taken into consideration.

The second section of this project provides the theoretical framework for the analysis in the section that follows after it. I define the relation between space and bodies, specifically dealing with the relation between displaced subjects and the space they have or rather lack in society. Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Judith Butler study the body and its connection with the world in their potential for transformation and both assert the connection between spaces and bodies, none of them fixed but always open to change and transformation. Both, spaces and bodies, are also constituted by the visible (in a geographical sense), and the invisible (the self in the case of the body, and the underground in what concerns space). It is here that memory is introduced to discuss its ability to recover past states of the being in the world, thus, being able to rescue unrecognised experiences so that they can gain visibility: this is what Michel Foucault calls counter-memory. The three of them are presented as an

accumulation of experiences, emphasising their connection across time and spatial boundaries.

Next, I consider Jean-Luc Nancy's ideas on landscape, from *The Ground of the Image* (2005), to describe the spaces that can account for the experience of dislocated subjects and the sense of absence they represent given that they have been prevented from a (re)presentation in space. Later, Giorgio Agamben's ideas on *bare life* and the *homo sacer* as per his work *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1995) are discussed to describe the mode of life of dislocated subjects who are deprived of their social and political rights as part of society; a bare life that lives in what Agamben considers a 'state of exception.' In its feeling of otherness and exclusion, the space that this bare life inhabits is described through the Foucauldian concept of 'heterotopia,' developed in his article "Of Other Spaces": a placeless place – similar to Nancy's ideas on absence – in which alternative realities counteract other sites, still, open to the possibilities that these sites may present across time and space. To conclude this theoretical framework, I engage with Judith Butler's concept of vulnerability, a condition inherent to our subjectivity formation as human beings, by which we are exposed to violence and harm.

The core of my work is the analysis of Anne Michaels' *Fugitive Pieces*, which discusses the process of formation of dislocated subjects, always in process, as a result of the many experiences they add to their own stories. After providing a biographical introduction to the author and her vision of dislocated life present in the novel, I proceed to analyse its main protagonist, Jakob Beer: his story is discussed as a representative example of the disruptive process of identity that subjects in contact with different realities undergo. His experience is characteristic of bare life, excluded from social structures that sustain and protect his mode of life. Also, as a bare life, he is unable to account for his suffering as its mode of life does not count. Jakob lives in-between the exclusion and inclusion in society, in a heterotopia that at the same time that counteracts the norm, is able to rescue others in his acknowledgement of their previous silenced voices: through the articulation of memory Jakob incorporates their stories to his own narrative, which is possible because of the heterotopic space he inhabits, open to other realities across space and time. In this way, Jakob recognises the importance of our relation with the other, and our ethical responsibilities towards them.

2. A LIMITED OUTLOOK ON THE WORLD

We live in a world in which the continuous movement of people is an ever-present reality; we move across countries, cultures, spaces but we are still obsessed with borders and with defining the margins at which nations, communities and so many other paradigms end, in order to know where others start. We have created constraints, borders, signifiers, definitions, all of which are socially established, founded on our own criteria to satisfy our requirements. Consequently, they have compromised our ability to apprehend the diversity that surrounds us, reducing the space for cooperation and effective communication in sociocultural relations. We have systematically categorised people, we have prejudged them, and most of their stories remain unheard and disqualified, while their cultures are patronised.

These structures highlight discrepancies and create opposites. The resulting societies of these processes are far from being a consolidated whole in which changes occur homogeneously. Instead, their principles are constantly disrupted by processes of differentiation that set us apart, what originates social segmentation and disparate subjectivities.

In “A Borderless World,” Bill Ashcroft explains that “the reason it is impossible to imagine a world without borders is that the first act performed by a people that wants to call itself a nation is to put borders around itself” (163). He goes on saying that the key to dissolve such borders is to destroy what makes them stand against others, to destroy all those categories based on opposites: “rich and poor nations, democratic and undemocratic, colonized and colonizing, the nation and its other” (163).

So, borders encompass both physical and psychological aspects. Thus, the discussion takes us to consider how the spaces that hold such borders affect or shape the concepts that were once established there. From this section onwards I will address notions of ‘space’ and ‘place,’ but, what should we understand by one and the other? Before getting deeper in this discussion I would like to clarify the use of the concepts of ‘space’ and ‘place’ that I will be making throughout this paper, as well as their treatment of ‘landscape’ “as a physical space for living and also as a place with meanings and contributions to societal identity” (Hunziker et al. 47). Thus, whereas ‘space’ relates to our necessities and the practicality of the landscape in which we are able (or not) to accomplish them, ‘place’ concerns a less abstract category: it is experienced in the form of the social relations that we establish there and their significance in building our stories and self-formation (Hunziker et al. 49). Nevertheless

‘spaces’ and ‘places’ are both sites bound to cultural implications, since they have been appropriated by referents socially assigned by those who inhabit it.

In “Spatial Theories and Poetic Practices” Ian Davidson argues that “[w]ithout places, space becomes empty and meaningless ... [p]laces provide spaces with content, and the populations of those places with identity and security; as well as being geographical locations they are also ‘structures of feeling’” (28). We are active agents in delineating this relation: we actually make meaning of space. Indeed, according to Foucault, “space takes for us the form of relations among sites ... we do not live in a kind of inside of which we could place individuals and things ... we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another” (“Of Other” 23). Therefore, our comprehension of space is based on these relations between places and of course those who live in them.

Accordingly, we can say that places are responsible for keeping alive the myths and constructs upon which borders and signifiers have been created, places that are closely related to notions of identity, nation and community. Given the constant flux of people in the world, the old paradigms that sustained society are being transformed as a consequence of new forms of identity and subjectivities in process emerging in this “new world.” So, spaces, as places deeply related to our cultural sense of belonging, used to be the base of our stability as social and human beings but, can places still be considered in such terms? Can they still hold together constructs and myths of unified cultures, nations, or borders? Or rather, how should spaces and places be considered in this new light?

The problem here lies in the fact that it is by means of denial and opposition that borders are construed; therefore, everything outside a category will inevitably lead into an opposition, being therefore othered and kept separate from ‘the mainstream.’ As a result, this opposite will be left out, at the margins of representation and, rather than recognised in the name of difference and diversity, it will only be considered as a misrepresentation of the proper category, forgotten outside the borders of what is considered representative. They adopt a particular point of view and a historical and spatial stance as a point of departure; thus, it is only a partial representation that they offer. In this way, with so many pieces left out from the picture, how can these borders, signifiers and meanings still be considered valuable when it is only a part of the whole that they address and represent? How can they hold universal concepts that are themselves subject to impermanent conditions?

Throughout time, these borders have been challenged on the part of different schools of criticism or theoretical approaches ranging from sociology to psychology, history and literary criticism, just to name a few. Such actions have broadened the perspective of a finite limited vision on cultures and societies from past and present, addressing causes which had been neglected before.

At this it is useful to resort to Linda Hutcheon's concept of historiographic metafiction in order to illustrate the obsolescence of borders and static fixations. In "Theorizing the Postmodern," the opening chapter of *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Hutcheon introduces the idea of "the presence of the past," (4) the importance of the past in conforming and modifying the present, and also the need to re-evaluate the past in the eyes of the present. I will make reference to this idea throughout my argument: the fact that the past affects the present and the future, that it is not only by virtue of our present actions that we live for but also by those that occurred before us, having a repercussion in the present and the future correspondingly. Postmodernism contests great narratives, what gives visibility to histories and people that have been misrepresented and excluded throughout time: "[w]hatever narratives or systems that once allowed us to think we could unproblematically and universally define public agreement have now been questioned by the acknowledgement of differences" (Hutcheon 7). Thus, a space can be created in which counter-narratives can emerge, from where it is possible to contest previously accepted master narratives of the nation that challenge previously accepted limits. Those limits were "constructed by us in answer to our needs" (Hutcheon 13), that is, they are signifiers that only satisfy our desires and forget our ethical duties to others.

Another relatively recent movement proves useful in acknowledging positionality: ecocriticism, a movement that approaches literature taking into consideration the relation between self and environment, recognising the ways in which the environment shapes and gives essence to those who are implicated with it. Accordingly, in defining ecocriticism, Cheryll Glotfelty says that "human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it" (xix). So, ecocriticism offers a critique of the representation of our environmental reality. It focuses on the process itself, not on the results. It does not seek to attain ultimate meanings or inspiring revelations. Similar to Postmodernism, ecocriticism advocates for a distinction between those constructs created as a response to human needs and those forms in which nature shows itself, the real and unspoilt. Therefore, ecocriticism is a recall to all that falls out from categorisation.

2.1 Crossing Boundaries: Diaspora and Transnationalism

As a result of the different phenomena that have caused people to go away from their countries of origin, there has been a need to redefine the relationship between spaces and borders among the variety of cultures and people across the globe. The response lies in a redefinition of the standards previously established. In this sense, it proves useful to resort to other mechanisms or theories that can account for difference and alternative realities. The terms ‘diaspora’ and ‘transnationalism’ have emerged in an attempt to address the hybrid spaces and identities arising in these new contexts in which the cultures involved are at the same time receiver and recipient of the force of change.

These terms have shed some light on the deep-rooted problems that societies face all over the world as a result of the imposition of majorities over minorities, the global over the local, which affects cultures, races and shapes our social relations. Attempts to presumably favour all cultures equally, such as those of multicultural policies implemented in some countries, have nevertheless been accused of damaging the distinctiveness of each culture in the process, especially that of the host country. In this context, it is interesting to consider the nature of the terms ‘diaspora’ and ‘transnationalism’ so often related, both of them fostering unity in the name of difference and change, both still different in their approach in certain aspects.

The word ‘diaspora’ has Greek origins, meaning “to disperse ... the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions” (Ashcroft et al. 68-69). Its most extensive usage can be traced back to the Jewish case, heavily marked by migration, displacement and yearning to find their home away. It was not until the 20th century that the term gradually adapted to the changing circumstances, thus broadening its meaning. It was then that other displacements, other than the Jewish, came to be considered diasporic. All of them share a negative implication that brings with it notions of suffering, alienation, dislocation and traumatic separation from their roots. What they have in common is the departure of a significant number of people from their homeland which becomes extrapolated to the host country, preserved in exile. Besides, it has also been commonly used to describe displacement of a particular religious or ethnic group.

Diaspora has also been related to colonialism and so, from the times of the Second World War, when this form of domination was being progressively dismantled, diasporic subjects in their different diasporas were starting to be recognised by the United Nations,

which contributed to visualise their so often misunderstood situation. It was at that moment that ‘diaspora’ was in a way liberated from its negative connotations.¹

Transnationalism goes further, filling some of the voids left by diaspora, also because it responds to the needs created by the nation-state as a social and political construct: a more “recent” paradigm that describes the current flux of people all over the world (Faist 27-28). It encompasses the diverse connections that diasporic movements have created, highlighting solidarity and ethical responsibility among peoples all over the world. It could be said that transnationalism takes diaspora one step further, as an evolution and expansion of its concerns: I would argue that because of the current massive mobilisation of people across countries and cultures, either in smaller or bigger groups of different nature, even individually, ‘diaspora’ falls somewhat short in addressing such phenomena. In its most common definition, the term ‘diaspora’ involves more particular circumstances whereas transnationalism embraces connections and cultural exchange on a wider scale.

Thomas Faist affirms that transnationalism covers a wider range of circumstances and cases than diaspora, as diaspora has usually been relegated to communities and groups whose ties have been determined by religion or ethnicity, and transnationalism on the other hand addresses any social disposition (21). Diasporic groups create “imagined communities”² abroad, always making reference to the homeland in an attempt to keep its mythological foundation alive, attached to it in a sort of unilateral connection, less commonly enriched by the participation of a third party – which is most likely addressed by transnationalism.

The second difference that Faist mentions concerns “collective identity” and “cross-border mobility” as interests addressed by both concepts and the different phenomena they comprise, yet in different ways. Whereas ‘diaspora’ concentrates on the first as its point of departure, it only considers mobility on a secondary stage. Nevertheless, cross-border mobility lies at the very centre of ‘transnationalism’ (21). Transnationalism involves

¹ The evolution of the term ‘diaspora’ has been consulted and developed accordingly to the initial chapter “What is Diaspora?” in the book *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction*, and an interview with the author of the same book, Kevin Kenny by Erik Owens, Associate Director of the Boise Center for Religion and American Public Life.

² In his book *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson proposes nations as imagined communities “both inherently limited and sovereign” (6). It is imagined because its constituent members will never actually meet and still they are considered members of the community (6). In this sense it is also envisioned as is limited because it ends where other nations begin and sovereign, since nations originate as a result of a redefinition of power and rule and the nation was the new structure of sovereignty (7). Finally, its conceived as a ‘community’ because in spite of the differences existing within is the sense of confraternity what makes it attainable (7).

mobilisation across the boundaries of the nation, inside out, embracing cultural exchanges and affiliations. Even though it remains related, to a greater or lesser extent, to the concept of homeland, it extends beyond its limits: in a physical way – in what concerns geography – and in a psychological one, as part of the process of subject formation and identity construction that allows us to establish connections with a particular culture, religion, etc. On the contrary, diaspora heavily relies on the ties to the mother country and collective identity, distance notwithstanding, especially when the rearranging of the borders of a country have forced people out from it (Faist 21). However, when it is people that have moved across borders as in transnational displacements, there are more elements and parties involved, “always embedded in other flows of ideas and goods” (Faist 22).

Thirdly, Faist explains that diaspora relates generations across time, which acknowledges past circumstances that have an effect in the present. However, transnationalism is more related to relatively current mobilities, less commonly used to refer to generational changes (Faist 22).

Despite all of the above-mentioned, these differences do not totally set them apart, as it is through a combination of both, working together, that we can have a broader understanding of displacement nowadays. I have introduced both terms and their implications so as to illustrate the complexities and blurred limits of both terms as much as the processes they address. Thus, in later sections I will refer to the following aspects as developed from each of the perspectives explained above: from the point of view of diaspora, this work will be particularly devoted to the effects of displacements across time and generations, the reflection of the past in the present and its consequences in the process of identity formation and the establishment of connections. Concerning transnationalism, my focus will be on the fluidity affecting identities across boundaries and spaces and how it affects subject formation, “in which binaries of center and periphery, national self, and other are dissolved” (Ashcroft 171). I will concentrate on the concept of transnation as defined by Bill Ashcroft in “A Borderless World”:

a way of talking about subjects in their ordinary lives, subjects who live in-between the categories by which subjectivity is normally constituted ... that ambivalent space between the promise of hegemonic unification offered by globalization and the fragmentation of transnational cultures. (170-71)

Also, taking this definition as a support for my thesis I will show that the transnation is not only as a space free from spatial boundaries but also temporal ones. I think these ideas are

useful given that *Fugitive Pieces* is an account on the exclusion of local stories of subjects who are forced to leave their homes, made invisible and excluded from a physical and ideological place for representation and acknowledgement. And at the same time, because it constitutes an example on the possibilities for counter-spaces to exist and hold alternative (hi)stories, where countermemory can exist: a sort of “drowned city” emerging like the one that Jakob inhabits. So far, I have introduced the sense of continuous change that pervades every aspect in relation with the world: borders, cultures, societies, people, spaces ... are always in process, they are not immutable or unattainable in an absolute sense, since they are all subject to change, as Jakob proves it to be. I have also talked about spaces and places in relation to those who inhabit it, since our cultural paradigms have appropriated spaces. So, in the following section, I will discuss the relation between the bodies that inhabit the world – understanding by body our physical being in the world –, and the spaces they occupy in order to explain the extent to which both relate and how.

2.2 Bodies in Space-Time Relations: Countermemory of Absence

One of the questions I posed in the introduction has to do with the relation between bodies and spaces in an era of displacement in which spaces do not longer hold immutable concepts concerning identity and ideas like community or nation.

Throughout this section I argue that both spaces and bodies are accumulative, as they comprise a collection of experiences and memories; therefore they cannot be partial nor can they be considered in isolation disregarding previous circumstances or different realities. Indeed, it is in drawing on what is not visible – though still part of this accumulation – on what has been kept hidden and is apparently invisible that bodies and spaces are especially interesting for the purpose of this analysis. For such purpose, I argue that the power of memory, also accumulative, is the means by which difference and previously invisible experiences can finally become visible, that is the countermemory of absence.

The body proves its connection to the world on a very simple basis: on the one hand, in the physical position it occupies in space, as it resorts to space and its designations in order to make concrete the place it occupies at different times; on the other hand, through its relation to other bodies. Maurice Merleau-Ponty makes two important claims in what concerns our bodies in the world. First, that it “is the fabric into which all objects are woven, and it is, at least in relation to the perceived world, the general instrument of my 'comprehension'” (*Phenomenology* 235); and second, that the “body is made of the same

flesh as the world ... shared by the world, the world *reflects* it, encroaches upon it and encroaches upon the world” (*The Visible* 248). So, he discusses the connection between body and world as inherent to our existence: our exposure to the world through our bodies is inherent to this connection as well. This is a very important thought that I will develop in sections to follow.

As a medium of “comprehension” (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 235), we cannot attain a complete perception of the world through the body. Merleau-Ponty describes the connection between body and world as being implicated in a set of particular circumstances, and a certain environment. On that basis, an established or fixed viewpoint will condition your actions and intentions, making you feel identified with it (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 82). This positioning on the world is involved in hierarchies of power, by means of which it will be privileged or underestimated accordingly. But precisely because it is a positioning on the world, the body, as a perceived, makes possible to be aware of all the other possibilities beyond it, in this way, ratifying the irresoluteness of all partial experiences: “I know that objects have several facets because I could make a tour of inspection of them, and in that sense I am conscious of the world through the medium of my body” (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 82). There is a wide range of positions to experience the world: even the same physical location can be experienced differently according to a different positioning.

Similarly, Judith Butler presents bodies in their inherent exposure to social transformation and their dependency on political power (Butler, *Frames* 3). In the finitude of our bodies, we grow aware of other perspectives to which we are bound: “they depend on what is “outside themselves” to be sustained-features that pertain to the phenomenological structure of bodily life ... that is at risk from the outset and can be put at risk or expunged quite suddenly from the outside and for reasons that are not always under one's control” (Butler, *Frames* 30). They are exposed to accident and to the infinity of possibilities and perspectives that the world offers.

In this way, the perception and apprehension of the world through our bodies proves to be just a small constituent part of a whole, as it is as well part of an accumulation: an accumulation of experiences, past and present, distant and close, visible and invisible. From their physical and temporal presence in the perceived world, bodies touch, feel, see, etc. John Wylie discusses the relation between landscape and self as being intrinsically connected, where the human factor is actively involved in the processes of the world “of lived

experience and corporeal practices – practices of moving, looking, listening, interacting” (46). So much so, that the limits of both are brought together, connected in a relation of “inside-outside” rather than “inside/outside” (46). However, this physicality to which bodies relate in the perceived world fails to acknowledge the invisible and intangible, still inherent to the connection between body and world, though problematically acknowledged.

Our bodies and their being in the world respond to our needs, and as such, because of our obsession with borders, that is what the body becomes: a limit for a full experience of the world. In this sense, it is useful to resort to Judith Butler’s conception on the body as a site of perspective and positioning on which cultural meanings are accumulated, meanings socially ascribed that prove their tautological condition as the only means to be established: “a process whereby regulatory norms ... achieve ... materialization through a forcible reiteration of ... norms ... [t]hat this reiteration is necessary a sign that materialization is never quite complete that bodies never quite comply with the norms by which their materialization is impelled” (Butler, “Bodies” 236). She uses the term performativity to address this need for reiteration: performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act', but rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names (Butler, “Bodies” 236).

Butler discusses the materialisation of norms using sex as an example, but I intend to make use of her conclusions in a more general sense; discussing the body and materialisation of the norm as the means by which bodies qualify (or not) according to the cultural background in which they are immersed. So, the body, as ‘matter,’ as a fixed identity, is constituted in a process of materialisation that reaches a certain stability over time (Butler, “Bodies” 239). But the materialisation of the body does not occur in an instant, it is rather a gradual process, it does not end once it is constructed in a reiteration of certain norms. On the contrary, at the same time, “by virtue of this reiteration ... gaps and fissures are opened up as the constitutive instabilities in such constructions, as that which escapes or exceeds the norm” (Butler, “Bodies” 239). In this way, through the norm, the stabilisation of the subject is compromised.

So, bodies do not naturally respond to fixations, and neither do the spaces to which bodies relate: they are rather obliged and forced into certain categories and positionalities. Both can be considered then as sites that are constantly in the process of becoming, that are reshaped according to their inherent mutability, rearticulated once and again: sites of accumulation. And this is because our being in the world as materialised through our bodies

implies movement “through which man is in the world [and] involves himself in a physical and social situation which then becomes his point of view on the world” and that is at the very basis of our existence according to Merleau-Ponty (*Sense* 72).

We can conclude that by visualising a certain aspect or positioning in one way or the other, we are systematically relegating to the invisible all of the other elements that are left aside from that positioning – therefore discarding them from visibility and its opportunities. Nonetheless, ‘the visible’ finds its most representative trait in what has been privileged from representation; what is accidental. Therefore, it acknowledges all those invisible components ineluctably part of the whole: “a topography unfolding by differentiation, by segregation, which holds together not by laws but through the reflections, shadows, levels, and horizons between things” (Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible* 1-li).

We could even talk about inside and outside when considering the invisible and the visible. On the surface or outside, our body relates to the world, as a physical site, being that the visible. On the inside, what is not tangible or visible, there are deeper connections across time and space, connections that concern our identity and subject formation, our self. So, it is not either in terms of what is visible or what is invisible that we should discuss our relation to the world, it is not for the sake of the former that the latter can stand on its own or vice versa. Instead, it is something in-between, a conciliatory mixture of the two: it is necessary to find a balanced position between both, what requires the true understanding of this relation.

Hence, bodies are sites in which meanings are inscribed and so are our stories and identities. Who we are is constituted through our body as it is our perceived and medium of acknowledgement and being into the world, always evolving and incorporating the given and the new, past and present, here and there. So, in discussing bodies as accumulative, it is important to take into account the role of memory in incorporating the past, continuously flourishing in the present.

Memory proves our abilities as physical beings (bodies) to recall previous circumstances and states of ourselves and our experiences in the world, as something that occurs on a physical and psychological level (Rossington 2). Memory is part of an active process, it is “alive” and as such, we are responsible for either voluntarily or unconsciously exercising our virtue to remember or forget, what also implies that memory is tied to our emotions and conditioned by them, this is “[c]entral to the ethics of memory” (Rossington

12). We give prominence to certain events according to our necessities and so we leave behind, unremembered, what we do not need or want for whatever reason. In this sense, memory proves the inconsistencies of universal history as its “authority” obeys to the satisfaction of the needs of those who recall the events that motivate that history. As Maurice Halbwachs affirms:

[H]istory is a collection of the most notable facts in the memory of man. But past events read about in books and taught and learned in schools are selected, combined, and evaluated in accord with necessities and rules not imposed on the groups that had through time guarded them as a living trust. General history starts only when tradition ends and the social memory is fading or breaking up. (139)

An account of a sequence of events will rarely fit everyone equally, so it will be inevitably neglected as defining the experience of a smaller or greater part of a group. As such, collective memory, which supposedly works on behalf of the whole, plays a very specific role in a certain time and space, “[it] requires the support of a group delimited in space and time” (Halbwachs 143). It functions in isolation, aside of other individual memories – subjectivities and identities – standing as the one and only version of the events it recalls. So, memory can be discussed as a refutation of history, as it shows that history is constructed, in its interdependency with memory, through the mental reconstruction of “facts.” Moreover, at the same time, its constructs respond to a specific set of social values and positioning, again it goes back to our being in the world through our bodies.

Memory is very much attached to our embodiment of experiences in the world as it is a physical agent what triggers it: a scent, a familiar touch, an unexpected sight that brings back an inside part of ourselves. But, as Linda Anderson points out “[w]hy we remember a place and how become ... important questions for how we construct places themselves and ourselves as subjects” (274). It does not have to be, and most of the times it is not something of our own that we have experienced ourselves, but rather a recollection of events that happens with history. We internalise experiences we are told or we get to know through others, so much so that they become our own. Also, at one level, memory brings us closer to those who share certain experiences with us, and on another level, it establishes connections to realities unknown to us of people we do not know. In both cases, it further demonstrates the ethical responsibilities towards others and our exposure to them. In this process, our bodies, on which these experiences are hold, offer a certain position in time and space, at least in what concerns physicality. However, this limited positioning can be transcended when we consider the invisible, the accident and the ever changing processes that our bodies experience as part of a world in constant transformation.

So, I argue in favour of the reconciliation of memory and the sense of movement and alteration inherent to displaced subjects, as we resort to memory not as an immovable essence, but as a resource for possibilities and the accidental. It is the way we recreate memories on different spaces that matters, as it says very much about who we truly are, our identity as subjects. We may recreate memories from other places and stories we have not lived and we may be unconsciously positioning ourselves in doing so, but this is not a closed paradigm, as it is recreated and reimagined once and again; we appropriate stories and make them our own. Memory is the medium that provides the means for unheard experiences to emerge, through which hidden stories and voices are finally revealed and surface from the underground, in this manner, giving an opportunity to other positionings not considered before.

Foucault uses the term ‘countermemory’ as the “transformation of history into a totally different form of time” (“Nietzsche” 160). He uses it in order to contest the “monuments” erected by history, what Nietzsche calls “monumental history”: that which collects the greatest advancements in history and keeps them in a permanent state of preservation away from the ravages of time (“Nietzsche” 161). On the contrary, the “effective” (“Nietzsche” 154) character of history that Foucault defends “introduces discontinuity in our very being – as it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself, deprives the self of the reassuring stability of life and nature ... The forces operating in history ... appear through the singular randomness of events” (“Nietzsche” 154-55). That being so, “effective” history comes to represent everything that had been previously removed from the annals of history, the local, the small, the accident. It calls for a recognition of the “fugitive pieces” that monumental history erased for the sake of homogeneity and permanence, those hidden meanings and “drowned cities” from underground spaces.

Foucault contests the authority of history in the three uses of history he discusses. As part of a parody “monumental history” proves its ridiculousness as it opposes reality and the revisionary character of memory (“Nietzsche” 160-61). A second use concerns identity: history contemplates identity as a unified and stable condition when it is instead dissociation what characterises it according to Foucault (“Nietzsche” 161-62). Thirdly, history is said to draw on neutral grounds, thus, devoted to truth, but on its determination to attain knowledge, it sacrifices variety under the false name of truth (Foucault, “Nietzsche” 162-63). Together, these three uses create a countermemory, which I would call a countermemory of *absence*, where the invisible and underground stories are rearticulated in the surface, they are made

visible. This history of the countermemory of absence draws on the accidental and the specific not on the mainstream, it is a revision of the past as an intention to recuperate forgotten meanings, buried stories concealed behind the “official.”

By addressing drowned realities, the countermemory of absence demonstrates that there is much more to the history we know and, as such, because our bodies in their articulation of memory reflect the stories of the spaces we are interconnected with, we can apply these conclusions to the genealogy of spaces as well. The body and the space to which it relates can be considered as the foundational narrative of our identity, distance, or notions of estrangement.

2.3 Space of Estrangement: The Heterotopic Experience of the Excluded

In the previous section I have argued that our positioning in the world is only a limited and partial experience of it. Therefore, this positioning, either in its physical, ideological or social dimension, conditioned by a certain time and space, fails to acknowledge the accumulation of experiences, sense of movement and transformation by which body and world are constituted. I have also said that memory necessarily asserts this connection as it resorts to previous states of our being in the world, providing a space for the countermemory of absence. So, this absence, as manifested through our bodies in their capacity to exercise memory, is also reflected in the spaces to which bodies relate. In this light, how do the different spaces to which we relate acknowledge this absence? In which kind of spaces do the previous absences and underground meanings materialise? And also, given the continuous movement that defines us as human beings and our being in the world, how does this condition affect the spaces to which we relate?

At this point, it is useful to introduce Jean Luc Nancy’s theories on landscape and representation of space and location as developed in his work *The Ground of the Image* (2005). He discusses the notions of absence in the representation, or rather presentation of landscape:

It is not so much the imitative representation of a given location as the presentation of a given absence of presence. If I may force the point a bit, I would say that, instead of depicting a “land” as a “location...” it depicts it as “dis-location...”: what presents itself there is the announcement of what is not there; more exactly, it is the announcement that, “there,” there is no presence, and yet that there is no access to an “elsewhere” that is not itself “here,” in the angle opened onto a land occupied only with opening in itself. (Nancy 59)

In discussing the representation of location Nancy introduces the country as opposite to landscape. Both of them approach the same reality, still both project different images of it. The country implies a positioning, the consideration of a location from a certain perspective constrained by its cultural implications (51). So much so, that it becomes a separate and impenetrable space, inaccessible to what lies outside its categories, and as such it stands out from the rest of space (52). It is a spaceless space as it does not contemplate the vastness that exists beyond its perspective (52). This country also holds one's sense of belonging insofar as this connection is based on the standards established by the categories of such country, and that country only (53). So, it is life through a certain perspective we are discussing once more, a view controlled by certain parameters like those socially inscribed in our bodies: always in its potential for representation.

But as it happens with the body, the visible and the hierarchies through which perspectives are construed only exist by virtue of the invisible, the unfolding or openness to other realities. Based on that, through his concept of landscape, Nancy discusses absence, what has been removed from presence: it is “the space of strangeness or estrangement” (Nancy 60). It becomes a space of otherness: “[d]epopulated, the landscape estranges, it renders uncanny” (Nancy 53). This is where we belong and are always in conflict with, a paradoxical blend of contradictory feelings of home and belonging on the one hand, and estrangement on the other. It is a feeling of proximity and distancing at the same time, it is estrangement in the absence of presence: the land “of those who have no land, who are uncanny and estranged ... who are at once those who have lost their way and those who contemplate the infinite—perhaps their infinite estrangement” (Nancy 61). It acknowledges a space of difference, for it welcomes those who have no country, those who live in-between categories, to be in harmony with the space they inhabit. Likewise, in this space, we find absence of ultimate meanings and closed arrangements or forms.

I would argue what Nancy considers as landscape as an in-between space, a space not yet defined, abstract, which allows dislocated realities and subjectivities to express themselves. I have argued before that through our bodies and positioning in the world we get to experience spaces differently. In this sense, spaces, as they are socially appropriated, are a projection of social and cultural constructs, what makes everything outside the conditions they hold, alien to them: it is what Nancy argues as the country. Empty spaces become then places that hold the sense of belonging of those who adjust to the categories such spaces describe. However, dislocated subjects, those who have been in contact with the

variety of the world and do not fit any category, experience a disruption in their sense of attachment; their processes of adaptation and sense of belonging grow differently from others. It is in a space between the visible and the invisible, inside and outside and closeness and remoteness that subjectivity – as it is always in process – finds its meaning. Because they have been left out and do not belong here nor there, their being is “attached” out of place, in an in-between space. As Nancy puts it “[w]hat is distinct in being-there is being-image: it is not here but over there, in the distance, in a distance that is called ‘absence’” (9).

As a result, the experience of place/home becomes a disrupting process for displaced subjects and, where others find refuge, they experience a sense of estrangement: that is the uncanny. The uncanny serves as a means to illustrate the arduous task of identity formation and subjectivity that these subjects in process experience in their displacement. This feeling of being an other with respect to someone else and someone else’s reality rather than our own, makes clearer our interdependency with the other. And so, it clarifies the constant tension we live in having to define ourselves independently yet by virtue of others. These subjects become strangers in the spaces they inhabit precisely because of the exclusion that categories have created, leaving them out. Nonetheless, even as the uncanny and through otherness, in the distance, dislocated subjects are still in relation to the norm as its exception. What is suppressed in representation can be discussed in terms of inclusion and exclusion, what is ostracised from representation is both included and excluded: it is included as it is part of the dislocated subject’s experience and excluded because it is not accounted for and incorporated into the norm.

This form of life that I have just mentioned above has been defined as ‘bare life’ living in an ‘state of exception.’ These terms are developed in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1995) by Giorgio Agamben, where he discusses the effects of sovereignty and power over life and defines the conditions of those who are subjected to it. Agamben discusses sovereignty and power in terms of a political order based on a state of exception that leaves outside what he calls “bare life.” Agamben draws on the Greek terms *zōē* and *bios* to later describe the state of exception in which bare life lives: on the one hand, *zōē* points out to a way of life shared by all beings with indistinct borders between animal and human, merely in the biological sense of the word. On the other, *bios* refers to a more particular way of life suitable for an individual or collectivity, a more politically related kind of life, normally associated with good or proper life (1). By means of the mechanisms of

sovereign power, the sovereign establishes a structure of political nature. In this structure, the sovereign originates and secures the conditions necessary for the legitimacy of the law (Agamben 17). Correlatively, the suspension of the law will be established as anything being outside such conditions. What is excluded, left outside, is what Agamben calls bare life: a human being turned into a bare life with regard to sovereignty, excluded from political life, with no rights, reduced to *zoē* (11). Bare life is only included through a state of exception, that is the subversion of political *bios*.

Hence, exception equals exclusion, but still, what is excluded maintains a relation to the rule as its suspension, and the state of exception derives from this situation in which order is suspended (Agamben 18). It defines itself in terms of inside and outside between what the rule incorporates and on the contrary what it excludes, forcing living beings to be tied to it and simultaneously neglected by it. So it is an inclusive exclusion we are dealing with. It is inclusive as far as it bears relation with the norm in a certain way, even if it is in negative terms. However, it is not completely forgotten or independent from it, as in this exclusion bare life is everything that proper life is not supposed to be, in this way, it remains connected to it. For Agamben the figure of the *homo sacer* fits the description of bare life, as someone who is excluded and because of its potential to be killed by anyone, vulnerable:

homo sacer ... has been excluded from the religious community and from all political life: he cannot participate in the rites of his *gens*, nor ... can he perform any juridically valid act. What is more, his entire existence is reduced to a bare life stripped of every right by virtue of the fact that anyone can kill him without committing homicide; he can save himself only in perpetual flight or a foreign land. (183)

So, this bare life as exemplified through the *homo sacer* describes an outlaw who does not count as proper life, not even as a human form able to account for its suffering and experiences of life. Bare life is subjected to violence, violence exerted by the sovereign and empowered by the law. The only hope left to this way of life is perpetual flight or a foreign land which is a space in-between inside and outside the norm, a place that exists but yet that functions as a counter-space for the norm and commonality. The border between law and lawlessness becomes blurred. It is like being out of place, foreign as Agamben puts it, uncanny estranged as per Nancy's term.

These in-between spaces of estrangement and the *homo sacer* or bare life that inhabits them are still in relation with the other spaces of commonality. Though in a state of exception, these spaces overthrow the kind of relations and establishments that have been settled and categorised by the normativity. I argue that these kinds of spaces fit the

description of what Foucault calls “heterotopias,” which he defines departing from the concept of utopia. In their connection with other sites, both stand out for their capacity to reimagine the kind of relations such sites describe (“Of Other” 24). On the one hand utopias, bear a relation to a real space yet not being real by themselves but just in terms of this correlation (Foucault, “Of Other” 24). On the other hand, Foucault discusses heterotopias as spaces that exist, that are real to every society and culture, and are indeed construed at the very core of their foundation, they are “counter-sites.” In these counter-sites those other places belonging to the same culture are challenged, transposed, and reimaged (Foucault, “Of Other” 24). They are “outside of all places,” “a placeless place” (Foucault, “Of Other” 24) that stands out from the rest in its contrastive nature. As an example of counter-site, Foucault discusses heterotopias through the example of the mirror. The mirror offers a view of what it reflects, a projection (which is indeed unreal) as a counteraction of the actual place that the thing it reflects occupy (which is real):

The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there. (Foucault, “Of Other” 24)

So, it is a compound experience between place and out of place, inclusion and exclusion and real and unreal what heterotopic spaces exemplify. They shelter estrangement and the uncanny, as counteractions of the values of the norm they become the other “another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled” (Foucault, “Of Other” 27). And as these set of values change so do they, as they take different forms and are always in process, not fixed; they present an “absolute break with their traditional time” (Foucault, “Of Other” 26). Heterotopias are outside time and place, in connection with other sites yet different from them. And as such, this heterotopic space, as an other, allows those who inhabit it to connect across time and space with others. In this sense they prove their accumulative feature “the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages” (Foucault, “Of Other” 26). Therefore, it is also a juxtaposition in the same space, of other spaces and by extension of the experiences of those who belong there.

Foucault ends with the ship or boat as the heterotopia in its uttermost expression: “a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity” (Foucault, “Of Other” 27). Dislocated

subjects are not attached to a certain place: they actually belong out of place because of the state of exception they live in, as the other, bare life in a space of estrangement. Also, like the heterotopia of the ship, this placeless place in which dislocated subjects live, incorporates other realities, it renders to infinity, to openness, accident and possibilities. And they do so not only across space, but across time as well, proving their accumulative sense as heterotopias. Though out of place and different from the rest, at the same time these spaces and the places they inhabit still bear a connection to all of the other places transforming their realities as the suspension of their norms, as a counter-site. In this state of exception to the norm dislocated subjects remain in-between the given and the new, as a result of being in the contact zone between cultures and people, all of them different. In their otherness, inhabiting the uncanny, they prove their connection with others and the true nature of their existence as they are subjects in process, in transformation, caught in flight, individually conscious yet exposed to others and their relation to them.

This description of heterotopias manifests the “politically impermeable nature of national boundaries and ... their porosity when the life practices of people are taken into account” (Ashcroft 169-70). Such is the transnation, “a space of transformation” (Ashcroft 175) in perpetual flight that begins inside the nation and extends outside it. According to Ashcroft, the transnation is a “conjunction of dissolving borders” (175) where categories become blurred, undistinguishable from each other, a hybrid space halfway between homogeneity and division (170-71). The heterotopic space of the transnation is the habitat of bare life by definition, that which accepts its dislocating reality.

2.4 Vulnerability as a Positive Model

I have been talking, on the one hand, about the feeling of otherness that bare life experiences being relegated to a space of estrangement, of in-between. On the other hand, I have discussed the connection of bare life to other realities through the exception to the norm, as an other, a connection with other bodies and sites.

The position of powerlessness that bare life experiences is based on a political decision: bare life does not fulfil with the requirements of the system, it is not sufficiently a proper life. In this position it is exposed, since it is not represented nor protected by any authority, it is vulnerable. This is a condition of precarity which Butler defines as a “politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and

economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death.” (Butler, *Frames* 25). Such a condition should not be confused with precariousness, by which we are bound to others as social beings, though certain standards shall be met to be considered as a life, “[i]t implies exposure both to those we know and to those we do not know; a dependency on people we know, or barely know, or not know at all” (Butler, *Frames* 14). This is vulnerability, a common condition we share with others, a responsibility we have towards others by means of which new social relations are built. This condition is not, however, something that we can control or declare in advance, it is open to accident and the infinity of the world and its possibilities (Butler, “Bodily” 114).

Vulnerability is a constitutive relation of our bodies, those same bodies that relate to the world “made of the same flesh as the world” (Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible* 248). Bodies are “sustained in relation to infrastructural supports (or their absence) ... [thus] we cannot extract the body from its constituting relations ... [which] means that vulnerability always takes an object, is always formed and lived in a relation to a set of conditions that are outside, yet part of, the body itself” (Butler, “Bodily” 114). Those conditions that are external to the body bound us to others, what means that the body is not a closed entity. The body involves death, vulnerability, agency: it is exposed in its physical constituency to the touch and the look of others, to violence, what makes it accessible to all, public, and by extension it is dispossessed (Butler, *Precarious* 26). But this is not a condition we can take or leave as we please, as we would be rejecting an essential condition of our selfhood and subject formation as social beings.

Butler uses Emmanuel Levinas’ concept of ‘the face’ to explain this mode of relationality “a way of being *for* another or *by virtue* of another” (Butler, *Precarious* 24). In a face-to-face encounter with the other, the other makes moral demands upon us, demands that we do not choose and cannot deny, and of course demands that we do not request (Butler, *Precarious* 131). This is our ethical reality part of our social condition as human beings which extends beyond time and space: “our ethical obligations extend to those who are not proximate in any physical sense and do not have to be part of a recognizable community to which we both belong [and] in no way depends on ... similar marks of national, cultural, religious [or] racial belonging” (Butler, “Precarious” 139-40).

Yet, in this connection, bodies, which remain open, are distinguishable by virtue of their infinity: “to have the idea of Infinity it is necessary to exist as separated” (Levinas 79). Thus, because homogeneity, or “totalization” in Levinas’ words (80) cannot occur, “Infinity”

comes to explain the impossibility of reducing a living being to a finite entity, its openness to accident and possibilities (Levinas 79-80). As bare life in its heterotopic experience, though connected as the suspension of the norm, it also remains discernible from it, it preserves its heterogeneity and that of the other spaces to which it relates, as counter-sites.

It is important to note that vulnerability does not work equally in all cases. It can be approached in its capacity to mark others, as they may not suffice normativity, therefore they do not count as life. On the contrary, it can also be the means by which those that fulfil the requirements, are protected (Butler, "Bodily" 111). So, we may ask: how does this ethical relation work for those who are beyond consideration, those who do not count as a life and are not devised as the kind of people towards whom we should have an ethical responsibility? There are certain "frames" as Butler calls them, that establish the differences between the lives that qualify as such and those which do not. In this way, these frames create the basis for the subject's existence, "[s]ubjects are constituted through norms which, in their reiteration, produce and shift the terms through which subjects are recognized" (Butler, *Frames* 3-4). But these frames do not remain immutable as they depend on their context, which is sustained on a temporal reason, and move from one place to the other (Butler, *Frames* 10). These frames are another way to exert power on targeted lives as either by accident or through an act of willingness, any kind of life can be effaced: "precisely because each body finds itself potentially threatened by others who are, by definition, precarious as well, forms of domination follow" (Butler, *Frames* 31).

According to Butler, lives that matter are those whose loss matter, those that can be grieved and mourned (*Frames* 14). The other lives will be still considered in their precarity, and since they do not adjust to normativity they will be regarded as a threat, a threat to life as they know it. So those considered as a life protect the lives of grievable subjects, their acts of violence being justified to protect "the living" (Butler, *Frames* 31). In turn, these lives, or their losses do not count as such, they do not qualify as grievable. These lives and bodies that exceed the norm are what Butler calls "abject bodies": "those 'unlivable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the 'unlivable' is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject" ("Bodies" 237).

In any case, it must not be forgotten that "[t]he body is a social phenomenon ... [and it is] vulnerable by definition (Butler, *Frames* 33), which means that our bodies are exposed to others in a series of relations that are an integral part of our identity formation which by

no means can be denied. The other is an intrinsic constituent part of ourselves, so, through acts of violence, cruelty and destruction we jeopardise the conditions of our survival and those upon which we inflict such violence (Butler, *Frames* 61).

This ethical responsibility is a challenge for our abilities as social beings. We have to keep a balanced position between our sense of exposure, in which we feel threatened by the other as a result of our own vulnerability, and the ethical responsibility towards the other at the same time. We need to acknowledge this connection and dependency as vulnerable social subjects. Accordingly, we would need to rework the mechanisms of our society so that we eventually sympathise with the other in a cooperative process, not merely in co-existence regardless of our connections and duties to them. As we are involved in a “social network of hands” (Butler, *Frames* 14) ethical responsibility towards others implies to care and look after them so that they may live, and as a consequence so we will as well. Vengeance is only a step towards an endless process of violence in which the danger of exposure grows each time we fight back. A negative reaction of this kind perpetuated over time will only make us insensible to the losses we cause to others “[l]oss and vulnerability seem to follow from our being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure” (Butler, *Precarious* 20). We should become aware of other lives, their realities and losses, to the extent that we set ourselves in the place of the other so as to give their lives the proper recognition.

3. UNDERSTANDING DISLOCATED SUBJECTS: ANNE MICHAELS' *FUGITIVE PIECES*

Literature has played a very important role in understanding human concerns, as a reflection and sometimes extension of life, as well as an exploration of its countless possibilities. Literature celebrates and participates in the passing of cultural traditions on which they are also documented and find support. It provides us with accounts on experiences occasionally relegated to the unknown. In this regard, literature proves a very important medium through which questions and affinities with real life are shared and explored by readers as much as writers.³

Anne Michaels published *Fugitive Pieces*, an account of the shattered pieces of Jakob Beer, in 1996. The novel is a great example of disintegration in the lives of dislocated subjects, who have been so often misunderstood. This is due to the lack of representative structures they can count on as subjects in process, always in transformation. In this sense, the novel provides a space for discussing the otherwise limited reality that we live day by day.

Although the novel has been usually studied from the point of view of Trauma Studies as it offers a very illustrative example of Holocaust literature, I would rather focus on the novel taking Jakob's experience as representative of subjects in process, a condition very much related to dislocated subjects. As I said in the introduction, my interest considers this traumatic part of the (hi)story as it is a crucial part of the narrative in order to understand Jakob's personality. However, I wish to go further from this traumatic event, as I want to emphasise the accumulative character emphasised throughout the story as it is this accumulation, through the body, memory, history and space that Jakob exemplifies. In this accumulation, no event is considered in isolation, outstanding or excluded from the rest. It is in this sense that I argue the Holocaust as part of the process of subject formation that Jakob undergoes, but not as the only reason of his situation. Especially important is the idea of "the gradual instant" so present in the novel and so representative of its author. But before getting deeper into this particular idea, it is necessary to introduce Anne Michaels to know more about the influences and background of this story.

³ A great part of the information gathered on the author's life has been taken from the following sources: an interview with James Adams, the entry on "Anne Michaels" in *The Literary Encyclopedia* by Marita Grimwood, and the entry on "Jewish Canadian Writing" in the *Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada*

Anne Michaels was born in Toronto, Canada, in 1958. Michaels is known for her literary professional career since, as far as her personal life is concerned, the author has preferred to let her writing speak for itself. In her own words:

the ideas discussed in the books are so important to me, I really would like them to be thought about by the reader, without the facts of my life, no matter how banal, intruding on that. One doesn't work so hard to create a fictional world that has some resonance with readers in order then to fill up space with one's self . . . Do I myself have to add myself to the discussion? (qtd. in Adams)

As the daughter of a man with a Polish-Jewish background, himself an immigrant, Michaels grew aware of the manifold devastating effects of the Second World War, which becomes present in her writing. She studied English at the University of Toronto, where she would teach creative writing years later. Michaels's literary career had its origins in poetry; her volumes of poems *The Weight of Oranges* (1986) and *Miner's Pond* (1991) awarded her the Commonwealth Prize and the National Magazine Award respectively. However, as time went by, because her interests grew deeper and more complex, poetry offered a limited space, hardly sufficient to delve into her concerns. She needed a deeper and much more extensive look out into her anxieties, which she eventually was able to develop through fiction. As she confirms in her interview with Gordon Bölling:

My task was different and so I couldn't do what I needed to do in poetry. I can't speak for the others. But for me there are certain large questions which I knew, in order to be truthful to the complexity of the questions and because some of those questions were very difficult to look at or questions which we maybe desire not to look at too closely, that I would have to unfold them over many pages. Being with the reader over two hundred or four hundred pages, one can unfold things differently and lead both the writer and the reader into places, difficult or painful places, because you have the time to do it. A poem doesn't allow you that. (148)

Fugitive Pieces was the product of her first venture in fiction which gained her international recognition. A national bestseller in Canada, it won the Books in Canada First Novel Award, the Trillium Book Award and the Orange Prize for Fiction among other national and international awards and nominations. The writing process of the novel took Michaels ten years of work to complete. The novel is divided in two parts and narrated by two different protagonists, travelling through various spaces, at different time frames, but still connected in their narration and life stories. The main protagonist of the novel, Jakob Beer, narrates the first part of the story whereas the second part is narrated by Ben, though still about Jakob, around who the plot revolves, always lying at the centre of the storyline from beginning to end.

The Second World War is the historical event that marks the succession of events and each of the characters' story, but I will make allusion mostly to Jakob as he will be the centre

of my study. Jakob belongs to a Jewish family living in Poland which is abruptly broken by the Nazis: his parents are murdered, and his sister disappears in all the confusion, her fate unknown. This is a dramatic event that Jakob “witnesses” concealed behind a wall, and it will have a great influence on the character’s insight. Jakob turns then to the “drowned city” of Biskupin in which he literally buries himself looking for protection. But everything changes when the Greek geologist Athos Roussos rescues and takes Jakob to Zakynthos, Greece, until the war ends. From there on Jakob will try to put the pieces of his life together and through the guidance he finds in Athos, he will resort to as many expressive strategies as he finds at his disposal to get to the bottom of his inner self.

Throughout the years a number of similarities have brought together Michaels’ novel with other writers and their works. Though apparently moving away from poetry, *Fugitive Pieces* preserves Michaels’ origins intact: being a novel and written in prose, still, Michaels manages to make use of the poetic language and style that characterises her. Precisely because Michaels started her career as a poet, she has been related to the novelist and poet Michael Ondaatje. Both share their beginnings as poets, a characteristic common to other Canadian authors like Margaret Atwood or Jane Urquart. In “The City as a Site of Counter-Memory” Meredith Criglington establishes a comparison between Michaels’ first novel and Ondaatje’s *In the Skin of a Lion* (1996), both of them examples of Jewish Canadian literature. They also defend and provide the reader and society with examples of the city as a space in which hidden meanings and underground spaces emerge visible (130). They also explore the spaces that witness the development of immigrant subjectivities through a Postmodernist perspective, both set in part in the still-in-progress city of Toronto (Sturgess 35).

As a portrait of Jewish Canadian Literature, *Fugitive Pieces* has also been considered a late response to A.M. Klein’s *The Second Scroll* (1985) and Henry Kreisel’s short story “The Almost Meeting” written in 1981 *The Almost Meeting and Other Stories* (2004), especially because their setting is shared between Canada and Europe, as Michaels’ novels begins in the Polish city of Biskupin, what sheds light on the “Jewish Canadian identity and its European Foundation” (Ravvin 616). Also, referring to Kreisel’s work, the symbolic “almost meeting” that its title suggests finds a parallel in Michaels’ novel. In Kreisel’s “The Almost Meeting,” neither of the two encounters that are pursued by Budak are successful, either with his father, or with his so admired colleague of profession, a writer called Lasker. Although Jakob and Ben meet at a certain point in the story, in the end, what prevails, as in

Kreisel's story, is the sense of quest over the result and so this feeling of non-reconciliation finds its parallel in the disruptive reality of immigrant identities, common to the two stories.

In the acknowledgements at the end of the novel, Michaels mentions some of the other writers and works that helped her through the writing process of *Fugitive Pieces*: "Many books assisted me in my research of the war – original testimony as well as the work of historians; in particular Terrence Des Pres's *The Survivor* renewed my resolve in the course of writing. My resolve was also strengthened by the work of John Berger" (296). Concerning John Berger she has particularly acknowledged him as an excellent source of inspiration for the humanist perspective present in his writing, no matter the crudity or challenge that the story may present, its accurateness never being compromised (Bölling 153). Indeed, this humanist perspective⁴ she deeply admires can also be appreciated in her work, making it a faithful and close approach to the reality she describes, particularly in the process of documentation on the historical realities she addresses. In this respect, regarding the process of writing her own novel, Michaels has said she "did years of reading, years of research, followed all kinds of strange and stray paths and just let that material sink into" (qtd. in Cho 4).

At the same time, Michaels is also aware of the impossibility to know everything and the importance of being respectful towards the facts and life stories we narrate: "[t]he inherent difficulty is that one can never know enough. You can research for years and never know enough. There has to be an absolute respect for one's own ignorance and also for the person whose voice you are attempting to speak from" (150).

Nevertheless, regarding influences on her as a writer and on her work, Michaels affirms that it is on "small gradations" that her career and learning have unfolded throughout the years, as she claims having no revelatory experience that marked a turning point in her profession, which so many other writers have affirmed to undergo (Bölling 153). Because, as she says, it is not a specific time that a certain moment involves, but rather that moment elongates in space and time, having broader connections (Bölling 154), so the same can be

⁴ John Berger is one among many advocates of Marxist Humanism. According to Joseph H. McMahon Berger "has used his writings to bring into high relief the tensions, dramas, and disappointments of life in the modern world" (202). McMahon continues saying that "[w]hat is noteworthy about Berger is the intensity of his personal effort to study the chasm between the ideal perceived and reality attained and to propose possible ways of bridging it" (202): this is the humanist perspective that Michaels acknowledges as an influence on her work.

applied to her professional career and the influences she may have received: they do not take place overnight but in small doses, step by step.

Similarly, William H. New argues that this novel is, and at the same time it is not, about the Holocaust (“Jewish” 552), an opinion which I endorse, since the novel seems to say so much more about subjectivity formation, as mentioned before. The novel portrays how much we are conditioned by the past as an accumulation of time and moments. It is not the very circumstances lived during a particular moment or period of time in itself that we receive influence of the Holocaust, for example. Instead, events are part of a bigger and more extensive phenomena in what concerns time and space. These are Michaels’ views on “history existing all at once” or “the gradual instant” (Cho 4) that I mentioned a few paragraphs above. Events are connected among themselves, as a succession of lived experiences that shape those who live them and those who come after them. Events do not stand in isolation, narrating single stories unrelated to previous circumstances: “[i]n the most simplistic sense, things don’t just happen. Historical events don’t just occur suddenly ... there’s been a buildup of events which causes the ultimate event” (Cho 4).

This is why this novel, as per the intentions behind its writing, and particularly the character of Jakob, constitutes the perfect example to develop my thesis: as per the motivations of the author, Jakob is willing to understand different point of views, cultural perspectives, possibilities and historical realities. Thus, he shows an enormous sense of respect for the other revealing himself in his vulnerability despite the harsh circumstances he may have lived.

After this introduction on the background and influences surrounding the writing of the novel, and also after providing a theoretical framework and notions that contextualise the reality of people in exile, those who actually have no system of support in many senses, I will proceed to analyse the novel itself focusing on how Jakob embodies the experience of the immigrant as a dislocated subject open to other realities in the accumulation in which they are presented: a subject open to others who seeks for these connections as the only means to understand himself and the world he lives in.

4. JAKOB: A VULNERABLE SUBJECT OF DISLOCATION

4.1. Jakob in *Fugitive Pieces*

Fugitive Pieces has been considered a novel about “Canadian immigrant fiction, nomadic fiction, or the fiction of exile ... a quest for spiritual survival across generations” (Howells 107). But its most outstanding characteristic and the one that its title foretells is that the narrative in which we get to know Jakob Beer is a novel about fugitives, “people in flight, who are wanderers from place to place, refugees, nomads” (Howells 108).

Before getting into the analysis of the character, I believe it is useful to provide an overview of the main events that mark Jakob’s story so as to understand what he lives in each moment and the influences that certain events have on his personality.

The first part of the novel, which is narrated by Jakob, starts in Biskupin. At Biskupin, Jakob loses his family and as a consequence he feels the need to hide himself in all kinds of landscapes for protection. Athos finds Jakob in the underground spaces of Biskupin, and decides to take the boy with him; they both go to Zakynthos, Athos’ home, where the geologist starts instructing Jakob in all the subjects he controls: he teaches him Greek and English, geology, history, botany, palaeontology, geography etc. After the Nazi occupation of Zakynthos comes to an end, Jakob starts to look for his place in the world, trying to put together all the scattered pieces that compose his story in order to finally make sense of his being in the world. It is then that he and Athos are able to move to Canada and Athos can finally take the invitation from a former member of Scott’s Antarctic Expedition to join the Geography department at the University of Toronto. Meanwhile, Jakob takes courses in literature, history and geography at the university and starts what would be his future career as a poet and translator. He starts translating from Greek to English the works of poets banned in Greek. There, Jakob meets the woman who would become his first wife, Alexandra. However, he is still connected to the past, since he is unable to abandon his origins and move on, and the relation turns into a failure. It is Michaela, years later, the one who will help Jakob make sense of his perturbed memories of the past. They move back to Greece, Athens, where Jakob writes the memories of his life in a series of diaries that Ben – the second narrator of the story – will desperately try to find.

In the second part of the story Ben follows Jakob's steps to solve his own personal dilemma. Though they both share similar concerns, unlike Jakob, Ben was born in Canada, and it is through his parents that he bears connection with a Polish-Jewish background. As a second generation child born to survivors of the Holocaust, he inherits the traumas of his parents, but unlike Jakob, he belongs to that group "for whom Canada is 'home ground' and not 'foreign territory'" (Howells 109).

Although I have introduced a linear summary of the plot in the novel, it is not a linear vision of his life what Jakob offers in the narration of his memories. Instead, the narrative parallels his evolving consciousness, incorporating elements and voices from one place and the other, from the past and the present.

4.2. Recovering "Remote Causes" through Memory: "All Visible Things Will Be Born Again Invisible"

Memory is cumulative selection.
It's an undersea cable connecting one continent
to another,
electric in the black brine of distance.

(Anne Michaels, "Miner's Pond")

We do not descend, but rise from our histories,
If I cut open, memory would resemble
A cross-section of the earth's core,
a table of geographical time.

(Anne Michaels, "The Lake of Two Rivers")

"Bog boy, I surfaced into the miry streets of the drowned city" (Michaels, *Fugitive* 5). That is how Jakob starts his narrative: from the beginning of the novel, we are immersed in underground spaces, always towards what is kept hidden and invisible, still showing a positive image of resistance. He mentions the "bog bodies," "Tollund Man, Grauballe Man" (Michaels, *Fugitive* 5), preserved intact under peat bogs for centuries, describing himself as

one of them. So, these “bog bodies” once mistreated and relegated to the invisible space of the underground, not treated as proper human life, paradoxically “outlast their killers — whose bodies have long dissolved to dust” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 48).

By recalling the image of the “bog bodies,” Jakob restores “justice” to those lives that were considered inferior, previously transformed from human lives into mere bodily commodities. This same image brings forth the dualism of concealment and retrieval present throughout the novel. Jakob’s memoir enhances resistance through memory, space and the body itself, the three of them accumulative of other experiences, open to the preservation and retrieval of others voices, memories and bodies forgotten by those controlling history and society, those who decide who is in and who is out.

So, on the one hand, we find the preservation of the body through its connection to the world in all its constituent dimensions – inside and outside, visible and invisible – and, on the other, its de-humanization⁵ as a result of the lack of recognition of certain modes of life in their full capacity. The use that Jakob makes of archaeology and geology serves to illustrate the connection between body and world, both of them “made of the same flesh” (Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible* 248): “[t]he spirit in the body is like wine in a glass; when it spills, it seeps into air and earth and light” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 22); “[h]uman memory is encoded in air currents and river sediment. Eskers of ash wait to be scooped up, lives reconstituted” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 53).

Through his body in the physical world, as “the general instrument of [his] comprehension” (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 235), he is not only superficially connected to the spaces visible and apprehensible in it. Instead, in describing himself as a “bog body” he also recognises the subterranean spaces and everything that they contain, such as the bodies that live in-between spaces and time. These are the underground spaces of the hidden and invisible, spaces into which Jakob, as many others, were forced, as they were not given other alternative: no other spaces were accessible for them to feel or claim as their own, in this way impeding their attachment or sense of belonging to a common background which they could share with others.

Athos confirmed that there was an invisible world, just as real as what’s evident. Full-grown forests still and silent, whole cities, under a sky of mud. The realm of the peat men, preserved as statuary. The place where all those who have uttered the bony password and entered the earth wait to emerge. From

⁵ The idea on de-humanisation here mentioned is a reflection on Karin Sanders’ *Bodies in the Bog and the Archaeological Imagination*.

underground and underwater, from iron boxes and behind brick walls, from trunks and packing crates....
(Michaels, *Fugitive* 49)

Besides, it is through the corporeal practices of the body in the world that Jakob narrates his story, according to his perception. Thus, Jakob is aware of the limits of his own perception, not only because he has many voids to fill, but also because he is aware of other bodies and other perspectives on the world apart from his own. Considering his body as a perceived, he grows aware that, in its physicality it is also limited to certain time and spatial circumstances: “[an] event is meaningful only if the coordination of time and place is witnessed” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 162). But through his relation to others, acknowledging other perspectives and breaking barriers, he goes beyond his own time and spatial perspective. Consequently, he is able to perceive the infinity of the world, what allows him to recognise a space of difference.

Jakob also describes this space of invisibility through silence, “the response to both emptiness and fullness” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 194). He continuously evokes images of silence as he feels the lack of means that highlight the impossibility of telling his story, which at the same time, give him feelings of uneasiness and estrangement: “I don’t stay under long ... with my ears under the surface, I can’t hear. This is more frightening to me than darkness, and when I can’t stand the silence any longer, I slip out of my wet skin, into sound” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 11). As a matter of fact, silence is the only means through which he feels he has been granted to explore the unspeakable dislocation he experiences: “I screamed into the silence the only phrase I knew in more than one language, I screamed it in Polish and German and Yiddish, thumping my fists on my own chest: dirty Jew, dirty Jew, dirty Jew” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 12-13). Jakob feels that he cannot recur to any other means of expression to convey his reality, as there are no structures that recognise it:

I listened to these dark shapes as if they were black spaces ... I felt this was my truth. That my life could not be stored in any language but only in silence; the moment I looked into the room and took in only what was visible, not vanished. The moment I failed to see Bella had disappeared. But I did not know how to seek by way of silence. ... I thought of writing poems this way, in code, every letter askew, so that loss would wreck the language, become the language. (Michaels, *Fugitive* 111)

Silence is also symbolic for the losses in Jakob’s life, absence in many forms that lie at the very centre of Jakob’s identity, making silence an integral part of his self. So, in this estrangement that he suffers no language seems to account for his voice: he is conferred to silence given that no structures sustain his body in the world, his perspective and positioning as such. However, the experience of language transforms Jakob in his process of learning Greek and English. At first, he admits that he “longed to cleanse [his] mouth of memory”

(Michaels, *Fugitive* 22), as he realises that through language, past memories that disrupt his life are released and recovered from silence. He experiences this degree of uneasiness, particularly when he gets in contact with the Greek alphabet, which could be explained in the features it shares with Hebrew, his mother tongue, as both of them “contain the ancient loneliness of ruins,” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 21-22) which reminds Jakob of the feeling of dislocation and disintegration so prevalent in his life. However, over time, he learns about the power of language to restore his shattered self, especially of languages other than his mother tongue, primarily English: “when I began to write down the events of my childhood in a language foreign to their happening, it was a revelation. English could protect me; an alphabet without memory” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 101).

So, initially, he tries to leave his haunting past behind, through a language different from his own, a language that is not his mother tongue and which leaves certain details back when translating his experience, a language that maintains a prudent distance and is alien to his memories at Biskupin and those of his parents and sister. He tries to “bury images, to cover them over with Greek and English words” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 93). But Jakob also grows aware of the danger of losing his identity in the process: “[t]he English language was food. I shoved it into my mouth, hungry for it. A gush of warmth spread through my body, but also panic, for with each mouthful the past was further silenced” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 92). After all, he tries to move towards a balanced position between his struggle with memory and the possibilities of expression that language provides him, so he writes his memoir in English. In this way the past will not emerge so painfully as it would do in his own language, as English, “an alphabet without memory” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 101), allows him to convey the indescribable through a prudent distance with the source of origin, but still remembering and articulating memory, what Athos so insistently reminds him to do. It is Athos indeed who, at the same time that he teaches Jakob new languages, also encourages him to keep practising his own language: “[i]t is your future you are remembering” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 21).

What is really important is that Jakob feels responsible for his past, and the past of all those lives he so willingly incorporates to the flow of his memory and the writing process of his memoir. In his “moral” exercise of memory he is not able to forget and leave behind the histories of silenced voices, no matter how uncomfortable he may feel in doing so. In *Fugitive Pieces*, writing becomes a strategy for recovery: through his writing Jakob rescues himself and others. This characteristic finds support in Athos’ claim when he tells Jakob:

“[w]rite to save yourself ... and someday you’ll write because you’ve been saved” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 165).

Nevertheless, Jakob knows the system of power and exclusion through which language is articulated: “I already knew the power of language to destroy, to omit, to obliterate” (Michaels *Fugitive* 79). So, he tries to find an alternative to standard language through which he can express himself without destroying anything, as his purpose is exactly the opposite, to recover something. Jakob turns to poetry, which allows him to really understand his being in the world: “poetry, the power of language to restore: this was what both Athos and Kostas were trying to teach me” (Michaels *Fugitive* 79).

Kristjana Gunnars discusses one of Michaels’ essays about poetry, “Cleopatra’s Love,” in a chapter titled “On Writing Short Books,” compiled in her book *Stranger at the Door: Writers and the Act of Writing*. According to Michaels, in its shortness, a poem is “unified without the loss of complexity” (qtd. in Gunnars 85). More importantly, Gunnar discusses that “a poem ‘knows’ that there is no coherence or unity. Everything, it is implied by poetry itself, is partial” (Gunnars 85), and this partiality suggests that we can only attain partial meanings of the world as well. The fact that a poem does not bring any story to an end and is not closed to possibility but rather open to be interpreted, is what makes poetry suitable for Jakob. As a subject of dislocation, through his body, Jakob is aware of this partial perspective and he corroborates this partiality and sense of fragmentation when he chooses to write poetry – partial and limited in itself – rather than any other writing strategy that would enhance a sense of closeness and determinacy through a clear ending to the events it narrates. In her essay, “Cleopatra’s Love,” Michaels describes the moral use of poetry:

The distinction between knowledge and "poetic knowing" resembles the distinction between history and memory. Knowledge/History is essentially amoral: events occurred. "Poetic Knowing"/Memory is inextricable linked with morality: history’s source is event, but memory’s source is meaning. Often what we consciously remember is what our conscience remembers.

Memory, like love, gains strength through restatement, reaffirmation; in a culture, through ritual, tradition, stories, art. Memory courts our better selves; it helps us recognize the importance of deed; we learn from pleasure just as we learn from pain. And when memory evokes consideration of what might have been or been prevented, memory becomes redemptive. As Israeli poet Yehudi Amichai wrote: "to remember is a kind of hope. (“Cleopatra” 15)

On that basis, we can say that Jakob uses poetry in an attempt to imagine and recreate across dimensions and the categories that standard language defines, therefore expanding them, providing them with a much more extensive meaning as it relies on interpretation departing just from a partial text. Thus, poetry overthrows absolute meanings.

In his study of the earth Jakob is able to appreciate that landscape is open to accident and transformation “[t]he landscape of the Peloponnesus had been injured and healed so many times, sorrow darkened the sunlit ground. All sorrow feels ancient. Wars, occupations, earthquakes; fire and drought. I stood in the valleys and imagined the grief of the hills” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 60). And so, in the many transformations it has suffered, the earth is able to incorporate many stories, not only from the present which, “like a landscape, is only a small part of a mysterious narrative. A narrative of slow accumulation” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 48). Rather, it also incorporates those from the past: the earth is composed of many layers and each of them contains different stories which are small parts of a bigger phenomenon, still all of them part of an accumulation.

Each time Jakob visits a new place he feels its history, the voices lost in the way, within the accumulation of the landscape:

“[w]e descended the valley to Kalavrita ... everyone we’d spoken to had told us of the massacre ... the Germans murdered every man in the village over the age of fifteen – fourteen hundred men ... In the valley, charred ruins, blackened stone, a terrible silence. A place so empty it was not even haunted” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 61).

So, on the surface, at first sight, the earth might seem rather simple, static, not offering anything further, not any story apart from the one he can see. However, drawing on the complexities of landscape and the accumulation of layers that composes it, Jakob is able to appreciate a whole new world full of possibilities and stories that extend to the past, what has been left behind or underneath, still unexplored, the history of earth itself. Jakob realises that these small parts that we are able to control are still invisible to many, since the obvious, so easily perceived, is acknowledged by the majority, therefore turned and fixed into a certain position:

It’s a mistake to think it’s the small things we control and not the large, it’s the other way around! We can’t stop the small accident, the tiny detail that conspires into fate: the extra moment you run back for something forgotten, a moment that saves you from an accident—or causes one. But we can assert the largest order, the large human values daily, the only order large enough to see. (Michaels, *Fugitive* 22)

This example extends to history as well. The largest order or “monumental history” (Foucault, “Nietzsche” 161) is controlled by authorities, like the Nazis control the history they tell, to the point that they alter the events occurred and transform them according to their own vision. Nevertheless, it is the small accident, forgotten by this “monumental history” (Foucault, “Nietzsche” 161), the local instead of the global, that which is different and does not adjust to the largest order and has been left outside what is free and remains in flux, open to possibilities and accident, out of control.

In this sense, Jakob proves to be part of the small accident, his identity always in process, open to possibilities rather than fixed. His story is made up of pieces, consisting of other stories that he recalls through memory. Indeed, it is through other voices and accounts, not only his own, that he constructs his story: “I did not witness the most important events of my life. My deepest story must be told by a blind man, a prisoner of sound. From behind a wall, from underground” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 17). Very early in the novel, Jakob introduces us to the main event that pervades the narration: war. He emphasises the fact that he does not have first-hand experience of the effects of war on his life: while he hides behind a wall, his parents are killed and his sister mysteriously vanishes.

Jakob demonstrates that the exercise of memory rescues the hidden (hi)stories from historical narratives – “monumental history” (Foucault, “Nietzsche” 161). Memory depends on our own choices, as Jakob chooses, through memory, to incorporate other stories and voices that had been silenced before, those that the largest order had deliberately excluded from its narration. The body has an important role here, given its limits, as a perception of the world in which previous states of the body are encrypted; it is its own story, through the practice of memory that it recalls, providing its own interpretation of history:

History is amoral: events occurred. But memory is moral; what we consciously remember is what our conscience remembers. History is the Totenbuch, The Book of the Dead, kept by the administrators of the camps. Memory is the Memorbucher, the names of those to be mourned, read aloud in the synagogue. History and memory share events; that is, they share time and space. Every moment is two moments. (Michaels, *Fugitive* 138)

So, when memory is acknowledged as partial – what also asserts its subjective and fragmentary character – other voices and stories are revealed through the voids that this partiality leaves unanswered. In this sense, going back to the bog bodies, through their timeless resistance, they prove to be morally more valuable, given that bog bodies outlast their killers, challenging the linearity of time and the authority of history, which they subvert (Sanders 70). The bog or mud carries antique histories; therefore, those who try to keep them hidden create their own “truths” to the detriment of other truths contained there in a destructive process that evidenced in the ruins of previous lives that remain in the mud. Besides, this also emphasises the small accident, that even if is taken out from the large order, it is still out of control and continues to slip through, incorporating the stories of those who can no longer speak: “remote causes” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 37).

Jakob also experiments the body as a reflection of power structures and hierarchies in which certain elements and stories are highlighted above others. His story serves as an

example of the counter-memory of absence: first and foremost, because of its fragmentary character which simultaneously rejects the relation between stability and unity associated to identity. And second, because it represents everything left outside by “official” history, recognising the fugitive pieces that “monumental history” has deleted for being different. Besides, through memory, it acknowledges that in remembering we are active counterparts in the process of choosing what we recall or leave aside, from a position of ethical awareness.

The storytelling of Jakob’s life is a retrospection, as the character tries to put together his fragmentary identity and sense of belonging through past events and experiences. Catherine Coussens affirms it can even be considered a palimpsest, since it is not a structured narrative that covers a story from beginning to end: instead the story’s linearity is interrupted by other voices and accounts from the past flourishing in different shapes in the present (75). Hence, Jakob undertakes a quest that takes him in a metaphorical journey, so to speak, across time and space barriers. As I have mentioned before, he does so through memory, and in doing so, the remembrance of other lives, voices, cultures and traditions emerge like his own, which coincides with Merleau-Ponty’s ideas on existence and on being as an active relationship with the world and other bodies. This proves that memory, as a site in which experiences are accumulated, fails to be defined only as an individual exercise of identification with a fixed notion like a certain nationality, religion or group, neither can it be classified as a collective practice since the self’s individuality and continuous variation would be excluded.

Jakob identifies so much with the experiences of others that they become his own, so, the kind of memory that dislocated subjects like Jakob exercise, the kind of space that he lives in and with which he identifies is not, as Marianne Hirsch has remarked, “an identity position, but a space of remembrance, more broadly available through cultural and public, and not merely individual and personal, acts of remembrance, identification, and projection” (qtd. in Coussens 83). In this space of remembrance Jakob feels “multiply interconnected with others of the same, of previous, and of subsequent generations, ... – proximate or distant – ... the self-identification with others represent an ethical relation to the oppressed or persecuted, and resists the distance between the self and the other” (qtd. in Coussens 76).

This feeling of closeness to the event in spite of the fact that it has not been experienced by him is what makes Jakob’s experience so revealing for the study of memory. It is rather inherited, passed to him, it is not an exercise of memory as such, instead we might approach this phenomenon through Hirsch’s term ‘postmemory’ as “the ways in which individuals

can be haunted by a past that they have not experienced personally but which has somehow been ‘transferred’ to them, often unconsciously, by family members ... [affecting them at a] collective or cultural level” (qtd. in Rossington and Whitehead 7). Therefore, we can draw two important conclusions: first, the unquestionable connections between people across time and space, second, the relevance that other lives and the events that those lives entail have on our lives, regardless of whether the events or the people are unknown to us.

Through memory Jakob also connects to loss, as he remembers and brings to life the dead ones: his parents, all those lives lost in the different times and places he is able to visit, and eventually, Athos. It is not loss as such what he explores or mourns, though; he provides a space in which invisible lives can be accounted for, and he is able to reconcile with death through time since, as long as those absences are remembered, they are not completely absent: “There’s no absence, if there remains even the memory of absence. Memory dies unless it’s given a use. Or, as Athos might have said: If one no longer has land but has the memory of land, then one can make a map” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 193).

So, to sum up, we can say that Jakob is aware of the limits of his body and through his physical connection with the world he is able to go beyond the visible into the invisible, where it can be understood that the visible is inherently composed by virtue of the invisible at the same time. In incorporating both the visible and the invisible an accumulation is recognised, and it is this same accumulation that is articulated through memory. Jakob recalls other experiences as he discovers, in his study of geology, that there is much more to time and space than the space he inhabits, or rather than the one he is able to perceive through the physicality of his body. At the same time, the body of the landscape and the world he experiences as a correlation, is also characterised by the interplay between concealment and revelation, visibility and invisibility. Being exposed through his body, Jakob depends on external circumstances that he cannot control. Besides, the structures of power to which the body is subject do not sustain Jakob, as he is not part of the large order, controlled and established in a certain way he does not comply.

4.2. Being out of Place

Unlike the bog bodies, Jakob is able to surface physically and live a “second history” he is given a second chance; still, the kind of space he comes to inhabit is a space of estrangement, a spaceless space. But even if it is a space of difference, this necessity to be

connected to the world through any kind of space that makes us feel identified with it manifests the necessity of a connection with landscape, as it is inherent to our subject formation: “‘What is a man,’ said Athos, ‘who has no landscape?’” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 86).

The kind of space in which Jakob emerges is not familiar in any sense, as he is deprived of a place in the world, he is relegated to other kind of spaces. Indeed, from his position as an other he inhabits a continuous sense of being out of place, or recalling Nancy’s words, a “dis-location” (Nancy 59). So Jakob, in his disrupting experiences of destruction and uprootedness feels placeless both in a geographical and psychological way.

Nevertheless, the limit between those excluded from a proper place in the world and those who inhabit alternative spaces becomes blurred, as one cannot be without the other; the invisible and estranged form part of the visible, the only difference is that the invisible or placeless is not acknowledged: “[t]erra cognita and terra incognita inhabit exactly the same coordinates of time and space” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 137). Even so, the fact that they are unexplored spaces does not mean that they are not “there” in any sense, they are “there” as they form part of history and the world, but their presence is marked by absence, what has been removed from presence: “terra nullius” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 19), nobody’s land. So, Jakob’s being in the world through these alternative spaces counteracts official history, which also applies to those voices from the past that he brings forth through memory. In his rebirth, once he is rescued by Athos, Jakob creates a new place after destruction, as destruction does not imply disappearance: he proves the slippages of time and voids of history through which alternative voices and accounts surface.

The space that Jakob inhabits then is characterised by a counter-memory of absence, and this space contests the large order as an exception, an exception to the norm and the appropriation of history. If we recall Agamben’s theories on the state of exception, Jakob represents the opposite to the establishments of the norm (in this case due to his cultural background). As such, he is excluded from political and social life, being relegated to a state of exception. Nevertheless, he is not totally excluded from the large order or normativity; like the “small accident,” Jakob is still related to the norm as its exception, only that maintaining a certain distance in this “connection,” a distance that is absence itself.

Jakob becomes a stranger anywhere he goes. He is bare life by definition in constant exile and excluded from visibility and recognition, not recognised in his full capacity as a social being and an integral part of society but as a mere biological being; *zoē*. In his physical

connection with the world, Jakob, through his body, depends on external structures and conditions “that pertain to the phenomenological structure of bodily life” (Butler, *Frames* 30). However, he is excluded of this mode of life as he does not fulfill the necessary conditions imposed by social parameters. And also, this exclusion is emphasised because he has been deprived of his “home place” due to the state of displacement to which he has been forced by historical and social circumstances. As such, in this state, he is exposed in two different ways: on the one hand, in the form of exclusion from recognition by society, and on the other, in his continuous exposure to accident and injurability, using Butler’s terminology (*Frames* 2). And in this way, the violence to which he is exposed reduces him to absence: “[d]estruction doesn’t create a vacuum, it simply transforms presence into absence. The splitting atom creates absence, palpable ‘missing’ energy” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 161).

The only possibility he is left is exile and perpetual flight, it is estrangement. As bare life, his life does not count as such, so much so that he has no means to account for his suffering or that of his parents. So, he is “condemned” to this perpetual flight or nomadism as Coral Ann Howells calls it applying Rosi Braidotti’s theories, where this state is “partly the result of historical circumstances and partly a psychological response to the radical dislocation of his identity as a child and the cultural and linguistic displacements of his upbringing” (111). It is as a result of these conditions that Jakob feels the need to explore the world to see where he belongs: “I was like the men in Athos’s stories, who set their courses before the invention of longitude and never quite knew where they were. They looked at the stars and knew they were missing information” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 19).

Jakob passes from being forced into displacement from Biskupin, his home-country, to take this feeling of displacement with him anywhere he goes, no matter the experiences he lives there: never mind that he grows in Zakynthos or consolidates his career as a poet in Toronto, still he feels out of place. But he grows aware of the need to accept his past in order to overcome his dislocation: “[e]ven as a child, even as my blood-past was drained from me, I understood that if I were strong enough to accept it, I was being offered a second history” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 20). This is the space inhabited by a stranger, a space of “pure transition that allows no rest” (qtd. in Howells 111). So, we are able to see his distortedness as an immigrant: through his experience as a diasporic subject we get to know the effects of displacements through generations, even when he leaves his “home” behind, still the past haunts him, making a great impact in his present life: “[t]he shadow-past is shaped by

everything that never happened. Invisible, it melts the present like rain through karst. A biography of longing” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 17). Besides, he also undergoes a transnational experience as concerns his identity, which trespasses the limits marked by nations, self and other and limited spaces. This can be described as an “acute awareness of the nonfixity of boundaries. It is the *intense* desire to go on trespassing, transgressing” (qtd. in Howells 111).

Jakob never quits his quest for place and sense of belonging, what proves that the formation of identity in dislocated subjects is space-based: “I seek out the horror which, like history itself, can’t be stanchd. I read everything I can. My eagerness for details is offensive” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 139). Actually, it is in exile where Jakob is really able to explore his sense of place and find what constitutes his identity; he relocates in exile: “‘In xenetia—in exile’ ... ‘in a foreign landscape, a man discovers the old songs. He calls out for water from his own well, for apples from his own orchard, for the muscat grapes from his own vine’” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 86).

It is especially interesting that Michaels uses the setting of Toronto as it is in itself a space that incorporates different cultures and identities “a city where almost everyone has come from elsewhere ... bringing with them their different ways of dying and marrying, their kitchens and songs. A city of forsaken worlds... (Michaels, *Fugitive* 89). It is in a space of transit where he is able to get rid, at least during short lapses of time, of his feeling of displacement, though it always happens when he is in contact with the natural environment, not the established prefixed spaces of the city. This distinction bring us back to the binary distinction between country – related to fixations and perspectivism – and landscape – concerning a spaceless space of estrangement and absence:

These weekly explorations into the ravines were escapes to ideal landscapes; lakes and primeval forests so long gone they could never be taken away from us.

On these walks I could temporarily shrug off my strangeness because, the way Athos saw the world, every human was a newcomer. (Michaels, *Fugitive* 103)

It is unusual to find displacement and dislocation associated with attachment to place; however, in *Fugitive Pieces* places are conceived in their sense of transformation: “Nothing is sudden. Not an explosion—planned, timed, wired carefully—not the burst door. Just as the earth invisibly prepares its cataclysms, so history is the gradual instant” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 77). As I said before, destroying a place does not necessarily imply that it vanishes, it is rather transformed by virtue of accidental nature. This kind of space of estrangement is a timeless space in which history is understood “as existing all at once” (Cho 4), in which present and past are conceived in their continuity, almost as if time did not exist. This is why

I argue that this space is heterotopic, in the sense that it incorporates other voices, rendering itself open to infinity and difference, subjected to the changes that occur in the world, always in process and constant transformation. This corresponds to the metaphor of the ship in Foucault, open to possibilities and other realities regardless of spatial and time boundaries: a placeless place. It is indeed a counter-site to those spaces fixed and solidified with imposed meanings. Heterotopic spaces, inaccessible to the ravages of time, make possible to mourn and redeem losses from the past in the present, showing once more how space reflects connections with others. This space in-between is also heterotopic in the sense that, though being real, it has to be perceived, it needs to pass through a virtual point as in the Foucauldian metaphor of the mirror: this space is real as far as it exists, and Jakob and so many other experiences belong there, but still, it is unreal as long as it is not acknowledged and perceived as an integrating part of society.

All of this is a result of exile, of being in contact with diverse cultures, therefore resorting to an alternative space that can account for this different reality, creating a “new world” in which Jakob is relocated in the in-betweenness of spaces – in the perpetual flight of the heterotopia. Such is the transnation, a space in which borders become blurred and dislocation constitutes identity, as the transnation is a space that embraces change and process: transformation through cataclysm, a place that articulates history.

The sense of exile in which Jakob lives, dislocated, proves that no system can represent any solidified immutable truth or knowledge. But, in putting together the fugitive pieces of history, dislocated subjects can experience their own sense of belonging in absence, out of place.

4.3. “Bonds that Compose us”

To live with the other, with the foreigner, confronts us with the possibility . . . *of being an other*. It is not simply a matter – humanistically – of our aptitude for accepting the other, but of *being in his or her place*, which amounts to thinking of oneself and making oneself other than oneself.

(Julia Kristeva, “Strangers to Ourselves”)

In the previous sections I have discussed Jakob and his devotion to the other. Jakob is committed to the invisible spaces and hidden (hi)stories, especially in retrieving them from invisibility. He uses poetry, geology, translation, archaeology and other subjects in an attempt to grasp what has been disregarded in life, in history, and so, in the places that others have come to inhabit. Jakob learns this connection and dependability from others but, above all, through his relationship with Athos: “Athos said: ‘We must carry each other. If we don’t have this, what are we...’” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 14). Through their relationship, they demonstrate the constitutive connection with others regardless of any prior agreement, for, if one fails to recognise the other that will be a failure of his own self as well: “[w]e were Russian dolls. I inside Athos, Bella inside me” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 13).

Jakob’s narrative conveys his awareness of the need to incorporate other stories that have been previously silenced, unaccounted for. Among the methods that he uses in lost meanings translation and poetry play an important role:

Translation is a kind of transubstantiation; one poem becomes another. You can choose your philosophy of translation just as you choose how to live: the free adaptation that sacrifices detail to meaning, the strict crib that sacrifices meaning to exactitude. The poet moves from life to language, the translator moves from language to life; both, like the immigrant, try to identify the invisible, what’s between the lines, the mysterious implications. (Michaels, *Fugitive* 109)

First of all, Jakob emphasises that in itself, translation implies transformation, as many details and meanings are lost when the translator tries to convey a text in a different language from the source. As such, “truth” is already compromised, more than it is in itself, as we understand that there are no absolutes or solidified meanings, they are rather in process. Apart from this initial clarification, Jakob also notes that the translator chooses the philosophy he follows in the act of translating: either to focus on meaning or rather to be precise, to draw from life or from language. Both ways try to recover hidden or lost meanings, as the immigrant, he says, tries to identify the invisible, what is between lines, between spaces. He tries to identify where he comes from to understand where he is going “[i]t is your future you are remembering” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 21). But the most that we can obtain from a translation, an approximation to life or language is a partial result. In any of the ways loss becomes part of the process; so Jakob understands, through writing, that he needs to address loss in transposition.

He assumes that loss is part of the process just as the loss the immigrant experiences each time (s)he moves from one country to the other or the loss of detail in our perspective in the world. This partiality is also present in interpretation, as it is only a certain perspective

of reality that it offers, and at the same time, it is acknowledged through the articulation of memory, which also reflects partiality insofar as it is conditioned by its “moral” capacity to remember certain events. What this comes to explain is the complex and fragmentary history of geology: the impossibility of articulating history in an ordered and logical manner as it entails loss and suffering.

But language also opens the possibility to adapt to customs and traditions of new places and people without sacrificing meaning or detail. It is a way to put oneself in the place of the other, as language relates to one’s sense of belonging and identity as social beings. Through language, Jakob is able to recover narratives and voices from other places and times. Language is another way in which, as social beings, we are exposed to others. And the fact that Jakob accepts loss in his writing also emphasises the necessity to redeem and mourn loss by remaining open to it, exposed and vulnerable, thus, including loss in the process.

The history of Jakob is marked by violence from the very beginning: he suffers a violent uprooting from his home, as a Jew – in what concerns religion and culture – he is neglected as an integral part of society, also in racial terms. Besides, he becomes orphaned at an early age after his parents are murdered and his sister’s location remains unknown after her mysterious disappearance. He is dispossessed of his place of origin – Biskupin is destroyed at a certain point in the story – of his family and also of his rights as a human being who participates in the world: he is dispossessed of everything that constitutes his self and identity. Forced to perpetual flight, Jakob travels the world. In exile he is not able to find his place but he still feels an “intense empathy with a landscape” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 60), so much so that he feels his grief is that of the earth as well, and by extension, the grief of the geological history of the earth. This can be understood as the grief of all the ages that the earth contains in their cataclysms “[w]ars, occupations, earthquakes; fire and drought” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 60). In its many transformations the earth has witnessed the passing of many people and their stories, and through all its transformations it has also incorporated all those dead voices. So, like the landscape, Jakob is vulnerable by nature, in his social integration with the world through his bodily life. Landscape also tells his history and in the many layers and ages that it contains it gathers all those histories in which he takes part, which are as much constitutive of him as his own, those voices, the others, are previous to his own individuality.

Bodies buried in subterranean spaces, those voices silenced throughout history, such as Jakob's, represent others in a world in which they are not protected by any authority, they are not backed by any structure of power, they are in a powerless position, and thus they are vulnerable, exposed, abject bodies. Jakob, as an immigrant and dislocated subject experiences an in-betweenness of spaces as a result of his contact with different cultures and realities: his identity is therefore disrupted.

I argue that Jakob experiences the "double consciousness"⁶ characteristic of dislocated subjects (immigrants, exiled) who tend to compare the old places with the new, the given culture with the one not yet acquired, his being in the world constructed through other bodies. In this way, by means of this twofold experience, Jakob is able to accept the unfolding nature of reality: the accumulation in history, space, memory and the body itself. This double perception, can also be analysed through the "mirror stage" described by Lacan. Jakob's subjectivity is constituted through his identification with others and, for Lacan, the mirror stage, through which he explains the formation of the self, corroborates this idea that our subjectivity depends on external factors (1286), on an other, a double consciousness.

Considering the above, I argue that Jakob, as a dislocated subject, is the perfect example of the reality of the immigrant: in exile, immigrants get to know different realities and cultures, while at the same time they try to figure out their own identity and the reality they are experiencing. As a result, in these contact zones between cultures, because immigrants are open to other realities, they are able to account for all those lives that have been left at the margins of society, unable to be grieved in the places marked by normativity. They do not adjust to close parameters and, therefore, they are willing to explore the variety that the world offers to them.

But I have argued before, as per Butler's claims, that bodies – and I would extend this to social structures, the normativity of spaces – are fixed, as matter, through reiteration of norms and, in this same reiteration there are gaps and fissures (spaces in between), that destabilise the power of those norms. On that basis, ungrievable lives return as the exception of the norm, in between, through the slippages of normativity. Jakob, once a bog body, as an

⁶ In *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903) W.E.B. Du Bois develops a similar concept to Levinas' concept of the face: acknowledging the other in our double consciousness "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (2). However, although the term, as conceived by Du Bois, has a negative connotation of subordination in an oppressive society, the intention behind its use is only to determine the awareness and necessity to look for the other in our own self-formation, which also reveals a split subjectivity.

example himself of that rebirth and return from the “dead” and the excluded, is able to account for the others who have also been excluded from representation.

Butler discusses what she calls “frames,” which are the means by which grievable and ungrievable lives are differentiated from each other – ungrievable lives being conceived as abject bodies: “the limits of constructivism are exposed at those boundaries of bodily life where abjected or delegitimated bodies fail to count as ‘bodies’” (Butler, “Bodies” 243). These bodies which do not count as lives are those which exceed the norm, like Jakob, so this is a different way of life, the abject body or bare life, that manifests in a different way through counter-sites (heterotopic spaces). Jakob, as the exception to the norm, as that which exceeds the norm, is an abject body that destabilises the norms that constitute bodies as grievable through normativity.

In consequence, I argue that abject bodies also matter, in the material sense, as substances, and in the ontological sense, their existence is important and counts, only that in a different way, as Jakob proves; through different spaces. In these spaces, reality unfolded in all its accumulation, Jakob is able to account for other lives, bodies come to matter and the dead ones can be grieved: Jakob is exposed to others and their suffering in a condition of precariousness, vulnerability.

There are different modes of vulnerability of course, but the vulnerability of a dislocated subject like Jakob is that in which, being characterised by the absence of structures to support them, he is identified as a threat and therefore targeted as such. In this way, his death would obey to the interests of the larger order to protect their interests from any possible obstacle: “the extermination of Jews was not a case of obeying one set of moral imperatives over another, but rather the case of the larger imperative satisfying any difficulties” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 165). That notwithstanding, the situation changes when we consider Jakob in his heterotopic experience of place: since Jakob is open to exposure he is willing to welcome other modes of life and different realities to his own. He accepts that there are no limits, neither in the body, nor in space or time: his destiny cannot be separated from the other and his self ends where the other starts. Even so, this exposure is not an option or a position Jakob can choose not to be in, since it is also open to the small accident and it cannot be controlled. Also, it is undeniable in the sense that the body and the world are accumulative, therefore sensible in their reception of histories and their openness to them, in such a way that this ethical relation with the other cannot be denied.

In the new spaces in which dislocated subjects like Jakob emerge, vulnerability is not conceived as something negative. Structures limited by normativity deny vulnerability, they deny relationality to others and remain closed in their paradigms of power and life patterns. However, in alternative spaces like heterotopias, bodies are not subjected to sedimentary identities or materialisation, they embrace difference and so they do not deny the social their relationality with others: “[f]orgive me, you who were born and died without being given names. Forgive this blasphemy, of choosing philosophy over the brutalism of fact” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 168).

Jakob’s willingness to expand his narration and incorporate other stories is proof of his ethical responsibility towards others and, more importantly, of the awareness of his actions towards others. He feels he has the duty to name the Jews buried in the corners of the world, commemorate the members of the Scott Atlantic Expedition in their suffering and hunger, his parents, his sister, etc. And so, when he leaves Zakynthos with Athos he commemorates the dead as per Athos’ claim that: “[w]e must have a ceremony. For your parents, for the Jews of Crete, for all who have no one to recall their names” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 75).

As stated above, Jakob, even in exile, despite of his sense of uprootedness, feels that his duty is to remember his parents and above all Bella, his sister. The memories of Bella pervade the narrative in every possible way, through sound, through language, through images ... to the point that he takes her into account in every move he makes: “I was letting Bella enter ahead of me, making sure she was not left behind. I paused when I ate, singing a silent incantation: A bite for me, a bite for you, an extra bite for Bella ... I felt her presence everywhere, in daylight, in rooms I knew weren’t empty. I felt her touch on my back, my shoulders, my neck” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 31). The fact that she is missing troubles Jakob, who tries to remember every detail in search for a response to her whereabouts: “I collect facts, trying to reconstruct events in minute detail. Because Bella might have died anywhere along that route. In the street, in the train, in the barracks” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 139).

Jakob understands that to remember the dead implies granting them freedom, “[t]o remain with the dead is to abandon them” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 170), although without disregarding their losses: it is to show understanding for their suffering, through sympathetic responsiveness. Otherwise, loss and death, when disregarded, cannot be grieved properly, which is the same situation of those narratives and voices that he tries to recover in order to grant them the place they deserve. One of the ways in which he tries to give voice to the

dead is through his writing, narrating their stories. Thus, his narration bridges the fragments of the past for the sake of a more structured future:

Your good deeds help the moral progress of the dead. Do good on their behalf ... We will not be able to exhume them according to custom; their bones will not join the bones of their families in the ossuary of their village. The generations will not be bound together; they will melt under the sea, or in the soil, desolate... (Michaels, *Fugitive* 75-6)

To commemorate and celebrate the dead that finally come together in earth, as part of the world, emphasises the sense of community of mourning; that grief is transnational and extends beyond borders and constraints of any kind.

In his vulnerability to others, Jakob is exposed to the touch and look of others, and in their encounter they make moral demands upon him. However, these demands cannot be articulated assuming reciprocity, as Jakob acts in an act of love for the other: “I know I must honour Athos’s lessons, especially one: to make love necessary” (Michaels *Fugitive* 121). Because, “[w]hat is love at first sight but the response of a soul crying out with sudden regret because it realizes it has never before been recognized? (Michaels, *Fugitive* 207). Jakob does not egotistically respond to these demands expecting something in exchange; that would mean that the answer to that demand responds to his fear of being attacked by the other, implying a rejection of vulnerability as this act conveys an attempt to protect himself from that other. On the contrary, in an appropriate response in which vulnerability is embraced, the demand is answered disinterestedly, as the person who answers the demand remains open and exposed to the others and their reaction.

In spite of the suffering it may bring to his life, Jakob does not elude his responsibility of remembering and accounting for the suffering of other as if it was his own. Jakob finds a balance between his sense of exposure in his own vulnerability and his ethical responsibility for bringing invisible lives into matter:

I tried to imagine their physical needs, the indignity of human needs grown so extreme they equal your longing for wife, child, sister, parent, friend. But truthfully I couldn’t even begin to imagine the trauma of their hearts, of being taken in the middle of their lives. Those with young children. Or those newly in love, wrenched from that state of grace. Or those who had lived invisibly, who were never known. (Michaels, *Fugitive* 147)

Not having a place to claim or a community to which he belongs, Jakob initially expects to feel relocated in place, he expects that putting the pieces of his life together will restore order to his life. Contrary to expectation, in this transition “the body experiences a revelation because it has abandoned every other possibility” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 53). Jakob says: “What does the body make us believe? That we’re never ourselves until we contain

two souls. For years corporeality made me believe in death. Now, inside Michaela yet watching her, death for the first time makes me believe in the body” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 189). This kind of physicality in which he affirms having faith, through the body, is conceived in its potential for becoming, its potential for transformation and rebirth: “[n]o one is born just once. If you’re lucky, you’ll emerge again in someone’s arms” (Michaels *Fugitive* 5). Concerning this sense of rebirth, Jakob finds in Michaela someone who understands his suffering in all its facets “her hands carry my memories” (Michaels *Fugitive* 192), in such a way, that she makes Jakob feel he has been truly acknowledged in all his experiences: “[s]he is sobbing. She has heard everything—her heart an ear, her skin an ear. Michaela is crying for Bella. The light and heat of her tears enter my bones. The joy of being recognized and the stabbing loss: recognized for the first time” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 182). To this hope and faith in materialisation, Michaels responds:

Jakob “reaches this conclusion that faith can be found in the body. He says, ‘Who can tell with absolute certainty the difference between the sounds of those who are in despair and those who want desperately to believe.’ And he sees that precise moment of struggle as proof that there’s faith in matter, in physical matter – almost a blunt, pragmatic faith.” (qtd. in Cho 4)

In this sense, matter is not fixed, but always in process open to the small accident, to the infinity of the world and its infinite possibilities. It is not solid materialisation but somewhat fluid. One explanatory note is necessary here: saying that Jakob, through his body, is open to infinity also means that he is distinguishable from other bodies as well. If we recall Levinas’ ideas, homogeneity or “totalization” is not possible, as it would diminish the body to a limited entity which is exactly the opposite to infinity. So, despite the fact that Jakob represents the body in its interdependence and public character of bodily life, his body still remains perceptible by itself.

Vulnerability is many times rejected as constitutive of the subject. But the body is social, it depends on others by nature, and to deny this connection leads to the destabilisation of the formation of the subject and by extension to its rejection. It does not matter how much you try to conceptualise reality and everything that surrounds you, if relationality to the other is denied, what is left for us?

We’re stuffed with famous men’s lives; soft with the habits of our own. The quest to discover another’s psyche, to absorb another’s motives as deeply as your own, is a lover’s quest. But the search for facts, for places, names, influential events, important conversations and correspondences, political circumstances — all this amounts to nothing if you can’t find the assumption your subject lives by. (Michaels, *Fugitive* 222)

And the answer is offered by Howells when she says that “home is never a place but always a private relationship” (113), that is “the assumption [the] subject lives by” (Michaels,

Fugitive 222): a private relationship *with the other*, if I may add. A relationship in which one does “good at great personal risk ... [and is] never confused objects and humans, [knowing] the difference between naming and the named” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 167). Being at risk and exposed to loss or violence, Jakob changes and, as the immigrant who arrives in a new place, something will be lost in his transition from the old place to the new but still something will result from this alteration as part of the process of change. Sometimes it is difficult to face the great order and establishments, but the small accident is enough to destabilise even the biggest constructs: “We forget the power of the small act of love. We forget how powerful that is. Often, we feel hopeless in the face of history, in the face of economics, in the face of these large forces, but really the small individual act can be incredibly powerful” (qtd. in Cho 4).

Therefore, loss involves change and transformation, but this cannot be chosen, Jakob cannot choose or predict in advance in what way loss will bring change, that is an act of love and faith. The way towards salvation then seems to be “[r]edemption through cataclysm; what had once been transformed might be transformed again” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 101). Jakob’s story only can only be narrated in an alternative reality since it relies on a different structure from the one established by the “large order.” It is not the same reality, as it has been conceived but restructured, what implies loss and transformation as well, a sacrifice. And this can only occur through cataclysm, accident and its excesses, through natural order. At the same time, cataclysm, through natural order will also reveal the tragedies of history: “[i]n his research, Athos descends so far that he reaches a place where redemption is possible, but it is only the redemption of tragedy” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 120).

Drawing on these conclusions, geology and archaeology – the study of the earth, of the world – become crucial in order to understand the structure of social change: “[Athos] often applied the geologic to the human, analyzing social change as he would a landscape; slow persuasion and catastrophe. Explosions, seizures, floods, glaciation. He constructed his own historical topography” (Michaels, *Fugitive* 119).

Thus, being in contact with the world in its potential for transformation, through bodily life, Jakob can recognise dislocation and embrace change. This means that, being open to others he understands the sense of community in which he lives as a socially constituted body, and hence, the influences between each other. He remains open to any kind of transformation that this exchange may involve. Jakob exercises his empathy towards others and in doing so, he recognises his answerability and sensibility to them. This answerability

is only possible because Jakob puts in practice his ethical duties towards others: he accepts the dispossession that vulnerability entails and in this way his body is not closed to the demands of others. Being out of control and subjected to others he remains accessible to their necessities:

We think that we suddenly rise to an occasion when the occasion demands it – that human values, human integrity, these things don't have to be practiced, that somehow, when the moment of choice occurs, that we'll do the right thing.' But these things have to be practiced – human integrity, human values have to be constantly practiced – so that when the moment occurs, we'll be able to respond. (qtd. in Cho 4)

Coral Ann Howells makes an interesting point concerning one of Homi Bhabha's quotes that I would like to reformulate, though taking the same point of departure: “[a]s literary creatures and political animals we ought to concern ourselves with the understanding of human action and the social world as a moment when *something is beyond control, but it is not beyond accommodation*” (qtd. in Howells 117). Howells considers the Holocaust as this moment beyond control that Bhabha refers to, she says that the trauma and sense of loss derived from this moment is accommodated through the exercise of memory (117). However, as per my point of view, Jakob exemplifies that what is beyond control is actually our connection to others and it is through our recognition of such vulnerability and condition with respect to the other that we can actually affirm that, therefore, “it is not beyond accommodation.”

As Jakob puts it: “while some are motivated by love (those who choose), most are motivated by fear (those who choose by not choosing)” (Michaels *Fugitive* 211). Those devoted to the otherness in their own selves and how important is to account for the other, embrace vulnerability, however, limits, borders, nations construed out of fear, trying to mark and set apart those which are thought to be a threaten for our borders – either racial, spatial, religious or any other kind – only distances humanity of its inherent social relations to others, constitutive by nature. As Butler would say; “these ties constitute what we are, ties or bonds that compose us (*Precarious* 22). Rather than fighting against it Butler announces: Let's face it. We're undone by each other. And if we're not, we're missing something (*Precarious* 23).

5. CONCLUSION

In this Master's Thesis I have analysed how those subjects who are in contact with different cultures and modes of life, being openly exposed to their influence, undergo an exceptional relationship with others that allows them to approach the world in a completely different manner. These subjects have difficulties in articulating their identity in the world. In an attempt to understand the different phenomena going on in the world, we have constructed psychological and physical barriers according to certain social parameters that have generated a whole system of binarisms of inclusion and exclusion. By means of it, those who adjust to the reality that these parameters describe will have a history, social structures, culture, language and any other necessary means to account for their mode of life. However, all those subjects disregarded by these categories experience a sense of dislocation: they are open to the possibilities that the world offers, thus, open to other cultures, people and ways of life in a way that it disrupts their subject formation.

In *Fugitive Pieces*, Anne Michaels narrates the story of the experiences of Jakob as a dislocated subject who tries to relocate his identity and sense of belonging through his experiences in exile, in contact with infinite possibilities. But because his identity results from a crossbreed, it becomes difficult to locate in geographical space. His identity is transnational and diasporic: transnational because it goes beyond borders and closed concepts like nations; and diasporic because he incorporates the influence of other experiences across time to his story, that is, his self-formation reflects the influence of the past in the light of the present.

Dislocated subjects create new spaces and connections that, contrary to the fixations of the system that have excluded them, remain in constant flux, in their capacity to change according to the ever-changing processes that they experience. Many of these subjects have suffered displacement from their homes – either in a psychological or geographical sense –, and, as a consequence they are exposed to violence and suffering as a result of their uprootedness and sense of loss. However, as it has been discussed in previous sections, this violence is exerted and legitimised through the structures that control the world, which leave them unprotected, in a powerless position that does not account for their suffering.

Jakob contemplates history all at once, which corresponds to Michaels' concept of the gradual instant. In the narration of his story other voices emerge like his own. The need that

Jakob feels to reconcile with the past does not only derive from his own necessity to reconcile with its haunting presence in his daily life; in his contact with other realities he becomes aware of the necessity to grieve the losses of former lives since they form part of who he is. This is the gradual instant, history unfolding and revealed in a way that others come to matter. In the space in which Jakob emerges, history is contemplated in all its facets as there are no limits to experience the past, nor the present: this is reality unfolded. Jakob undergoes a heterotopic experience of space: as a subject that has been excluded from society whose experience does not count, Jakob emerges in a different kind of space, in-between categories among which normal subjectivities are construed. This is the ambivalent space of the transnation that integrates the part and the whole, “globalisation and the fragmentation of transnational cultures” (Ashcroft 170-71). Recalling previous narratives that have been silenced before, through the exercise of memory, Jakob allows these voices from the past to have a “place” in the present, recognising his experiences: this heterotopic places articulate a counter-memory of absence.

The novel is full of places, cultures, names, voices from the past and languages from different countries; it is full with the spirit of Jakob so willing to accept the other in all the risks that it may involve. Our social and cultural constructs originate in the exclusion of the improper. On this basis, Jakob’s abandonment by the structures of society that sustain participation as political and social beings, responds to this categorisation as bare life or the abject. In its impropriety, the abject subverts everything that normativity seeks to preserve, so it threatens and destabilises the order of normativity; it is an imminent danger capable to destroy it. This is why ordinary spaces and social structures deny others: in an attempt to protect themselves from violence and exposure those who may jeopardise the order are turned invisible. So, no social and even less empathic relation is able to recognise vulnerability, because everything that may alter the order is seen in a negative way. What this order fails to acknowledge is that the loss or transformation that this relationship entails turns out as a revelation of an intrinsic part of our subjectivity; our relations with others.

Jakob emerges in a new space that counteracts the values of the norm and rearticulates its establishments: this is the heterotopia. In it, Jakob tries to relocate his being somewhere in the world, only to learn that his home is in the other. Establishing connections across cultures, languages, races and nations, Jakob, as the immigrant dislocated subject who is always in the process of becoming, is undone through his relationship with the other: he proves that our self is disruptive and is always in process open to accident and its possibilities

of transformation and change. Jakob is the example of the necessity to empathise with others in society, in a social space that welcomes other realities. Sociocultural interaction is possible in heterotopic spaces in which we are open to accept our interdependency from others, conscious of the inherent social formation of our subjectivity: to accept others and remain open to their needs and claims in a sense of community that extends beyond borders. This is why I consider the heterotopic spaces in which dislocated subjects live as the perfect space in which vulnerability and ethical responses to the other can be fulfilled because it implies one's own sacrifice to change and openness to the unknown, and heterotopic spaces are not closed in time or space, neither they are to other realities.

The example that Michaels offers in her novel reminds us the necessity to respect the variety of cultures present in our society. Jakob, though a fictional character, comes to represent so many stories of resettlement and relocation in a new space in which it is possible to experience the world in a way is difficult to achieve through other "frames"; accepting that you are as important as I am because you and I are bound together, no racial arguments involved, neither religious, cultural or any other kind. We should embrace the enriching promising experience that the transnation offers in its advocacy for glocalisation.

Throughout this paper, I have considered *Fugitive Pieces* to be representative of subjectivity formation in dislocated subjects. But the purpose behind my argument intends to go beyond post-traumatic disorders that arise from the Holocaust. Instead, Jakob is taken into consideration because in spite of the historical frame that encloses his narrative, he can be identified with the changes that identity undergoes as a result of displacement, which can prove illustrative for the massive displacements that are presently occurring, as he may well embody the life experiences of many immigrants nowadays.

Jakob appears as a precursor of the social model that should prevail in our current reality. Given the amount of violence derived from opposite social and political structures in the world, we are living a dramatic exposure to vulnerability derived from hostile relationships with others. We are far from being in the path towards a recognition of the inherent social trait that makes one bound to others in a positive light. Many people in the world remain inaccessible to others, and their demands as social constituted bodies fail to be acknowledged and satisfied: the negation of this relationship turns out to respond to closed structures that do not make possible to account for all modes of life.

I argue that to embrace this relationship in which “I” am by virtue of an other, implies to remain open to society in all the different values it may defend, appreciate the variety of the world embracing difference so that our vulnerability does not need to be exercised against threats but towards an equal other, open to the alteration it may bring to our lives. Through the character of Jakob, Michaels proposes a model of precariousness that, unfortunately, we still have to work hard to achieve.

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