

From *Immunopolitics* to *Xenopolitics*: Sovereignty and Migration in Donatella Di Cesare's *Resident Foreigners*

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to offer a critical comment on *Resident Foreigners: A Philosophy of Migration* (2017, translated into English in 2020). A critical reading related to this work can be relevant if we assume it as an example of a philosophical experiment: Di Cesare proposes, in this regard, a 'Philosophy of Migration' project which should distinguish itself from Political Philosophy and Political Theory, adopting and mixing together two different and heterogeneous philosophical traditions: phenomenology and political ontology. In the first section, an overview of Di Cesare's recent works will be reconstructed, situating her work in the context of the *Italian Thought* movement and summarising her proposal for a new discipline, the Philosophy of Migration, using *Resident Foreigners*' main chapters. In the second section, a prominent feature of the same book, the concept of an 'ontology of autochthony', will be articulated in a way that draws near to Di Cesare's critical references (Michael Walzer, David Miller, Christopher H. Wellman and Joseph Carens, in particular), discussing a constitutive political and ontological relationship between the State and a *dispositive of exclusion* within Communitarianism and Liberalism. The third section, *The passenger paradox*, introduces Di Cesare's use of a *political phenomenology*, exposing a friction between political ontology and political phenomenology along with a lack of methodology which could compromise the whole project of a philosophy of migration. The same critical notes will lead to some final conclusions, where the concepts of both *the Other* and *the Same* can be situated in a broader philosophical context, *xenopolitics* – I will use this term in relation to Rosi Braidotti, Helen Hester and Paul B. Preciado – where Di Cesare's categorisation of 'immunopolitics' can be accompanied on the one hand by the rethinking of racism in 'meso-' and 'micro-' social and political areas – not just between the State and the migrant; and, on the other hand, *affirmative* ethical and political models (*constituent alienation*, *ethics of estrangement*, *affirmative politics*) can be further developed.

1. Introduction. On Di Cesare's *Philosophy of Migration* project

Between March and April 2020, with the outbreak of the COVID epidemic in Europe, the Italian public debate was shaken by a peculiar conspiracy theory: following some television reports that mistakenly used photographs of the caskets containing refugees who had died on Lampedusa's shores instead of pictures of the coffins for COVID-19 victims in Lombardy, speculations spread regarding media fabrications. The political theme of the migrant as a *casus belli* of the emergency returned to occupy centre-stage.

If the migrant is unwillingly part of any public debate concerning state intervention in emergencies, Donatella Di Cesare's *Resident Foreigners: A Philosophy of Migration* (2017, translated into English in 2020) gives us a guide to understanding the structural relation between the state's dispositives of power, which are engaged in building a national identity, and migratory phenomena. This is a novel framework and a welcome addition to the political theory of migration, employing insights from current events, journal articles, interviews and diaries, alongside philosophical research. It highlights hitherto neglected aspects, such as the distinction between, on the one hand, a sedentary, state-centric perspective, along with a neo-existentialist paradigm of life, bodies and movements, and on the other hand, a profound reflection upon the political status of the migrant as a 'citizen-without-citizenship'.

To see the overall picture of Di Cesare's thought, we could assume as a starting point that since the beginning of her work, Di Cesare articulates a complex and multifaceted comment upon Martin Heidegger's thought, with particular attention to the French phenomenology inspired by the Heideggerian philosophy. At the same time, Di Cesare conducts in-depth research on the Jewish philosophical tradition, from *Grammatica dei tempi messianici* (2008) to *Marranos: The Other of the Other* (2018, translated into English, 2020a).

Di Cesare's other works are structurally intertwined with a critical insight into the role of the state and national 'logics of belonging' in contemporary politics, discussing fundamental philosophical and cultural archetypes which structure the public debate on the concept of citizenship. The *resident* and the *migrant* are, in fact, two fundamental figures in her thought, appearing even more frequently since the publication of *Utopia of Understanding: Between Babel and Auschwitz* (2003, translated into English, 2012) and the pamphlet *Crimini contro l'ospitalità. Vita e violenza nei centri per gli stranieri* (2014a), a philosophical work dedicated to the Centres for Identification and Expulsion (CIE).

A new development of Di Cesare's political theory slowly emerges after the publication of Dario Gentili's *Italian Theory* (2012). Gentili's reconstruction of Italian political thought, from the 1960s to contemporary debates, gives birth to the philosophical movement of 'Italian Thought': biopolitics, in this context, is seen not only according to the perspective of Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben, but also from Roberto Esposito's trilogy, composed of *Communitas* (1998, translated into English, 2009), *Immunitas* (2002, translated into English, 2011) and *Bios* (2004, translated into English, 2008).

The analysis of Di Cesare's identity politics, enriched with an existentialist tone characterising the project of a philosophy of migration, refers to a form of existential *debt* as a condition for the migrant's ontological-political difference. Despite the heterogeneous modalities, the theme of debt allows *Resident Foreigners* to be placed alongside such works as Roberto Esposito's *Communitas* and Elettra Stimilli's *The Debt of the Living* (2011, translated into English, 2016), in what we could define as a 'second wave' of Italian Thought focused on the

conceptual dyad of community and immunity. More specifically, the meaning given to ‘community’ by Esposito is repeated by Di Cesare (p. 200) in an attempt to indicate in the Latin word *‘munus’* an ineradicable absence, analogous to an infinite debt, which shapes the ideal community precisely because it fails to deal with that absence.

Even if Di Cesare could be considered a thinker who bears some relation to the *Italian Thought* movement, her political philosophy may be considered to distinguish itself from it by her conceptualisation of an ‘ontological anarchism’ (focusing on the Greek etymology of anarchy: ‘ἀν-’, absence or negation, and ‘ἀρχή’, origin, principle and government). The use of the ‘anarchist’ adjective, therefore, becomes more and more relevant after the publication of *Sulla vocazione politica della filosofia* (2018, forthcoming in English, 2021c); from this book onwards, Di Cesare advocates the retrieval of a neo-existential approach to philosophical knowledge, accompanied by a rethinking of the concept of ‘ἀναρχία’ which goes beyond the political history of the Anarchist movement. These influences become decisive in the most recent work of Di Cesare, *Il tempo della rivolta* (2020, forthcoming in English, 2021b).

In *Resident Foreigners*, certain formulations from Di Cesare’s later work are anticipated – such as the idea of an ‘immunodemocracy’ described in *Virus sovrano? L’asfissia capitalistica* (2020, translated into English as *Immunodemocracy: Capitalist Asphyxia*, 2021a) – by the attribution to the State of a ‘self-immunising logic of exclusion’ (p. 1). The migrant is a ghost that haunts the territory of a national state, always exploited in critical situations as the bearer of the power of ‘deterritorialisation’ (p. 9) pertaining to the free passage of a living flow, naturally averse to the construction of identity. By blocking migrants at the border, the State acquires an identity and becomes the promulgator of a principle of identification of human beings in line with the contemporary biopolitical lexicon.

The book is divided up into four sections. In the first, *Migrants and the State* (pp. 5–77), she insists, from a historical and political perspective, on a form of irreconcilability between the ‘migrant’ and the ‘State’. Di Cesare critically analyses the public debate on immigration, emphasising a ‘state-centric’ perspective (pp. 11–22) which groups political thinkers of various backgrounds in taking a political position on migratory phenomena; in this direction, Di Cesare underlines the ‘sedentary’ nature of these positions, which restricts the possibilities of a philosophy of migration to decisions that can be taken only ‘within-the-State’ (p. 21). Hence, what is really lacking in contemporary philosophies of migration is not a more precisely articulated political theory of border control, but a phenomenological perspective on the migratory experience. Di Cesare sets the boats full of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea alongside Foucault’s *ship of fools*, making evident how a new philosophy of migration has to face off against ‘the existential nudity’ (p. 22) embodied by desperate migrants.

In the second section, the migrant is no longer considered as an *archetypal figure*: Di Cesare discusses tragic episodes which have catalysed the public debate

on immigration, combining these references with a qualitative ethnographical approach. To this end, we find the photos of the corpse of Alan Kurdi, a 3-year-old Kurdish child found dead on Turkish shores: after an emotional wave of shock and empathy, European citizens obliterated the case from their short-term memory (pp. 84–88). In addition, Di Cesare reconstructs *Fadoul's story* (pp. 91–95): born in Cameroon in a refugee camp, Fadoul obtains a provisional visa in France allowing him to live in another refugee camp, only to see, after a short period, his asylum request refused for bureaucratic reasons. Di Cesare attempts to tell his story, in each of its steps, shedding light on Fadoul's frustration at being separated from his family, who are in another camp, as well as the 'trauma' of having survived his boat's sinking in the Mediterranean Sea, remembering his dead friends and their common dream of reaching Europe.

In the third section, *Resident Foreigners* (pp. 128–66), Di Cesare investigates 'citizenship' as a concept that includes institutionalised models of living, distinguishing between an 'earth-born' identity (pp. 140–47), a juridical citizenship (pp. 147–53), and the 'theological-political' form of '*ger*', which represents a unity of 'resident' and 'foreigner' in Biblical Jerusalem (pp. 153–63). A central reference is the figure of the *exile* throughout 20th century philosophy; more than a specific form of exile, it is 'exileness' as a property of the human condition that can be philosophically reconstructed by means of such examples as Martin Heidegger's notion of *Heimatlosigkeit*, Simone Weil's conceptualisation of *Déracinement* or Emmanuel Lévinas and María Zambrano's philosophies of exile. The metaphor of the *root*, in this respect, can be characterised differently if one begins from the experience of exile; the latter testifies to a life which takes shape through a practice of *crossing spaces* more than an identitarian *rooting* within a territory (p. 130).

The last part of the book uses walls as a symbol of contemporary national sovereignty and analyses the militarisation of national borders to critically reconsider globalisation as a whole. Di Cesare refers to Wendy Brown's *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (2010), discussing a 'psychopolitics' engineered by security dispositives of control and intertwined with identitarian politics. This kind of emotional manipulation can produce collective neurosis and lead to a psychopathological status of 'self-segregation' (p. 170). Di Cesare mentions two paradigms consistent with this interpretation: Giorgio Agamben's theory of biopolitical *fields* and the geopolitical map of the globalised world developed by the French anthropologist Michel Agier.

In a world made by fields, walls and identitarian states, political power is exercised in the control of passage. In this respect, Di Cesare distinguishes etymologically between three kinds of passage between national states: *confine*, composed of 'con-' (with) and 'fine' (end), implies a mutual acknowledgement on the part of the two regions, linked by a passage-zone; *limite* (limit, from the Latin '*limes*') is something imposed by one part upon the other, and *frontiera* (frontier), a military term that has been invoked in contemporary debates concerning immigration hotspots, expresses the idea that *border* and *struggle* are one and the

same (p. 175). The border becomes a site of control from which we cannot escape, where life must be stopped, controlled, and dominated. But *Resident Foreigners*, adopting a biopolitical perspective, partially excludes a unique answer to the question of what a border is: in the near future, or in a dystopian scenario, a *biometric passport* could be the way in which the body itself is identified with the person and biological data will replace civil registries (pp. 180–182).

From this standpoint, Di Cesare's critical analysis of the identity politics of European states aims to trace a constitutive relationship between maintaining state borders (from the war between states to the war between 'Them' and 'Us') and the social reproduction of the feeling of national identity. The resident citizen becomes persuaded of this identity by learning to use 'the grammar of the possessive', consisting of ownership and appropriations, divisions and distinctions, and within which even tolerance depends on overcoming an underlying hostility (p. 13). Di Cesare draws inspiration from the critical interpretation of the etymological relationship between 'birth' and 'nation' in Hannah Arendt (p. 35). The dramatic discovery of an external agency leads the national political body to define the attainment of citizenship rights through the terminology of naturalisation: the excess of migration must be thwarted by immunopolitical manoeuvres, although each migratory wave shakes up the dispositives of identity.

Rather than recounting each one of *Resident Foreigners'* arguments, we shall try to shed light on the philosophical method which Di Cesare uses in her proposal. The main objective is not to produce a variation on the current 'Political Theory' or 'Political Philosophy' of migration, but to lay the foundations for a 'Philosophy of Migration' and, at the same time, to shed new light on the same issue. Di Cesare makes full use of two specific traditions: political ontology and phenomenology. With this in mind, the following section will reconstruct Di Cesare's ontological approach by describing the range of political positions that can be defined as identity politics, a definition produced by way of a philosophical insight into the relation between an idea of subjectivity as 'self-determination' and the political concept of sovereignty. Once this has been achieved, a sample application of phenomenology as a philosophical technique will be commented upon, so that some critical notes on the philosophy of migration may be proposed in the conclusion, along with some proposals for further developing it.

2. The Ontology of Autochthony. Critical perspectives on Communitarianism and Liberalism

On closer examination, the 'grammar of possessives' characteristic of national identity politics is based on an *ontology of autochthony*. In this sense, the migrant's existence presupposes absolute negativity, since he has *no right to exist* as he does not belong to any territory and he is extraneous to any habitus: 'According to this view, then, one can only exist as the autochthonous, in the presumed naturalness of those born to the land in which they live. *I exist* in that *I am from here*' (p. 106).

Citizenship preserves and exacerbates the problem of the growing presence of the stateless, rather than solving it, within a framework of social and political ontology such as the globalised one, where the stateless-without-citizenship come to assume a critical role. The public identification of human existence is contradicted by the simple presence of the Other. The ontology of autochthony, faced with the stateless, sternly replies: '[Her] simple presence does not justify her existence' (p. 107). What is more, Di Cesare relates the migrant condition to certain Kafkaesque characters, persecuted by being *perpetually on trial*, and to a theological sensitivity, the migrant being similar to the bearer of original sin, that is the identity/territorial uprooting: 'The migrant also has to face the demand: why are you here? This question summarises an incessant and reiterated process. [...] [A]n original sin that the migrant will never stop having to answer for. The guilt will dog her forever. [...] Whoever emigrates remains on trial for her whole life' (p. 108).

Of particular historical-political relevance is, from this point of view, Di Cesare's critical reading of Michael Walzer, which seems to assign some political responsibilities to the communitarian thought of the American philosopher. Since the publication of *Spheres of Justice* (1983), communitarianism has provided a model for other political doctrines that, directly or indirectly, advocate 'sovereignist perspectives' (p. 40). More precisely, Di Cesare uses 'sovereignty', a term particularly popular within Italian far-right factions; for she describes sovereignty as an identity politics centred on the three guiding axes of 'self-determination', 'the integrity of an identity' and 'the ownership of territory' (p. 46), matched by performative processes of biopolitical devices now part of the European democratic lexicon, such as 'adaptation', 'insertion' and 'assimilation' (p. 114).

In considering communitarianism as part of the history of the theory of sovereignty, Di Cesare attributes to communitarianism the affirmation of an identity within borders, theorising only a *political vacuum* (always keen to contribute to the formation of states of exception) beyond them. The construction of an identity fortress assumes, in Walzer's more liberal thought, the image of the political community as a *club* and of refugees as candidates who apply for membership (p. 42). Not only does such a logic not take into account the existential condition of the migrant, willing to die amidst the storms of the Mediterranean, but it also fails to recognise the mass production, in the economic-political order of globalisation, of a multitude of the desperate, the precarious, and refugees, defined by Arendt in 'We refugees' (1943) as 'the scum of the Earth'.

Communitarianism has a decisive role in Di Cesare's critical insight. Nevertheless, in relation to migratory phenomena, political and philosophical perspectives of a liberal and cosmopolitan character also share the exercise of state sovereignty (p. 46). Sovereignist political decisions on others' lives are presuppositions common to 'liberal nationalist' (p. 47) thinkers such as David

Miller and Christopher H. Wellman, and liberal cosmopolitans such as Joseph Carens alike (p. 57).

Di Cesare uses Miller's *Strangers in Our Midst* (2016) – which emphasises a divisive identitarian rhetoric already in its title – to criticise the political concept of 'self-determination'. The legitimacy of the self-determination argument depends on 'rhetorical acrobatics' from a philosophical point of view – 'a tautological shift, in which the response appears as a repetition of the premises' (p. 47) – which hides an authentically political affirmation of power in an 'Us', a pronoun which places the grammar of the possessive and the ontology of autochthony on the same level. Not only are the state and its role never problematised by Miller, but he conceives a fundamental principle of contemporary governmentality through the construction and the conservation of national identity's *sufficient cohesion*: 'The more cohesive the self is, the better it is able to self-determine' (p. 47).

Di Cesare reads Wellman's philosophy of migration, in addition, as a development of the Walzerian communitarian proposal revisited by a 'pathetic liberalism' and based on a specious 'fiction of self-determination' (p. 50). From this point of view, Wellman puts on the same plane of reasoning a woman's *freedom to reject* a marriage proposal and religious freedom of faith, to bolster the argument for popular sovereignty's legitimacy in banishing migrants. Di Cesare sees in Wellman's association between resident citizens and club members the reduction of the complex and tragic conditions of contemporary migrants to a 'ridiculous analogy' (p. 49).

Di Cesare devotes more time to Joseph Carens' *open border* proposal and a 'liberal cosmopolitan' approach (p. 61). In Carens' perspective, citizenship rights can be seen as class privileges in Western societies (p. 58); nevertheless, Carens 'depoliticises' his analysis of migratory phenomena using a theory of a universal *right of migration*. Carens, in addition, considers as valid a provisional suspension of the right of migration in emergencies involving unstable political and economic situations, at the discretion of the state. This kind of sovereign power – which, in Schmittian terms, is principally the power to declare a *state of exception* – is substantially incompatible with an anarchist model of the philosophy of migration, such as the one advocated by Di Cesare. Communitarianism, Liberalism, and Cosmopolitanism all presuppose a *decision on identity*, dividing human beings into two factions on two sides of a divide and founding a political ontology of autochthony.

Furthermore, Di Cesare discusses different historical ways of looking at the right of citizenship in the sections of her work devoted to Athens (pp. 140–47), Rome (pp. 147–53) and Jerusalem (pp. 153–63), tripartite in increasing order, from the territorial conceptualisation to one open to hybrid forms of citizenship. In the Jewish idea of '*ger*', which Di Cesare uses as a prototype for the *resident foreigner*, the philosopher proposes a form of acknowledgement of those living in a foreign land. The resident foreigner appears as an ethical figure for Di Cesare, related at once to the perception of *exile* in the mystical and nomadic tradition of Judaism as

well as to *ecstatic living* in Martin Heidegger's sense, which establishes the foreigner, and not the native, as a human model of the terrestrial inhabitant (pp. 215-16).

Di Cesare's argument is also inspired by Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Lévinas and, more generally, the French phenomenological interpretation of Heidegger's thought. From Derrida's philosophy it inherits the notion that hospitality is *an absolute law* of human ethics, an idea which in Derrida's work forms part of an attempt to detach 'xénia' from an exclusively legal paradigm (p. 190). The French philosopher confers a messianic value upon the encounter with the Other, although the Other can be anybody, and such an ethical predisposition is better defined as *messianic without messianism* (p. 188). The link between ethics and hospitality is vehemently reiterated by Lévinas, who distinguishes an 'ethics of hospitality' from 'ethics as hospitality'. From Lévinas, Di Cesare draws a critical vision of the philosophical-political idea of *sovereign subjectivity* which is at the basis of Western cultures and which the French philosopher historically links to the advent of Auschwitz (p. 188). If the 'grammar of possessives' permeates not only our common language, but also our visual perception, the idea of a sovereign subjectivity connects the Western ethical paradigm with something broader and deeper, hidden in history, culture, and even in philosophy. The political ontology of sovereignty and autochthony admits the possibility of a collective subject only through the government of others' lives; at the same time, an idea of subjectivity limited to identity involves being successful in the domination of the Self as the Other. The state presupposes a governmentality which extends itself to migrants and the stateless, creating borders and exceeding them at the same time, whereas the Self must transform the inner Other into an identity, presuming a psychological *immunologics*.

3. The passenger paradox

If one of *Resident Foreigners*' most precious facets consists in the attempt to fuse together two different and heterogeneous philosophical filters – in this case, political ontology and phenomenology – none of them is analysed and considered expressly in a methodological light; the two could appear, moreover, in mutual contrast in some loci. So as to consider this aspect critically, we shall refer to a particular example.

Di Cesare does not passively address the phenomenological tradition, she rather articulates, in one of the most experimental sections of her work, *The power of place* (pp. 205-208), a thought experiment that reflects on the encounter with the Other in an everyday setting: a railway carriage. The actions and reactions of passengers, who must share the spatiality and maintain the regularities of their habits as passengers, serve Di Cesare to show how a philosophy of migration can develop through a phenomenological investigation of the way in which different bodies share a common space. The principles of immunopolitics do not develop

only on a vertical plane, such as that of sovereignty: they act in a micro-political and psycho-social context, and the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion inside a train carriage can testify to the horizontal plane of immunopolitics, an ‘immunising good sense’ (p. 205).

In Di Cesare’s example, the compartment of a carriage has six seats, initially occupied by only two passengers. The two arrange their objects in the empty seats and seize the compartment space, positioning themselves more freely; but the arrival of two new passengers jeopardises the achieved serenity, creating a temporal border between those who arrived first and those who arrived later, a ‘Them’ versus an ‘Us’ analogous to a micro-community that must immunise itself from the Other. The four passengers’ moods change once more with the arrival of two other passengers who fill the compartment and force each to the limits of their *own* space: ‘The situation changes instantly. Those who had previously been outsiders now, in turn, feel themselves to be co-proprietors of the compartment together with the two passengers who had been on the train from the start. Though they have nothing much in common, they tacitly constitute a clan of the autochthonous determined to defend the privileges they have acquired’ (p. 206).

Following this event, Di Cesare proposes an interpretation of the apparent removal of the nomadic condition of each passenger – as a passing figure – while considering the feeling of appropriation that arises simply by occupying a place with one’s body. This leads us to the *passenger paradox*: ‘The paradox reaches its pinnacle when one considers that the passenger is the negation of sedentary. Yet those who enter the compartment not only overlook the precarity of territory that has been conquered but rapidly forget that they were themselves unfamiliar to the others, as they proudly and arrogantly present themselves as autochthonous’ (p. 207). The Italian philosopher affirms that the phenomenological analysis of appropriation and estrangement stemming from the sharing of a space between bodies is a precondition for a future ‘ethics of space’ (p. 207).

The first criticism of the same example is related to its brilliant efficacy and clarity: the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion, far from community- or state-centred political models, can be traced back to invisible ‘micro-territories’, which could be dismantled through a phenomenological exercise. How could a new ethics of space emerge from these complex, and yet instituted, cognitive schemes, freeing human life from every form of appropriation? Sight, more specifically, is not analysed through the lens of the social construction of perception, in Di Cesare’s terms. The passenger paradox, particularly in its phenomenological aspect, can introduce the philosophy of migration into a major order of critical issues: appropriation and alienation, identification and estrangement, and other conceptual dyads of a similar character, can be applied to a political phenomenology of human intersubjectivity, which surpass the current historical and cultural context and, even more, the political ontology which sustains the state’s role in Western societies. Di Cesare, from this point of view, seems inadvertently to open the door to a major problem: the mere co-presence of two different bodies in the same space can engender a

political relationship, which could also assume the form of an including/excluding dispositive, acting and reacting autonomously simply to the Other's *presence* (rather than to a specific form of its subjectivity).

Di Cesare, in response, singles out the idea of 'return' as crucial for a new ethics of migrations. Against the dyad constructed by a sedentary and rooted way of life and an absolute errancy, which is more a figure of the 'extraneousness' of a globalisation process driven by capitalism, the 'return', in Di Cesare's term, is a *form of living* in time and space with ethical contents. Returning *somewhere* does not mean that we have a fixed origin, a localisable destination at which to end our journey: the need for a return exposes a sense of loss and does not erase the experience of a journey which has modified the traveller, deconstructing the meaning of 'from' and 'towards'. The resident-foreigner, consequently, has to return *nowhere*: the arrival is not refused – it is an existential necessity, as it is for the contemporary migrants approaching the Mediterranean coasts of European countries: *no one is autochthonous, but everyone needs to return somewhere, someday*.

The concept of return, strongly charged with references to ethics, philosophy and even history in the Jewish tradition, seems to get the final answer supplied by the book back on the rails of political ontology. How, if not paradoxically, could returning testify to the leaving behind of metaphysical issues, such as the origin and foundation of human existence? Furthermore, could a modality of reasoning which intertwines theology and ethics give practicable solutions to the problem of future political reforms and social experiments that work against identity politics, when the same identitarian tendency of contemporaneity is largely driven by religious confessions? In Di Cesare's ontological-political proposal, a *dissolving origin* can be, at most, encountered, but the origin itself is not denied insofar as it involves the false consciousness of a false problem to its core.

An aspect which could supplement Di Cesare's Philosophy of Migration concerns a rigorous reflection on the analytical method which it employs – which should be undertaken carefully every time a new theory is proposed. The phenomenological technique, recalled in the passenger paradox, seems to generate some friction with the approach of political ontology right up to the end of the book: the appearance of a spontaneous dynamics of inclusion/exclusion is, in some respects, disconnected from Di Cesare's ethical proposals due to its immanent and sensory nature. A different result could be given, nevertheless, using phenomenology and political ontology not merely side by side, but conferring upon the former a *deconstructing* and *destitutive* power with respect to the latter.

The absence of a methodological programme for the philosophy of migration project, one that is able to show us how it might function beyond any determinate ethical or political position, will lead us towards two other unresolved moments within *Resident Foreigners*, which implicate the whole 'immunological' conceptual apparatus of *Italian Thought*: the need to exploit the full potential of

biopolitics, directing biopolitical categories in the direction of ‘micro-’ and ‘meso-’ spatial areas on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the missing development of an anti-identitarian *affirmative* proposal — through which we could distinguish between a ‘constituent alienation’ and alienation as such, between ‘self-estrangement’ as a practice and a passive estrangement, and so on.

4. Conclusion. From *immunopolitics* to *xenopolitics*

Racism will occupy a prominent place among the phenomena of the philosophy of migration, a new discipline emerging in our day that cannot ignore the violence against migrants. Therefore, to make sense of racism with a philosophical analysis could mean to employ a social and political phenomenology of racism, capable of guiding the theory of identity politics through more ‘planes’ and to expand the totality of its facets.

Following the reflection of Di Cesare even racism might become an ontological-political category, branching off as a fundamental process of Western sovereignty both subjectively and collectively. In this sense, the future philosophy of migration would be responsible for its difficult deconstruction, not only in the field of national sovereignty but also in micro-political and psycho-social perspectives which seem to function autonomously (micro-aggressions, schools and families with their specific features, criminal contexts and so on).

Even if a political theory of migration aims to be associated with an ontological-political perspective, a more radical and methodical approach could discuss the constitutive correspondence between ‘state’ and ‘racism’. How racism, after Foucault’s reflection on the same topic, could be explored and analysed as a phenomenon deeply intertwined with the dispositives of individualisation and social subjectivation that belong to nation-states? What could be said of living human singularities *without* the state?

Besides, the Other (ξένος in ancient Greek) — which is not the same as ‘barbarian’ and can be related to its opposite, ιδιώτης, *idiot*, derived from ἴδιος, being purely its own, identical) — is at risk of being reduced to spatial categories (root, nation, migration, exile, return, and so on). The migrant, as we have seen whilst commenting on *Resident Foreigners*, is the Other, but from a perspective in which the duality ‘within the border’/‘beyond the border’ plays a pivotal role, making the aforementioned inclusive/exclusive *dispositif* comprehensible only within a phenomenology/ethics/ontology of private and public space.

The Other and the idiot/identical are protagonists with different nuances in Helen Hester’s *Xenofeminism*, which underlines the necessity of also working at the same time with micro-political or meso-political dimensions, in order not to overlook the plurality of different levels of discrimination — the sexual and the racial become more closely allied in a broader meaning given to ‘*xeno-phobia*’.

The ‘control of borders’ cannot be restricted to national frontiers: a fundamental reference for *Xenofeminism* results, in this direction, in Paul B.

Preciado's conceptualisation of '*gatekeeping*', a reasoning which involves at the same time an expansion of the biopolitical lexicon and the analysis of identity politics from a pharmacological and physical perspective. In addition, it seems clear already in Di Cesare's passenger paradox how a micro-sociological and auto-ethnographical scientific literature cannot be ignored when it comes to explaining processes and practices which work on a horizontal and immanent plane.

Beside the dual polarity of roles (resident/foreigner) that represents the drama of Western identity, we do not find in *Resident Foreigners* examples of an *affirmative politics of otherness* which moves beyond the resident and the migrant. In addition, more questions arise if we consider politics, at least since the Modern Age, in relation to the conceptualisation of '*affirmation*' – an issue at the centre of Rosi Braidotti's feminist and posthuman thought, for example. How could *the Other* be acknowledged not only in the foreigners' presence and arrival, but also beginning with an affirmative and horizontal politics of otherness?

As an ontological-political concept, the 'return' has been used by Di Cesare in one of her most widely discussed works, *Israele. Terra, ritorno, anarchia* (2014), which considers a philosophy of Zionism – Italian readers remember the fierce polemic between Di Cesare and another philosopher of the Heideggerian tradition, Gianni Vattimo, on the same topic. Di Cesare's thought could help us to rethink a philosophical anarchism, but her proposal is not radically atheistic and without any instituted political models in sight – models which do not seem to embody a deconstruction of the state apparatus. Furthermore, even the more proactive among *Resident Foreigners*' paragraphs are not related to any concrete anti-identitarian and experimental practices of contemporary societies.

In this context, Hester, Preciado and Braidotti help with a specific problem: how to conceptualise *xénos* in an intersectional manner, indeed racial and sexual, but also with the theoretical aim of radically deconstructing 'subjectivation' in itself as a psycho-social process rather than taking aim at individual historical and political models. The *xenopolitical* proposal – Di Cesare doubts that *xeno-* as a prefix, making use of the same word only in the ancient Greek meaning and without taking into consideration the contemporary paradigm which moves from the same term – offers, in addition, the idea of a *constituent alienation* and distinguishes between 'self-estrangement' as a practice, with strong political and ethical facets, and a passive estrangement caused by identity politics.

The ancient Greek word ξενιτεία, derived from a substantive form of *xénos*, was used by Christian monks to indicate an ascetic practice consisting in living as strangers in the world: in the contemporary era, what kind of estrangement practices could provide an *ethics of estrangement* to replace identity-based forms of life? Nevertheless, a relevant absence could be traced in the missed connection with *transformative politics* – one of the richest traditions of contemporary philosophy which, maintaining a constant focus on bodies and new categories of biopolitical 'inscription', has been directed, at least during the last twenty years, towards a *Queer Ontology* which leaves the sexual dimension of its initial

assumptions far behind. When the features of the foreigner from another territory are confused with those of the alien emerging from the human, the critique of immunopolitics implies a broader discussion of *xeno*-politics.

The roots of identity politics are deeper than those of community and state, maybe even deeper than the body itself: xenopolitics, from this point of view, resists even being named (the *xénos* cannot be identical to itself or, more precisely, the *xénos* is not the *xénos*). To maintain a non-identical, hybridised and bastardised status means to articulate affirmatively and actively a *xeno-logics* against an immune-logics, making clear the difference – in a philosophy which works, at least with language, in the opposite direction to biopolitical categories – between a different model of subjectivity and a radical practice of de-subjection.

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