Dis/Placement, Dis/Location, Dis/Engagement? FEMINIST REFLECTIONS ON THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN EXILE

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Abstract. This article examines the production of feminist knowledge under conditions of exile through the case of Belarusian gender studies after 2020. Drawing on feminist epistemology and most notably Donna Haraway's concept of situated knowledges, the article conceptualizes displacement as an epistemic condition that reshapes research agendas, methods of study, and modes of engagement. Problematizing the notions of dis/placement, dis/location, and dis/engagement, the author states that what may be perceived as a disruption in professional occupation and loss of cultural belonging, burdened by uncertainty, precariousness and nomadic life, eventually results into a reconfiguration of feminist epistemic labor and the production of new knowledge on gender subjects.

Keywords: Belarus, displacement, exile, feminist epistemology, gender studies, knowledge production, migration, nomadism, political repression.

Introduction: exile, nomadism, and scholars at risk

Donna Haraway's well-known statement that all knowledge is situated and that it bears the imprint of the place, position, and conditions in

which it is produced has long been central to feminist epistemology (Haraway 1988). Yet the question of what it means to produce situated knowledges under conditions of forced displacement, exile, and political repression remains insufficiently theorized. This text addresses that gap by examining the contemporary situation of Belarusian gender studies after 2020, when mass political repression, imprisonments of thousands of people, liquidation of independent media, NGOs, non-state art and educational institutions, and the consequent forced migration radically transformed not only the life circumstances, but the conditions of intellectual work too for many Belarusian scholars — those who had to leave, but also those who remained in the country, facing the factual ban on their professional (academic) occupation.

In my view, the questioning of the epistemological connection between knowledge production and the politics of location, theorized by feminist and decolonial thinkers, has not only not lost its relevance, but gained new impetus for understanding the political and existential situation in which scholars from Belarus find themselves today. A series of theoretical and practical questions evolve under these circumstances. What knowledge do we produce and for whom? What theoretical frameworks are most helpful for the analysis of current societal changes in Belarus and in the region (more specifically, what role gender studies plays in it)? What methods and instruments are most efficient when the empirical field, archives and statistics are inaccessible? What role does the experience of individual and collective (institutional) exile play in transforming our research interests and scholarly methodologies? How do academic and grass-roots knowledges are interrelated and how can we use that knowledge in order to become the agents of change?

The title of this essay — *Dis/placement*, *dis/location*, *dis/engagement*? — marks the tensions that structure this condition. It is deliberately fractured, the terms are disjunct with slashes in a deconstructivist manner, while the question mark invites to reflect on the losses and gains of the displacement of scholars. Rather than describing a linear process of loss, all three terms implicate the challenges that characterize knowledge production in exile. But these keywords are also called to underline the input of many feminist scholars who explored and conceptualized the experience of migration and exile.

Dis/placement signals the ambivalence of forced movement and of deprivation: the necessity to leave, the loss of a home and the impossibility of return (at least, at the present time) for many exiled Belarusians, including scholars. It refers not only to physical relocation (often multiple relocations, due to wars, political turbulences, family problems, work placement and issues with legalization) but also to the

uneven and coercive character of mobility. What the new *placement* will be, where and for how long?

Dis/location implies the loss of a permanent job, habitual institutional setting, cultural habitus, but also it suggests am acquisition of new institutional home (even if temporarily), navigating new spaces, and moving to another "house of being", that is switching to other language(s) — be it English, German, Polish or French as academic languages, or Lithuanian, Georgian, Ukrainian as the languages of everyday communication, and Belarusian — for all purposes[1].

Finally, *dis/engagement* raises the question of whether exile and life circumstances of migrant scholars (academic refugees) entail withdrawal from political and scholarly engagement, or does it compel an even stronger commitment to professional occupation and the engagement "to think Belarus" from other spaces?

The condition of exile is often perceived on the personal level and conceptualized in theory as negative and traumatic experience (what is fully justified from practical side — emotionally, existentially, financially, juridically, professionally). I would, however, argue that it may also bring some advantages, even if they seem to be unobvious[2]. This condition can be regarded as a formative experience, that opens up new horizons for self-realization, expands research possibilities and fosters the process of better (although sometimes too swift and abrupt) integration to the international academic networks and diverse institutional environments. All of this makes scholars at risk more adjustable and eventually feeling more self-confident on the international academic labor market with the upgraded linguistic, communicative and research project management skills. In other words, scholarship in exile can be conceptualized as a challenging, yet promising epistemic situation that reshapes research agendas, methods of study, and modes of engagement. From feminist perspective, it implies the transformation of epistemic labor rather than its negation.

1 When it comes to multilingualism as a challenge of migration(s), I see only gains, not losses. As Rosi Braidotti notes, "My work as a thinker has no mother tongue, only a succession of translations, displacements and adaptations to changing conditions. Nomadism for me equals multilingualism. [...] Accents are the traces of my multiple linguistic homes. They spell my own ecology of belonging, my loyalty to parallel yet divergent lives" (Braidotti 2014).

2 This approach underpinned the conceptual framework of the 2024 conference "The Promise of (Un)Happiness? Gender, Labor, and Migration", organized by the EHU Center for Gender Studies as part of the Women in Tech project, the outcomes of which are presented in this special issue of *Topos*.

Feminist epistemology, situated knowledges, and the displacement studies

Feminist epistemology has long ago questioned the fiction of a neutral, universal, and disembodied knowing subject. In her seminal essay on situated knowledges Donna Haraway dismissed the "view from nowhere", having proposed, instead, the "privilege of partial perspective" (1988). Feminist objectivity, in this view, does not reside in transcendence but in the recognition of one's location, embodiment, and relational positioning within structures of power. The already classical Adrienne Rich's concept of *politics of location* insists on recognizing the position from which one speaks, when advocating global feminist agenda (Rich 1986). Initially formulated as a critique of the ethnocentrism of Western feminism, the politics of location has since evolved into a broader transnational framework that situates knowledge within global hierarchies of power, colonial histories, and asymmetrical mobilities (Brah 1996; Mohanty 2003; Rich 1986). Together, these feminist interventions foreground location not as a fixed point but as a relational and historically contingent condition.

Research on displacement and forced migration has increasingly drawn on feminist epistemology to contest earlier gender-neutral framings of mobility. Feminist displacement studies emphasize that displacement is a profoundly gendered process, structured by intersecting axes of power such as gender, sexuality, class, race, and citizenship (Ball 2022; Baynham, De Fina 2005; Brickell, Speer 2020; Carstens, Bozalek 2021; Davis 2007; John 1996; Morrison 2008; Vatansever 2018). Rather than treating displacement as a singular event, feminist scholars conceptualize it as a process marked by uneven temporalities, emotional and reproductive labor, and forms of "slow violence" (Tyner 2020).

Mimi Sheller's conceptualization of mobility justice underscores the need to consider not only the right to move, but also the right to stay, to dwell, and to remain immobile without coercion (Sheller 2018). From this perspective, coerced mobility is neither inherently liberating nor evenly distributed. For scholars at risk, mobility is instead associated with precariousness, the loss of institutional protection, and dependence on temporary and often unstable legal regimes.

Rosi Braidotti's theory of a nomadic subject occupies a special place in feminist reflections on migration and exile (2011 [1994]). It emphasizes becoming, relationality, and multiplicity as alternatives to fixed, sovereign identities. For Braidotti, nomadism is both a philosophical concept and a materially embedded condition: it designates a subjectivity that resists fixity and essentialism, while remaining firmly grounded in embodied, social, and geopolitical realities:

> Being homeless; a migrant; an exile; a refugee; a tourist; a rape-in-war victim; an itinerant migrant; an illegal immigrant; an expatriate; a mail-order bride; a foreign caretaker of the young or the elderly of the economically developed world; a high-flying professional; a global venture financial expert; a humanitarian relief worker in the UN global system; a citizen of a country that no longer exists (Yugoslavia; Czechoslovakia; the Soviet Union) — these are no metaphors. Having no passport or having too many of them is neither equivalent nor is it merely metaphorical. These are highly specific geo–political and historical locations — it's history and belonging tattooed on your body. One may be empowered or beautified by it, or be scarred, hurt and wounded by it. Learning to tell the difference among different forms of non-unitary, multilayered or diasporic subjectivity is therefore a key ethical but also methodological issue (Braidotti, 2014: 179-180).

As I noted above, speaking of exiled scholars, I approach nomadism and displacement not as markers of freedom or autonomy in mobility (which they are not), but as epistemic conditions that demand careful differentiation. Forced migration, exile, and statelessness produce specific modes of situated knowledge that are shaped by loss, trauma, and constraint, but they also foster the formation of new forms of solidarity, creativity, and feminist imagination (Kmak, Björklund 2022; Ball 2022).

Belarusian gender scholars as political nomads

After the rigged presidential elections in summer 2020 and the following mass protests, Belarusians faced with the unprecedented political repressions. Thousands of people were arrested and sentenced to absurd prisons terms, dozens of independent media outlets and hundreds of civil society organizations were liquidated (and then, already in exile, labeled "extremist"); universities, research institutes, archives, and publishing infrastructures were brought under direct ideological control of the state, while many university lecturers and academic researchers were fired and eventually forced to exile. Remaining in the country for them became incompatible with their scientific and ethical principles, political views, physical safety and professional work.

Estimates of the number of Belarusian scholars affected by repression and forced to leave the country vary, and no precise statistics are available, although it is generally assumed that the figure reaches several hundred (Rohava 2024; University World News 2025). As for gender scholars and feminist activists, their number is even more difficult

to determine[3]; however, based on indirect data, it may amount to several dozen individuals.

At the same time, the geography of displacement and the itineraries of dislocation — often multiple and non-linear — are familiar to many Belarusians: Belarus–Poland (with Ukraine serving as a transit country prior to the outbreak of the war), Belarus–Lithuania, Belarus–Germany, Belarus–Sweden, Belarus–the United States, and beyond.

The overwhelming majority of Belarusian gender researchers and feminist activists with whom I collaborated at various stages — including graduates of the EHU Master's program in Gender Studies — emigrated in 2020–2021. Some left the country later, following their release from prison. Those few who remained in Belarus have effectively disappeared from the public sphere, maintaining a low profile: they do not give interviews, are inactive on social media, do not publish in academic journals, and do not participate in gender-related conferences abroad. If they do, they publish under pseudonyms or participate as AA (anonymous authors). I have no doubt they are taking field notes and writing texts, but we will find out about that later, when everything is over. Paradoxically, invisibility has become a dominant survival strategy for many Belarusian scholars. Anonymity in academic publishing — an anomaly according to conventional academic norms — has effectively turned into an abnormal "new norm".[4]

Academic mobility is one of the most important factors in academic life and an essential condition for scholarly work. However, forced migration — and especially emergency evacuation (with just a backpack, as many Belarusians experienced, making their way through swamps and forests) — is incompatible with the idea of how mobility contributes to professional academic work. Forced migration is involuntary by default, and this is certainly not a case of "homelessness as a chosen condition" (Braidotti 2011 [1994]: 17).

The situation for Belarusian scholars is also accompanied by the risk of transnational repression, although the Belarusian case is not unique (Dukalskis et al. 2022; Michaelsen, Anstis 2025). Since 2020, criminal cases in absentia, arrests or confiscation of property, pressure on relatives, and digital intimidation have become routine tools of persecution by the Belarusian state. For many political migrants,

3 Some scholars do not identify themselves as scholars in exile; others do not foreground their work in gender studies, positioning themselves instead as sociologists, philosophers, linguists, or historians. Still others deliberately maintain a low profile — even while working abroad — in order to avoid creating risks for family members who remain in Belarus.

4 As one Belarusian female journalist remarked when commenting on her work for "extremist" media operating in exile, "nonames read nonames".

returning is impossible, and even access to consular services, such as passport renewal, is denied, effectively rendering them stateless.

Belarusian gender scholars and feminist activists form a particular group of targeted repression for Belarusian authorities. Since the 1990s many of us were working and conducting research in the spaces and institutions that were parallel to the state (except some rare cases), but Belarusian "revolution with a female face" that involved many grassroots feminist organizations and brought women of different social groups, professions and ages to the forefront of protest movement, made Lukashenko's regime particularly attentive to women as agents of social change.

It is therefore no accident that feminism as such has become a "personal enemy" of the regime. Feminist and LGBTQ NGOs — even when operating abroad — are subjected to transnational repression and are routinely labeled "extremist", while within the country a rhetoric of "traditional" and "family" values has been aggressively promoted. This rhetoric aligns closely with Russian "soft power" and serves the demographic and ideological objectives of authoritarian rule. In the summer of 2025, the Belarusian authorities proposed to criminalize any public mention of homosexual relations, grouping — through a single draft legal provision — "homosexual relations, sex change, childlessness, and pedophilia" as equivalent categories (Belsat 2025). One might also suggest that today the very word gender is permitted in Belarus only within the confines of official reporting on gender equality indices submitted to the UN.

Meanwhile, Belarusian gender scholars, feminist activists and women artists, who found themselves in exile after 2020, have continued their professional engagement abroad — through participating in research projects, engaging in expert activities, developing various media projects, curating art exhibitions and becoming drivers of transnational feminist networks. With the time being (almost 6 years in exile) Belarusian feminists' work and input on the international academic and art scenes, as well as in Belarusian (independent) media, became much more visible in public and academic spheres than before 2020. This visibility and publicness, however, comes at a cost, including online harassment, misogynistic attacks, and threats that exploit gendered vulnerabilities, and most of all it entails risks of political (transnational) persecution from Belarusian authorities, as it was noted above.

In regards to this, one more problem warrants mention. The vulnerability experienced by Belarusian scholars at risk, including gender researchers, entails — among other challenges — an issue of epistemic invisibility. Erasure of institutional histories and digital archives, the

ruination of websites, the continual reconfiguration of institutional affiliations (often across different countries), the provisional renunciation of authorship, the algorithmic deprioritization of media content in Belarusian language through search engines — these and other factors do not merely affect careers or institutions. They actively shape what can be known, cited, and recognized as knowledge. While these processes may not significantly constrain individual authors publishing in English, they profoundly affect the visibility of Belarusian gender scholarship as a collective intellectual field[5].

Under such circumstances, Belarusian gender scholars in exile are producing what can be described as feminist refugee epistemologies, that is forms of knowledge grounded in lived experience of displacement, imprisonment, the loss of home and sense of belonging yet also of the retrieval of communities, the beginning of new life and the revision of the meaning of the political. Feminist migrant narratives illuminate the emotional distress of coping with trauma, escape and survival, being at the same time oriented toward care and focusing on the role of solidarity infrastructures and feminist networks in times of wars and political upheavals (Davydzik 2025; Nikolayenko 2021; Sarakavik 2023; Sasunkevich 2024; Stebur 2025; Shparaga 2025; Vazyanau 2023). These epistemologies challenge conventional academic norms by integrating autobiographical narratives, creative non-fiction, collaborative research, and art practices into the production of knowledge about the Self and the Other (Arcimovich 2025; Biran 2023; Dvorák 2023; Ivanoŭ (Harbacki) 2023; Lashden 2024; Rakava 2025). The stories of Belarusian women intellectuals and artists who found themselves in forced migration in the 20th century or suffered political repression in the USSR have also become an important topic for a new generation of feminist political nomads (Arcimovich 2023; Ivanou, 2024; Ousmanova 2024). Against this backdrop, critical research on the penitentiary system as a core instrument of political repression in Belarus, alongside analyses of the mechanisms of gender-based state violence (long employed by the authorities but rendered normative after 2020) have become particularly urgent (Chulitskaya, Matonyte 2024; Klaskouskaya 2023; Komar 2023; Litskevich 2024; Vazyanau 2021; Vialichka 2023). Studies addressing the nexus of patriarchy and authoritarianism, and the deconstructing of state propaganda on gender issues also remain crucial for further inquiry (Nikolayenko 2021; Ousmanova 2021; Rudnik 2022;

5 This tendency reveals in that even institutional entities such EHU Center for Gender Studies do not appear in the scientometric data on the evolution of gender scholarship in the region — neither as Belarusian, nor as Lithuanian (Kataeva et al. 2023).

Shadrina 2023; numerous media publications and Telegram-channel "Убок ад мэйнстрыму" by Iryna Sidorskaya 2025).

Thus, feminist scholars engage not only with the history of Belarusian "revolution with a female face" and the distinctiveness of women's political leadership in 2020 (Gapova 2021; Gapova 2023; Gaufman 2021; Ivanoŭ 2021; Navumau and Matveieva 2021; Paulovich 2021; Sasunkevich, 2025; Shparaga 2021), but also with the dramatic experiences of political persecution, imprisonment, and forced migration. Addressing these themes has significantly broadened the range of research questions, while the production of knowledge about such experiences is vital not only for Belarusian scholars but also for colleagues elsewhere, as it enables comparative analysis across different historical and political contexts. Moreover, this scholarship places Belarusian gender studies on the map of global knowledge production and secures its place in history[6].

Feminist knowledge production in exile: the case of EHU Center for Gender Studies

In this context the history of the Center for Gender Studies at the European Humanities University provides a unique and particularly interesting example for reflecting on how Belarusian gender studies can exist and develop outside Belarus. The majority of gender scholars and feminist activists whose research was mentioned above left the country individually: prior to 2020, to pursue education and build academic careers abroad; and after 2020, as a result of political persecution. Meanwhile, the Center for Gender Studies, as an institutional entity with a nearly 30-year history (founded by Elena Gapova in 1997), has for the past twenty years operated in another country (Lithuania) while conducting research related to Belarus and implementing educational and infrastructure projects for Belarusians.

The reason for relocating to another country was political, as in many other cases involving Belarusian scholars during Lukashenko's rule. However, it should be noted that the Center for Gender Studies itself was not then a specific target of deliberate repression by the Belarusian authorities (unlike the Central European University in Budapest, which was forced to close and relocate to Vienna as a direct result of targeted attacks on gender studies). In the 1990s and early 2000s, gender studies and feminist activism attracted little attention

6 Here I rephrase Adrienne Rich's well-known formulation: "I need to understand how a place on the map is also a place in history" (Rich 1986: 212)

from the Lukashenko regime, as such activities were conducted outside state institutions, without state funding, and were largely perceived as insignificant.

Yet "the eye of the power", to borrow Michel Foucault's formulation, was drawn to EHU as an educational institution that was established and operated during several years outside direct state control over the funding, management and the curricula of the university programs. In the summer of 2004, the authorities revoked EHU's educational license. A year later, EHU resumed its activities in Vilnius, with the support of the European Union, the Lithuanian government, and international donors.

Thus, the Center for Gender Studies moved to Vilnius together with the university. This case constitutes a history of institutional displacement — a feature that renders it both distinctive and analytically significant. Meanwhile, one of the most remarkable aspects of the CGS is its capacity to persist as an institutional entity despite the absence of a "room of one's own ", the changing composition of affiliated members, and the wide geographical dispersion of its associate members, spanning Canada and the United States, the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Germany, and Poland. I would attribute this sustainability to three interrelated factors: first, the importance of the Center's institutional affiliation with EHU (institutions are better prepared to survive[7]); second, the presence of a small but stable core team (three-four people) who are integrated into the university's academic life, actively engaged in gender research and committed to sustaining the Center; and, finally, an extensive network of alumni of Gender Studies Master's program and of affiliated researchers linked to the Center through teaching, research, and collaborative projects.

Could the Center for Gender Studies have remained in Minsk and continued its activities under another institutional umbrella, or registered as an NGO (at least, until 2020)? Theoretically, it could, but we bore responsibility for maintaining not only the research and publication activities of the Center, but also for our Master's program in Gender Studies, that we launched in 2000. This was the first Master's program at EHU and one of the very few such programs in the region at the time. It played an important role in disseminating feminist concepts and research methodologies, the formation of new generation of gender scholars and the production of new knowledge on Belarus. In June 2004, we held our third graduation ceremony; one month later,

7 The "institutional reality" of gender studies in the universities is a separate issue that I will not touch upon here, although it remains an urgent subject (Braidotti 2011 [1994]): 206–207; Ahmed 2017).

the Minsk chapter of our history came to an end. The key point here is that institutional context, academic environment, intellectual autonomy, and infrastructure matter. From this perspective, further development of the Master's program in Gender Studies in Minsk without EHU was simply not possible.

The EHU Master's program in Gender Studies continues to operate in Vilnius to this day, apart from brief interruptions in 2004–2005 and 2020–2022. Of the program's 130 graduates as of 2026 (approximately 80 per cent of whom are Belarusians) — around 20 per cent have already defended their doctoral dissertations or are currently completing PhD studies. Some have gone on to pursue successful academic careers at universities in Europe and the United States. Looking back to the 2010s, I would note that in Belarus many of our graduates became key actors in both academic and grassroots gender studies, as well as in NGO activities. After 2020, a significant number of them were forced to leave the country. The names of our alumni now frequently appear among the authors of academic and media publications, in English and other languages, addressing gender issues in Belarus after 2020.

This suggests that continuity in knowledge production depends to a large extent on how, and within what institutional and intellectual contexts, emerging researchers acquire knowledge and develop the impetus for research. In this sense, even if the activities of the Center for Gender Studies remained largely unnoticed within Belarus after its relocation to Lithuania[8], the EHU Master's program in Gender Studies has continued to make a substantial contribution to the development of Belarusian gender studies throughout more than two decades of work in exile.

However, the history of EHU's Master's program in Gender Studies is illuminating also from another perspective. If we consider the production of knowledge on Belarus through the lens of gender studies, the transformation of research topics, methods, and the field as a whole before and after 2020 can be traced particularly clearly through the master's theses produced by our students. What topics and issues attracted young gender scholars in the 2000s, 2010s, and 2020s? How did their working conditions and the broader academic environment change with the development of new technologies and digital tools for data analysis? How do new theoretical frameworks

8 "Despite the rich history and valuable contributions to the field of gender studies and feminist theories within Belarusian discourse, the history of CGS remains almost invisible and overlooked, both locally and in research concerning the development of gender studies in Central and Eastern Europe" (Arcimovich and Reviaka 2026).

intersect with classical feminist theories in their research? How has the concept of "fieldwork" changed in the era of online communication? Is it even necessary to be in Belarus today to conduct research? And, last but not least, how have the events of 2020, followed by displacement and exile, intensified their interest in gender studies and shaped their research choices? Due to the space limitations of this publication, I cannot provide a detailed analysis here and will therefore confine myself to a few brief observations.

An overview of the Master's theses defended at the Gender Studies program at EHU reveals a clear epistemic shift before and after 2020. An important note: I took into consideration only those theses that were prepared by students from Belarus. Prior to 2020, students' research was largely oriented toward the analysis of gendered subjectivities, everyday practices, and social institutions within the Belarusian context. Dominant themes included family and intimacy, corporeality and medicalization, gendered labor and professional identities, media and cultural representations, and the gendered dimensions of state policies. Methodologically, these projects relied on qualitative interviews, discourse analysis, and ethnographic approaches conducted under conditions of access to the empirical field(s). From the perspective of feminist epistemology, this body of work exemplified knowledge grounded in embodied proximity, physical co-presence, and sustained engagement with local contexts[9].

Meanwhile, after 2020, the thematic orientation of students' research changed considerably. Gendered state violence, political repression and trauma studies emerged as central objects of inquiry, alongside studies of women's role in political protests of 2020, masculinities under authoritarianism, and the reshaping of gender discourse in Belarusian society and media. Forced migration (in particular of women with children) and psychosocial adaptation in new circumstances became key research areas, as some students themselves experienced displacement and sometimes several relocations. These shifts were accompanied by an increased focus on mediated activism and online infrastructures, as well as by the growing use of autoethnography and digital methods of research. It is also worth noting that during last

9 To substantiate my argument, I will offer several examples of Master's theses that could only have been conducted when the empirical field was accessible: "Challenging Tradition or Reproducing It? A Study of Minsk Clubs as Gender-Marked Spaces"; "The Socialization of Girls in Residential Care Institutions"; "Sexual Practices of Students in Vocational and Technical Education Institutions in a Contemporary Belarusian Provincial City"; "Invisible Labor: Conceptualizing Care Work for Relatives with Disabilities and Dementia in Belarus"; "Aging Cities: The Infrastructure of Old Age in Paternalistic Belarus".

years among our students there came more practicing psychologists (2–3 per year), who needed gender studies, as psychological and psychotherapeutic knowledge and skills were insufficient to understand the traumatic situations and depressions they work with. Therefore, one could argue that the master's theses defended after 2020, constitute a form of feminist knowledge produced from displacement, in which exile becomes an epistemic condition rather than a merely biographical circumstance.

Conclusion: situated knowledges under conditions of dis/location

Belarusian gender studies continue to develop, while having been displaced and deterritorialized. Exile has fractured previously existing infrastructures and produced new forms of precarity, yet it also opened the space for alternative research objects, practices, networks, and institutional affiliations. Returning to Haraway's notion of the privilege of partial perspective, I would argue that feminist knowledges produced in exile are marked by a particular ethical and political responsibility. The main question is how to remain engaged with gender research on Belarus while working at a distance and, at the same time, addressing the new challenges posed by relocation — including the gendered dimensions of migrant life.

Dis/placement, dis/location, and dis/engagement thus name not only the radically altered life circumstances and conditions of academic labor faced by Belarusian gender scholars, but also the contours of feminist research on nomadism, migration, and the politics of place. Conceptualizing exile as an epistemic condition makes it possible to rethink the experience of displacement and to reflect upon it within research practice at a situation when remaining in (one) place has ceased to be an available option and when there is no longer any "place like home".

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