Chapter 4: Philosophy of forced migration: Sit at the table or knock it over

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HAL Id: hal-04392345
https://hal.parisnanterre.fr/hal-04392345

Submitted on 15 Jan 2024

Handbook on Forced Migration

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ELGAR HANDBOOKS IN MIGRATION

Cover image by Pippa Skotnes. Image is of a sculpture by David Brown, set against a sky of flocking quelea birds in Namibia (photo by Pippa Skotnes).

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PART II

PHILOSOPHY

4.   Philosophy of forced migration: Sit at the table or knock it over

Hervé Nicolle

To speak of a philosophy of migration, and in particular of forced migration, seems perilous when the few courageous ones who have made the effort to tackle the subject note that philosophy has continuously ignored the question of migration. In a recent book, Donatella Di Cesare says, for example, that there is 'still no philosophy of migration. We lack either a reflection on migration or a reflection that revolves around the migrants themselves […] Through disinterest, ignorance or amnesia, philosophy has not recognized the citizenship rights of the migrant.'[1] This lack seems to mimic, provocatively, the politics of exclusion that are now the norm in an increasingly hermetic and exclusive Western world. Is this an oversight or underestimation of what the periphery can teach us about our political models? Or is the difficulty to address issues of forced displacement and mobility intrinsic to the discipline and the philosophical process? This Part addresses why, although philosophy – as a discipline – seems to be uncomfortable with migration and displacement, a philosophical perspective on migration is even more necessary today.

FROM THE FIGURE OF THE STRANGER TO TODAY'S FORCED MIGRANTS

The philosophical tradition has often approached political questions through the figure of the exile or the foreigner. Rooted in the respect to 'hospitable Zeus' and the favorable welcome given to people from elsewhere (*philoxenia*), the figure of the Stranger is central in Plato's philosophy, both in a text with a political scope like the *Laws* and in a dialogue with a more epistemological aim like *The Sophist*. In the first dialogue, Clinias the Cretan and Megillus the Lacedemonian build in words a just city under the guidance of an anonymous Athenian, a stranger to the city, and are confronted with the question of geographical but also political borders. Thinking about the stranger and citizenship, and the outside and the inside of the city, implies holding together the different and the identical, which exerts a constraint on the modalities of public hospitality reserved for the stranger. But the Stranger of the *Laws* comes from nowhere, just as Socrates himself is described as *atopos* in the *Phaedrus*[2] or the *Symposium*.[3]

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[1]   Donatella Di Cesare, *Resident Foreigners: A Philosophy of Migration*, Wiley, 2020.

[2]   Plato, *Phaedrus*, 230c. Translation by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. From *Plato: Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. Hackett Publishing, 1997. *Atopos* can be translated as unclassifiable, placeless, or 'not following the beaten path'.

[3]   Plato, *The Symposium*, 215a. Translation by Margaret C. Howatson, edited by Frisbee C.C. Sheffield, Cambridge University Press, 2008. In the Banquet, Alcibiades reproaches Socrates for his *atopia* (tên sên atopian), which can be translated as eccentricity, a central characteristic of the philosopher's figure as well as of his philosophy.

The Stranger is no one in particular, his is a theoretical and practical function, that of the dif-ference, politically constitutive in Plato's eyes, between being of the city and not being of it. The figures of the stranger, the exile, even the nomad are thus used as third figures, different from both the author and the reader, to reproduce the philosopher's thought. Philosophy tradi-tionally uses the stranger as a form of auxiliary, a useful periphery to think our centrality, our metaphysical dilemmas, our political problems, our moral incoherence. The stranger becomes a lens through which to understand the world and an actor that sets boundaries.

The displaced person of our time is not the Platonic 'stranger', but a historically rooted figure, who demonstrates the limits of a national conception of citizenship. The crux of the problem can be summarized briefly. The universality of human rights requires every human being to be a citizen of a specific country (or countries). According to most countries' constitu-tion, each citizen can assert his or her rights before a political power, that of his or her country. But what happens when individuals are forced by the political or economic conditions of their country to seek elsewhere the conditions of a free existence – or even of a minimal survival? Outside the country of which he or she is a full citizen, every individual is de facto but also *de jure* a foreigner, left to the leniency or political calculation of governments.

Hannah Arendt provided an essential problematization of this question, based on her per-sonal situation (in the article 'We refugees'[4]) and in the specific context of Europe after the First World War (in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*[5]). In the latter, Arendt uses the image of the 'scum of the earth' to imagine what has taken shape between borders, the dross of an earth now sculpted by borders: the stateless, the undocumented, the refugees, caught between two national borders, who appear as a surplus, as a remnant, as foreign or unwanted bodies. They have no right to any place in the new world order and give rise to what Arendt describes as a new race of '*superfluous*'. Arendt was the first to identify forced migration as a mass phe-nomenon. She reflected on what defined the era, at a time when the decline of the nation-state was not yet complete. The attempt to make the borders of European states conform to nations has led to profound contradictions: the impossibility of guaranteeing the rights of anyone who is not a citizen of a given nation. This is a problem for the global system of states, because it is precisely those who are condemned to statelessness and deprived of the rights guaranteed by citizenship who are most in need of defense and protection. When, in the course of the twen-tieth century, the masses of foreigners deprived of citizenship and legal protection burst onto the scene of history, the problem appeared in all its gravity. Arendt also warns us that between the totalitarian state and the democratic state there is only a difference of degree, not of kind, for the mass production of displaced persons in the limbo of international law is a particular feature of the nation-state itself. Arendt thus poses the question of the reception of those who are left on the margins of an increasingly globalized and global humanity – those who are denied the very possibility of participating in a common world. In the absence of a 'right to have rights', those who should be most protected are marked with the seal of superfluity. They are then turned away, deported and interned.

Taking a critical perspective on Arendt, Megan Bradley questions the relevance of the representation of refugees as lawless and stateless, as 'scum of the earth'. In today's context,

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[4]   Hannah Arendt, 'We refugees', in The Jew as Pariah. Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age, New York: Grove Press, 1978, pp. 55–66. First publication in The Menorah Journal, 1943, pp. 69–77.
[5]   Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. London: Penguin Modern Classics, 1951.

this characterization has become anachronistic and inaccurate. Bradley notes that: 'since the mid-1980s, states' answer to this question has been to reframe the refugee problem so that the displaced are no longer seen as stateless and rightless, but as citizens of their state of origin, with the right to return in safety and dignity.'[6] Drawing on case studies, including that of Guatemalan refugees who have fled to Mexico or the United States, Bradley shows how repatriation can become a source of empowerment for the displaced, but also how they contribute to political debates in their country of origin. As emphasized by David Turton, the danger of adopting the Arendtian position in an uncritical way is therefore to 'treat the displaced as fundamentally flawed human beings, as lacking what it takes to be social agents and historical subjects. It is to see them … as a category of "passive victims" who exist to be assisted, managed, regimented and controlled.'[7]

At the heart of this critique lies what is at stake in any philosophy of forced migration: two ways of thinking about forced migrants. Arendt's view sees forced migrants as reduced to simple naked lives, atoms of vulnerability deprived of their rights, of their political nature, of their very humanity. Bradley's critique explores the forms of political subjectivation to which the lives of forced migrants bear witness, and takes into account the real experience of forced migration. In other words, the philosophical challenge is to imagine a philosophy *from* migration (and not only an analysis focusing *on* migration).

A *DEBATE* THAT IGNORES THE EXPERIENCE OF FORCED MIGRANTS

The critical and constructive task of formulating a philosophy *from* migration has not been at the center of philosophical attempts to explain contemporary migration. We limit ourselves here to the analysis of the communitarian positions of Walzer and Wellman, and the so-called cosmopolitan approach of Carens. Their positions are indicative of the contemporary way in which issues of forced migration are treated – often in a partial or even biased way – by philosophers. (Their positions also reflect the ways in which governments, United Nations agencies, and non-governmental organizations approach the migration issue in strategic and programmatic terms.) Here I want to consider this unusual alignment of the philosopher and the politician, as a symptom of a critical deficit on the part of the former.

In a world of well-ordered states, often quick to externalize asylum claims as well as erect walls, the critical question – philosophical or political – concerns the government of migratory movements. Should we welcome or not welcome migrants? How to distinguish between the refugees, and other migrants? Philosophers ask whether, and to what extent, the political contract can be extended to newcomers without undermining the welfare state, and the order, solidarity, resources and security of the national community. Michael Walzer has had lasting

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6   Megan Bradley, 'Rethinking refugeehood: statelessness, repatriation, and refugee agency', *Review of International Studies*, 40(1), 2014, pp. 101–23.
7   David Turton, 'The meaning of place in a world of movement', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 18(3), 2003, p. 278 (cited by Megan Bradley). This judgment could also be applied to Giorgio Agamben's interpretation of the Arendtian theses in his book *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998. For a critique of his argument, see Patricia Owens, 'Reclaiming "bare life"?: Against Agamben on refugees', *International Relations*, 23(4), 2009, pp. 567–82.

influence on this debate. He poses the question of whether countries are obliged to admit migrants. Out of the larger group of migrants, refugees pose a real philosophical question insofar as they 'make the most forceful claim for admission. If you don't take me in,' they say, 'I shall be killed, persecuted, brutally oppressed by the rulers of my own country.' In other words, admission is the only recourse and the only way to honor our moral obligations to them: 'claims cannot be met by yielding territory or exporting wealth, but only by taking people in'. As such, Walzer considers that we have an obligation to help strangers in need, an obligation that is rooted in the principle of solidarity or mutual aid, also known as the Good Samaritan principle: if two strangers meet and one needs help, the second should help if the need is urgent and the cost of assistance relatively low.

Yet states retain control over immigration and admission, and have discretion over which forced migrants to admit and how many: 'At some level of political organization, something like the sovereign state must take shape and claim the authority to make its own admissions policy'.[8] The root of Walzer's argument is that political communities[9] need territorialized *closure* in order to preserve their fundamental character as a culture and group. Walzer writes: 'The distinctiveness of culture and groups depends upon closure and without it, cannot be conceived as a stable feature of human life.' Those outside the community are condemned to have nothing, while those inside, members of the community, can participate in distributive justice. Membership is the constitutive pillar of the community, a precious good whose allocation cannot be entrusted to any external authority.

Contemporary positions, such as Wellman's, present a deepening of Walzer's position and the intellectual underpinning of widespread political narratives. Deepening, first of all. On other premises, since Wellman starts from a homology between the right of individuals (freedom of association, as in marriage or religion, cooperatives) and a right of states to free association. This allows, according to Wellman, to have 'dominion over ourselves – regarding affairs'.[10] Just as an individual has a right to determine who he or she wants to marry, citizens also have a right to determine who will share their political lives and can therefore legitimately choose to exclude those with whom they do not want to. Certainly, our duty to help the poor in other countries is rooted in our 'natural duty to assist others when we can at no unreasonable cost to ourselves'. But these duties can be fulfilled without having to allow immigration to our countries and citizenship. Wellman uses an analogy: just as no one would demand that a person who wanted to fight poverty be forced to marry a poor person, so too rich countries cannot be asked to fight global poverty by admitting the world's poor. Wellman insists instead that we can find other ways to help refugees than resettlement or integration: in particular, we can 'export justice', through military intervention to restore an unjust political environment and ensure the safety of potential asylum seekers.

Wellman and Walzer provide an intellectual underpinning for today's hegemonic narratives. One is surprised, as is Serena Parekh,[11] that Walzer and Wellman never ask what happens to

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[8]   Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. Basic Books, 1983.
[9]   The political community is understood as the sharing of a linguistic, historical, social, cultural world, as a set of goods both common and specific to the members of this community, which share constitution, laws, public goods and services, systems of social insurance and solidarity, and so on.
[10]   Christopher Heath Wellman, 'Immigration and freedom of association'. *Ethics*, *119*(1), 2008, pp. 109–41.
[11]   Serena Parekh, *No Refuge: Ethics and the Global Refugee Crisis*. Oxford University Press, 2020.

forced migrants whom states exclude on the basis of preserving communities of character. For them, forced migrants are those people who flee persecution in relatively small numbers and who can seek relief from states on the basis of mutual aid and affinity. Walzer remains silent about forced migrants who are de facto refugees but cannot appeal to rich countries on the basis of political, cultural or racial affinity. Prolonged encampment and long-term displacement, often the result of states working to preserve their 'communities of character', are never posed as moral problems.

Do cosmopolitan philosophers have a different worldview today? Is their approach based more on the primacy of the universal over sovereign particularism? Joseph Carens' essay, 'Aliens and citizens: the case for open borders', published in 1991, is a direct response to Walzer's position.[12] For Carens, the sovereign position is not tenable insofar as it contravenes fundamental individual freedoms and in particular the freedom of movement – to emigrate and to immigrate – marked by a dissymmetry between the right to emigrate and the right to immigrate: 'Citizenship in Western democracies is the modern equivalent of feudal class privilege – an inherited status that greatly enhances one's life chances.' Place of birth is as arbitrary as skin color, family background, gender, and so on, and can contribute to creating or reinforcing inequalities between individuals, which is not morally acceptable.

Carens is well aware that adherence to this position overturns not only the communitarian approach, but also opinion and common sense, through a delinking of nation (derived from the Latin *nascor*, to be born) and state framework. To support his point, he makes a theoretical gesture that takes up and extends John Rawls' veil of ignorance[13] beyond the framework of the nation-state: if one were to ask each person, under conditions of a veil of ignorance involving not knowing his or her place of birth and residence, what his or her position would be on the migration question, he or she would reply that residence is contingent and that citizenship is an artificial privilege comparable to class arbitrariness. Since immigration does not pose a threat to national security, Carens claims, only a maximalist position appears logically defensible: it is not legitimate to restrict or reduce entry from one territory to another.

Carens provides diametrically opposed answers to Walzer or Wellman on the question of the right to migration, but one is struck by his abstract reduction of the migratory experience – 'the pedestrian flatness of individuals moving back and forth'[14] in the words of Donatella Di Cesare – without ever questioning the real conditions of mobility. Mobility and forced migration cannot be reduced to an abstract space of exchange between rational agents, equally informed, endowed with the same resources and able to achieve their objectives with the same ease. By interrogating forced migration only with the grammar of inclusion/exclusion and citizenship, both the sovereign and cosmopolitan positions ignore the concrete experience of mobility and the political character of forced migration.

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[12]   Joseph Carens, 'Aliens and citizens: The case for open borders'. *Review of Politics*, 49(2), 1987, pp. 251–73.

[13]   John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice: Original Edition*. Harvard University Press, 1971.

[14]   Donatella Di Cesare, *Resident Foreigners: A Philosophy of Migration*. Wiley, 2020.

PHILOSOPHERS' DENIAL AND THE EXPERIENCE OF FREEDOM

Forced migration brings the conflict between philosophy and politics into sharp focus. Hannah Arendt, in *Between Past and Future*,[15] says that political philosophy has been constructed as a theory to protect the philosopher from the experience of freedom and community. Political philosophy installs the philosopher in an ivory tower from which he can contemplate the world from an external point of view. In the essay 'What is freedom?', Arendt shows that the philosophical tradition has imposed a *concept of* metaphysical freedom distinct from the *experience of* effective political freedom. This importation from the metaphysical field into the political field has gradually replaced the actual political experience of freedom. The effects are damaging, because this philosophical experience consisted in positing that freedom was equivalent to self-determination, to the exercise of sovereignty over oneself, which gradually turned into domination over others.

Inspired by Stoic, Christian, and in particular Augustinian thought, according to a genealogy that Hannah Arendt traces in her essay, this tradition identifies freedom with removing obstacles in the way of one's will. Freedom is equated with the will; and the free act with the capacity to do what one wants. This import-conversion of the experience of freedom from the real political field to the metaphysical abstraction has important consequences. On the one hand, freedom becomes the attribute of an individual agent, a subject or a State and is no longer a *relation* to another. On the other hand, the great political question, which will find its almost complete formulation with Rousseau, becomes that of the general will, that is, of sovereignty. Thinkers as distinct as Walzer, Wellman and Carens, who between them cover all the possible nuances in the *debate* on forced displacement, are in this sense the heirs of this dominant anti-political tradition.

> I can only hint here at the fatal consequences for political theory of this equation of freedom with the human capacity to will; it was one of the causes why even today we almost automatically equate power with oppression or, at least, with rule over others.[16]

This abstract, metaphysical and anti-political understanding of freedom prevails in the analysis of migration by philosophers, but also in the sociological, legal or economic fields. For liberal philosophers – a spectrum that goes from the communitarian positions of Walzer or Wellman to the cosmopolitanism of Carens – freedom has different faces, whether it is self-determination, freedom of choice, deliberation, or agency, but it remains a sovereignty or co-sovereignty constitutive of identity. Their conceptual framework for thinking about national sovereignty as well as the place of migrants (acceptable or undesirable) is based on such an idea of freedom as free will.

Against this conceptualization, Arendt summons another experience, that of Athenian democracy. Freedom is not the attribute of a subject, it is a political relationship that is situated with, by, for and from others. Arendt thus dissociates freedom from the will to associate

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[15]   Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. In a slightly different perspective, more focused on refugees' subjecthood, see Cindy Horst and Odin Lysaker, 'Miracles in dark times: Hannah Arendt and Refugees as "Vanguard"'. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 34(1), March 2021, pp. 67–84.

[16]   Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.

it with equality. It is a question of rethinking freedom in terms of equality and no longer of sovereignty or omnipotence, of discretionary power over others. By thinking of freedom as the capacity to begin something rather than to dominate something, we realize that freedom is neither conceivable nor realizable without a relationship to a plurality of individuals.

> The field where freedom has always been known, not as a problem, to be sure, but as a fact of every-day life, is the political realm. And even today, whether we know it or not, the question of politics and the fact that man is a being endowed with the gift of action must always be present to our mind when we speak of the problem of freedom; for action and politics, among all the capabilities and potentialities of human life, are the only things of which we could not even conceive without at least assuming that freedom exists, and we can hardly touch a single political issue without, implicitly or explicitly, touching upon an issue of man's liberty.[17]

From such a perspective, the 'community of belonging' of which Walzer speaks – and which contemporary migration management policies more or less echo – appears to be unpolitical, stuck on a conception of identity as a fence between a compartmentalized interior and a fanta-sized exterior. In this light, thinking about the transversality of migration is not only confusing for a philosopher, it is also threatening because it challenges the established frameworks of political philosophy, based on a Westphalian division of states, a sovereignist and territorial conception of politics, and an association of citizenship rooted in nationality, all of which are underpinned by an abstract, metaphysical and anti-political understanding of freedom. In order to defend its conceptual stock in trade, philosophy would somehow be doomed to think about forced migration, the status of refugees and stateless people, only in terms of sovereignty and inclusion/exclusion.

   A working hypothesis for thinking about philosophical embarrassment on the issue of forced migration thus leans towards a blockage, a denial[18] inscribed in the philosophical gesture itself. Everything that should be critically questioned is instead taken for granted – borders, sovereignty, territory, citizenship, community, and by implication identity itself. Moreover, philosophy refrains from understanding, from a phenomenological, ethnographic or existential approach, the point of view of the displaced in transit through inhospitable corridors: 'hence the absence of human feeling in a philosophy that exhausts itself in working on norms and definitions, without bringing out the existential nakedness of the one who arrives after having lived an extreme situation.'[19] What is the use of philosophers then?

SEEING FORCED MIGRANTS FROM A RELATIONAL AND PLURAL PERSPECTIVE

This overview of existing positions shows why it is urgent to give back to philosophy a critical efficiency by questioning its de facto legitimization of political powers as well as its alignment with the dominant discourses of neoliberal hegemony. The objective of this part of the book

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[17]   Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.
[18]   We borrow the idea of a denial at the heart of political philosophy from Catherine Malabou, *Au Voleur! Anarchisme et Philosophie*. Paris, PUF, 2022.
[19]   Donatella Di Cesare, *Resident Foreigners: A Philosophy of Migration*. Wiley, 2020.

is therefore to explore how a philosophy of forced migration can be constructed according to a *relational* perspective, which starts from the very fact of *plurality* and goes beyond sovereignty and territoriality.

Extending Hannah Arendt's thought on the experience of freedom as plurality, Seyla Benhabib underlines that 'peoples are radically and not merely episodically interdependent'.[20] This existential interdependence creates a complex arrangement that links institutional systems, historical strata, but also individual destinies: *'*the international system of peoples and states is characterized by such extensive interdependencies and the historical crisscrossing of fates and fortunes that the scope of special as well as general moral obligations to our fellow human beings far transcends the perspective of the territorially bounded state-centric system'. Basically, it is a matter of understanding justice and obligations towards the displaced from a more global, interconnected, interdependent perspective, which deposes (but does not annihilate) the exorbitant privilege granted to stato-centric constructions.

Judith Butler's most recent works on vulnerability, inspired in particular by the work of Melanie Klein, refer to this same idea with relationality: 'Let's face it. We're undone by each other. And if we're not, we're missing something.'[21] Butler does not deny individuality, but she sees it as structurally made and unmade through a network of sensitive, embodied relationships. It is thus the relation itself that is ontologically primary and that allows the distinction between inside and outside. Such an approach allows the overcoming of the liberal theory, according to which the last constituents of the society are individuals understood as substances, in favor of a relational social ontology for which what are primary in the social reality are living sets of relations which are produced, made and unmade by their very relations. The subjects are not entities, separate substances, but the effects of a network of relations through which the subject and the object, the inside and the outside constitute and call each other.

On the basis of this recognition of our experience of freedom as plurality (Arendt, Benhabib) and of our relational being (Butler) – that is to say of our fragility and precariousness, without real sovereignty or self-sufficiency – it is then a question of fighting together for the advent of more livable relational modes. From then on, the philosopher can neither adopt a position of overhang nor pretend to be the spokesman of the oppressed, the refugees, the subalterns. One thinks, for example, of the auto-ethnographic work of Shahram Khosravi, at the crossroads of anthropology, philosophy and *migration studies*.[22] The author succeeds in showing how the experience of crossing borders has literally crossed his life, how the labels (asylum seeker, refugee) have modified his gaze and that of others, how bodies are penetrated by the feeling of illegality. It is a philosophical document about shame – the shame of the displaced, the shame of the reader, the shame that is not felt by institutional devices and state apparatuses.

This concern for relationality is also what this Part of the book sketches out, by offering perspectives to nourish dialogue and reflection beyond disciplinary boundaries. The interviews in this Part propose a toolbox by using concepts and notions that encourage thinking about forced

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[20]   Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens* (The Seeley Lectures). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

[21]   Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Verso, 2004. See also the collective publication by Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti, and Leticia Sabsay (editors), *Vulnerability in Resistance*. Duke University Press, 2016.

[22]   Shahram Khosravi, *"Illegal" Traveller: An Auto-Ethnography of Borders*. Basingstoke, UK and New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

migration according to a practice of discontinuous questioning. This question-and-answer approach seeks to follow the rhythm of philosophical questioning to present some key concepts of each author, but also to exchange, dig, question, and open up new avenues.

Epistemological issues: A first set of interviews brings together two figures of migration studies to discuss issues of knowledge and discourse. The 'empirical social scientist' Oliver Bakewell and the feminist geographer Jennifer Hyndman share a transdisciplinary and critical approach.

In particular, Oliver Bakewell interrogates the words of migration, probing the relevance and legitimacy of key notions of forced displacement – starting with the voluntary/forced migration pairing. What is the danger of using categories such as 'vulnerability' or terms such as 'migration management' in an unreasonable way? The interview also analyzes the multiplication of 'best practices' in place of norms and law. Finally, through an interpretation of the *narratives* and storytelling of the different actors of forced displacement (displaced people, mediators, NGOs, police, government), Bakewell identifies the language games specific to the field of asylum and law.

Jennifer Hyndman proceeds to a genealogy of the neoliberal turn and moment over the last twenty years, studying the symptoms of the progressive alignment of a political rationality that has become dominant with spatialization practices and geo-economic strategies. Faced with this, it is important to know how to suspend the desire to fix things by attacking superficial and apparent causes. Feminist geography, on the other hand, traces a possible path of resistance through the production of a situated, contextualized knowledge, a knowledge that allows transformations in the fields of practices and discourses.

Ethical questions: The second series of interviews questions more directly the ethical issues of migration. The philosopher Serena Parekh, inspired by Arendt, and the poet and philosopher Tanella Boni seek to situate our responsibility – in the double sense of this word (to answer for oneself and to answer for others).

Serena Parekh notes that the vast majority of forced displacement (as well as so-called economic migration) is a legacy of the colonial past, imported wars, contemporary neoliberal reforms, as well as the consequences of climate change for which the most industrialized countries bear responsibility. In this context, the only legitimate question on which to base both a philosophy and a politics of migration must be: what do we owe to human beings, as human beings? In this interview, Parekh shows how critical it is to rehumanize the displaced by creating meaningful and life-giving interpersonal relationships, by putting her thoughts in dialogue with the contemporary feminist theories of Iris Young, Gillian Brock or Alison Jaggar.

Political issues: The third series of interviews proposes to widen the analytical angle beyond the issues of forced displacement, in order to better diagnose this phenomenon as a symptom. Although he does not present himself as a specialist in migration, the thinker Jacques Rancière is here put indirectly in dialogue with Seyla Benhabib to think genealogically about the emergence of a rationality and political narratives concomitant with the 'Age of Migrations'.[23]

Jacques Rancière invites us to place questions of forced displacement in a broader historical and genealogical perspective by questioning the co-emergence of 'absolutized capitalism' and a consensus that is both anti-democratic and racist in European countries, echoing Nancy

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[23]   To use the title of the classic book by Stephen Castles, Hein De Haas and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration, International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 5th edn, 2013.

Fraser on the North American continent.[24] By extending the questions of migration to other struggles for emancipation and equality, Rancière highlights some of the forms of contemporary political action, underlining the intrinsic positivity of these moments and spaces of emancipation wrested from the unequal order of domination. Finally, he questions the capacity of fiction – and of cinema in particular – to politically represent the existence of migrants.

Seyla Benhabib takes a critical look at the limits of the contemporary system of migration governance, emphasizing the imperative of decriminalizing displacement. Drawing in particular on the Kantian and Arendtian legacies, Benhabib deciphers the strategic and ideological implementations of states (or federations of states) to manage those they do not want to welcome on their territory. Whether it is a question of rebordering or crimmigration, the philosopher identifies the connections between neo-liberalism and practices of exclusion and rejection, in order to enable us to think on new bases, equipped with new values.

Tanella Boni offers a philosopher's and poet's view to better highlight the link between human beings, a link woven of words and silence. She reminds us that the human being is a speaking being before being a politician or a citizen. This bond of co-responsibility from one human to another is also what Edouard Glissant called the *relationship*. Boni makes it the heart of our condition to others and the engine of a renewed theoretical and practical approach to issues of forced displacement.

We hope that through the interdisciplinarity of the contributors, the multiplicity of points of view, the discontinuity of the remarks, the very rhythm of the interview, this part will show that philosophy is not meant to sit at the table of experts, taking up the concepts and frameworks of domination or sovereignty. This would be to forget that the determinants of forced displacement and the question of whether or not to accept refugees are simply the results of growing economic inequalities. From this point of view, it is probably more a question of turning the table upside down rather than sitting at it. In contrast to philosophical attempts marked by the primacy of the nation-state and a metaphysical understanding of sovereignty, it is increasingly urgent to think about the conditions of possibility of a real politics *from* migration, that is, based on a critique of hegemonic discourses and an attention to the relational character within a plurality of communities and individuals. All vulnerable, all precarious, all interdependent. This is the challenge and the urgency of the philosophy of migration today.

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