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Environmental Migration: Ignorance Facing Climate Change and Mistreatment Toward Refugees
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Abstract
Climate change is causing climate forced migration—a situation in which individuals are involuntarily displaced. Displaced people are often treated inhumanely under the cynical pretense that their migration is voluntary. Despite this, the certainty and severity of human induced climate change continues to be undermined. A driving force behind such purportedly justified cruelty—at least regarding the feasibility of climate change influencing the perceived reckless notion of invasion by the climate refugees—pertains to ideologies which trace all so-called truths to a single other-worldly arbiter. In opposition to these ideologues stands an effort to shift the narrative away from such rationalizations in favor of emphasizing a vulnerability climate change poses to all people. A reorienting of the overall approach toward environmental migration would provide the conditions for simultaneously tackling climate change and empathizing with the climate refugees. A new, outcome-focused model—which emphasizes greater susceptibility to climate catastrophe—would more likely inspire a reexamination of motive to move: that is, to come to see just how climate refugees, content in residing in where they call home, do not effectively choose to leave, thereby shedding ideological justifications for inhumane treatment of all people who find themselves in positions of vulnerability. To justify this, we contrast the rejection of climate refugees in Kiribati with the welcoming of refugees in the Syrian Refugee Crisis. We argue that applying a version of Richard Rorty’s pragmatic approach to climate forced migration leads to improved outcomes that can be applied to these cases.

Keywords: Richard Rorty, pragmatism, refugees, climate change, literacy, climate forced migration, involuntary displacement, agency
Introduction

The issue, extrapolated by climate change, concerns the displacement of refugees as they are treated inhumanely under the contemptuous pretense that their migration is voluntary. A need exists for the reorientation of how we view this unfortunate displacement, the current one does not support an outcome-focused model but rather an emphasis on seeking truths which materialize from a single other-worldly arbiter. Climate refugees (our terminology to address “those seeking asylum” as there is climate migration which causes their situation) receive indignation when attempting to flee their current situations, not allowing for the continued safe residence in their home country. We argue that an orientation which accentuates greater susceptibility to climate catastrophe will allow for an adjustment in the examination directed towards climate refugees—cultivating a better outcome due to the resulting shedding of ideological justifications for the inhumane treatment of people who find themselves in positions of vulnerability.

The shift in how the world as a whole regard’s climate refugees should take root with action, action to treat those displaced with compassion and avoid a destructive agency justification. To this end, we are going to lay out our methodology. In section 1, we discuss the consequences of metaphysical realism, a philosophical orientation, which utilizes truth-seeking to define the course of life. Additionally, pragmatism, our suggested orientation, works to discover ways in which to allow for a better future while not objectifying current events. Section 2 involves solidifying the validity of climate change in its entirety, and how its occurrence perpetuates climate forced migration and climate refugee’s consequent displacement. Section 3 delves into the false notion of the displaced movement as voluntary, taking note of how the terms “refugee” and “migrant” are similar but generate vastly different connotations which all work towards supporting climate refugees’ inhumane treatment. Further, in section 4 we attach this inhumane treatment to a reintroduction of the driving factor of metaphysical realism—including an example highlighting the negative effects. Section 5 portrays the multiple definitions of literacy and how the language implemented has the power to alter thinking, and therefore, goals. One subset, environmental literacy, features how viewing certain events with knowledge in the ways in which they impact the Earth allows for the comprehension of its state and better achievement of sustainability in that aspect. Lastly, section 6 explains the positives to implementing a pragmatic approach for addressing climate forced migration which disregards the previous notion of an absolute truth.

Section 1

In delineating contributions to climate change perpetuation and the human toll from it, two philosophical orientations will be referenced. Foundationalism is a division of philosophy antithetical to pragmatism that attempts to escape the present by uncovering essential natures that construct a foundation of knowledge. This essentialism purports that the existence of the world and the objects therein are severed from human conception and needs. The deferral of action regarding the climate crisis—which has created this new and increasing form of human movement—is sustained by a worldview informed by essentialism, and regards the rapid depreciation of Earth’s environment as a predetermined future independent of human intervention. What follows is the realist conception that the crisis embeds a sense of inevitability, resulting in complacency and continuation. Conversely, the dismissal of a realist
acceptance of essentialism maintains a heightened sense of agency derived from a refusal to accept an immutable depiction of the world. Agency consistent with a Rortyan view of pragmatism proceeds parallel to a sense of literacy and empathy to Earth’s inhabitants—and not to some philosophical devotion to universal truths as posed by foundationalism.

Foundationalism seeks to “adjudicate claims of knowledge” (Rorty 84) into accurate and non-accurate representations of the “way the world really is” (Farrell 154), to restrict the discovery of knowledge and inquiry to a narrowly prescribed direction. The trajectory of inquiry is determined by the identification of essential natures of concepts and objects to justify further assertions, hence producing a foundation to progress toward objective truth. Foundationalism can be conceived of as a system of ultimate truth-seeking that endeavors to monopolize philosophical conceptions by offering singular theories about truth, knowledge, and human nature that are removed from historical or cultural contexts, to explicate human enterprises in relation to the universe. The removal of theories from their temporal backgrounds has an effect of grounding “elements of our practices on something external to these practices” (Rorty 728), resulting in the pursuit of non-human support for human projects, and instilling an other-worldly disposition. To perceive climate change foundationally serves as a first step to diminishing the involuntary nature of climate related migration and thus removing the issues from a problem-solving endeavor into one of misguided justification for complacency. A foundational interpretation of climate forced migration undermines individual agency and ultimately structural reform, thereby perpetuating the worsening conditions by elucidating the nature of the problem without nominating relevant this-worldly solutions.

Pragmatism, broadly, is a method for assessing the relative benefits and harms of practices by utilizing conversation to reach consensus. Claims to knowledge are not prioritized over others as genuine depictions of reality and instead are viewed as tools in achieving a specific goal. Within this scheme, truth is not the infallible purveyor of actuality, as suggested by foundationalism, “but a compliment paid to a well-justified belief” (Rorty 229), for truth and knowledge have no essential natures to be sought after. The approach attempts to reach a reasonable agreement within the respected undertaking to emphasize empathy to fellow participants, and not impart objectivity or accuracy for the sake of universal principles. Unlike foundationalism, historical contingencies are valued here, resulting in a kind of literacy that further bolsters cooperation. Thus, philosophy, as a foundational discipline, offers essentialist theories to encapsulate truth and fails to alter ethical and social practices. Pragmatism advances what realism rooted in foundationalism does not: a proposal to change the future rather than abandoning human concerns by looking for objective truths exonerated from human beliefs and needs. Pragmatism regards realism as a less worthy pursuit for attempting to “view the world from nowhere” (Rorty 68).

Our analysis is specifically informed by Rorty’s postmodern take of pragmatism. Postmodernism is defined by its opponents as a “hope for greater freedom and equality which mark[s] the recent history of the West [as] somehow deeply self-deceptive” (Rorty 307). Rorty notes that philosophers tend to inspect the West—shorthand for democratic tenets—from a detached distance as if it were a finalized project. This foundational appraisal is grounds for Rorty to review what he discerns as philosophy’s self-made academic isolation, contend that philosophy is not the discipline of cultural arbitration that acts as a “self-reflective transcendental subject” (West 201). Subsequently, a pragmatic conception of language and
literacy—a tool for dealing with the world—further dismantles philosophical categorizations, resulting in the disruption of the distinction between the humanities and natural and physical scientific inquiries. A vocabulary articulated by scientists might best capture nature but is not the essential language of nature. Further, Rorty’s anti-essentialism applies to beliefs and knowledge, allowing for a continuous redefinition of the self, theories, and practices—like what it means to be literate in its various connotations of the term. It is how Rorty denies “truth as correspondence to reality” (Rorty 228) and such a pragmatism accepts the “evolving descriptions and ever-changing versions of objects, things, and the world” (West 201). In sum, Rortyan pragmatism—and our position here—aims to assess “specific practices in light of the best available social theories, cultural critiques, and historiographical insights… to achieve certain moral consequences” (West 209).

As a substitute to essentialism, we, with Rorty, offer empathy by way of a pragmatic use of literacy to thwart realism’s justification of indifference, prejudice, and cruelty. The predilection toward empathy is tied to Rorty’s position that there ought be no attempt at establishing philosophical foundations; specifically, the approach to defeat malice invokes the ability to reimagine, redescribe, and reevaluate practices, where such a narrative’s power lies in acquaint[ing] people of different kinds with one another...to expand the reference of the terms ‘our kind of people’” (Rorty 357). The encouragement of such a disposition coincides with a cultural of literacy that champions the “narrative, detail, diversity.” (Rorty 313) to illustrate precise cases of suffering.

Section 2

Pernicious claims against the validity of climate change have created a dimension of mistrust within populations concerning expert consensus about the state of the atmosphere. The deceptive connotation involving the warming of Earth originates as an absurd suggestion. Devastating effects have already manifested in “higher temperatures, rising seas, unpredictable rainfall, and more acidic oceans” (UN Report 1). Moreover, without the adaption of efforts to combat climate change, the amount of people suffering from lack of a sufficient water source, for at least one month per year, will grow substantially from current rates of “3.6 billion to more than 5 billion by 2050” (UN Report 1). Unsettlement mounts when considering that politicians in positions of power publicly denounce such a phenomenon occurring while falsely accusing scientists of incorrect assumptions as to the state of the planet—Texas governor Rick Perry states, “There are a substantial number of scientists who have manipulated data so they will have dollars rolling into their projects” (Leiserowitz, Linden, Maibach, Rosenthal 1). Devising politization out of science undermines the “influence of consensus information” by allowing citizens to attain the means to “dismiss otherwise credible scientific evidence” (Leiserowitz, Linden, Maibach, Rosenthal 1). Climate change disproportionately affects all life and must not carry stigma of such invalid perceptions, especially pertaining to those with influential strength.

The act of seeking asylum is not limited to one’s personal choice, but also comes to fruition by means of force outside of direct human initiation. Climate forced migration poses an imminent issue as 84% of those seeking refuge apply for applications due to an increase of 1 degree Celsius in their home country, and 99% apply for immigration applications if the weather warms by 4-5 degrees Celsius (Missirian and Schlenker 3). The people inflicted by the
warming of the climate leave because their place of residence undergoes such a rate of inhabitability, influenced by distress derived from weather shocks. There exists a statistically significant relationship between asylum seeking and exogenous weather conditions, and this relationship projects a 28% increase of climate refugees by the end of the century (Missirian and Schlenker 3). The persistence of the warming of the climate adds a threat multiplier to those seeking refugee as they must respond to the environment by leaving their place of residence, consequently spilling over into developed countries and not remaining an isolated incident—which does not create room for those not enduring the same conditions to ignore.

Deprivement of livelihoods and personal property due to climate forced migration prompts the phenomena of such displacements as those afflicted face weakened social capital and connections within their initial residence (Christensen and Harild 4). The environmental degradation pushes refugees into situations which sanction an unfamiliarity of new surroundings (Christensen and Harild 10). The scenarios derived from displacement transpires as increased risk of food insecurity, morbidity and mortality, along with social marginalization (Christensen and Harild 11). Unfavorable occurrences commence when displacement materializes from climate change, the deterioration of prevailing ways of life by the forceful relocation from people’s properties. A cycle of vulnerability develops as “access to services, such as education and health, becomes exceedingly difficult” (Christensen and Harild 11), and as the departure matures not by choice, necessary documents and affairs do not always have the luxury of organization. The weight of displacement from uprooting all understood conveniences proves damaging as the urgency required may not allocate to certain individuals.

Section 3

Refugees can be defined as “persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution.” On the other hand, migrants leave their homes to improve living scenarios—finding better education or jobs—rather than being forced due to threats on their lives. (“Refugee vs. migrant”). Refugees face perilous situations forcing them out of their countries, typically into neighboring ones, bringing forth the urgency of their external sanctuary which otherwise would result in dangerous circumstances—this results in the international recognition as a refugee. In contrast to refugees, migrants can return home safely, as their reasons for leaving are to improve their conditions rather than fleeing from danger, which is dealt with politically in terms of a country’s own policies and laws. (“Refugee vs. migrant”). Regarding climate change, a climate refugee would be fleeing from climate forced conditions with external departure whereas a climate migrant indicates that departure is due to wanting to find environmentally improved living locations, but this is “not necessarily forced” (“Let’s Talk about Climate Migrants”). For our purpose, we will refer to these people as climate refugees.

The way in which these climate refugees are perceived tends to predict the acceptance of the displaced by the resides of the refuge country, lesser of a chance, especially, regarding when victims of the warming climate may sustain the label of a “security threat” by those harboring underlying political justifications (Munoz 4). Most negativity, surrounding the uprooting derived from consequences of indirect human behavior, stem from the reason one gives for the so-called infringement of rights, whether the move possess a voluntary or involuntary motive—displacement due to climate change encompassing the latter. The utilization of agency does not apply to the climate forced migration which acts as a choice,
ignoring the pressure inflicted from the alteration of current territory (Munoz 6). The narrative that besets traditional asylum seekers is extrapolated for displaced people as well, even though the cases differ significantly by the need of relocation, and on the opposite end, the want (Munoz 10). The unwillingness of countries to accept that those seeking asylum have that inclination due to factors outside of choice dictates the rate in which people accept those suffering—if that empathy does not sustain, an air of disdain results.

Generalizing all refugees attests to the number of merciless attitudes towards climate refugees, the framing in which those thoughts generate comprise of roots in xenophobia—or the “attitudes, prejudices, and behavior that reject, exclude, or vilify based on the perception that they are outsiders” (Niang 2). The notion of “we do not want them in our country” enlists a sense of superiority, compared to the helpless others, which enables inhumane treatment of refugees (Niang 16). Viewing those impacted as seeking asylum voluntarily, rather than with the lens of by force and the opposition to do so in the first place, enables a negative perspective in which the construed view implies that the people carry an economic burden by peculating money and their sense of prosperity (Niang 17). The unsupported inclination for people to exonerate themselves of any malfeasance, regarding resisting climate refugee’s asylum, ensues from the discernment of agency.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) represent nations that embody smaller sizes, possess limited natural resources, and endure relative isolation (Dreher and Voyer 62). The effects of climate change do not occur evenly throughout the world, that notion increases the instance where richer countries (that do not see rising sea levels and lack of resources) can deny SIDS of refuge by mentioning how the warming of the climate does not pose a major threat (McNamara 45). Therein lies a scapegoat for countries to latch onto, implying that since the warming of the climate does not pose an imminent issue for them, although SIDS experience the brunt of the effects, there resides no reason other than choice for refugees to seek asylum (McNamara 47).

One of such, Kiribati, deals directly with the altering of the climate as “coastal erosion, prolonged drought, saltwater intrusion into groundwater, and decline in availability of seafood resources” offer just a glimpse into what this country suffers through (Dreher and Voyer 69). Australia, as it is located within a proximity to Kiribati, does not offer aid because they regard Kiribati’s resort to migrate as a resignment in attempting to combat climate change (McNamara 50). Therefore, the people do not exhibit compassion to Kiribati as they believe that more can be done to ensure their country persists, seeing the seeking of asylum as defeat, a choice, and not worthy of help (McNamara 51). The unwillingness of countries, like Australia, to assist countries suffering from climate forced migration, like Kiribati, clearly enables a sense of resistance to refugees as they hold the belief that the situation is not terribly dire and that the people are just not doing enough to combat the change, just attempting to take the easy way out by relocating elsewhere.

Section 4

The theoretical alignment of metaphysical realism materializes when discussing situations pertaining to a lack of compassion exhibited to displaced persons. A sense of inevitability develops as this orientation to view the world produces a thinking that parallels a world in which life is preordained- there exists a truth cultivated by a higher power which works
in ways only those enlightened can decipher (Rorty 308). Thus, climate forced migration came into fruition by means outside of humanity, and the ways in which people view the alteration in the weather compares to the voluntary acts of leaving and entering a country of such that does not bear similar conditions. Rorty would counter such statement by discerning how every individual has the right to be understood, not signaling an abstract notion such as “humanity” or “higher power” that trumps all thought—doing so by critiquing cases in which people faced suffering while others ignored the anguish (Rorty 318). Further, foundationalist views indicate how the choice to depart falls on the people affected, prompting the lack of support by those in dissimilar arrangements to conjure an excuse obtained by declaring voluntary movement (Rorty 312). The philosophers that distinguish foundationalist views perceive climate refugees as leaving on their own accord, choosing to accept part of the story—that is, people wishing to enter a different country which omits the reason of an uninhabitable environment.

The inclination for terms to designate situations of refugees in relation to the climate paints an image of agency, the choice given compared to a forcible push correlating to the displacement of refugees—foundationalism residing with the former. To elaborate, prioritizing “knowledge” of climate change foregoes Kiribati’s refugees’ experiences as invalid as they do not depict the truth that countries, like Australia, sustain (Dreher and Voyer 63). The media also enjoys “the power of constructing reality”, which determines the social world—allowing foundationalist views to conclude that their story is gospel, and the people should listen to what they believe as to what is occurring in Kiribati (Dreher and Voyer 60). A “truth” is constructed under foundational guidance which configures scenarios of climate change and the severity of such a phenomenon (Dreher and Voyer 65). The view referenced portrays how Australians could address Kiribati climate refugees in an unapologetic manner with the terms utilized to express climate change.

The succeeding turmoil ensued from a foundational orientation to view the world stems from the belief that an all-encompassing truth can be concluded from world events (Rorty 314). Especially, how climate change can be up for debate while countries, like the SIDS, or Kiribati, currently deal with the effects of a warming atmosphere. More concerning yet, utilizing SIDS as proof of climate change allows for fundamentalists to justify such an occurrence by incorporating a frame of “something hidden and underlying which secretly determines the course of human affairs” (Rorty 314). This orientation suggests the effects of climate change should sustain without any effort, or need, to combat it as the natural disaster was bound to happen in the first place—suggesting that their right to exist is somehow diminished compared to wealthier nations who have the power to change the narrative in the media, and therefore public comprehension (Dreher and Voyer 69). The outlook of foundationalism generates a misguided tendency for people to objectively view climate change as originating from a source outside of human control, although there are ways in which the warming can be dealt with, which cultivates lack of support for climate refugees. The misguided inclination can be construed to represent a differing perception than reality presents, consequently forging a
misreading of the event. That notion correlates with a lack of sustainable information, a phenomenon which a good reading of situations can account for.

**Section 5**

The most elementary level of reading consists of using characters to formulate words and then sentences. The point of reading though is to engage with others and to make sense of the world by communicating ideas via the written word. This also involves orientating oneself to the world, be it foundational or pragmatic. For us, we associate more compassion with a better outcome. With this in mind, we can extend literacy as a concept for action beyond reading and writing. The definition has adapted to having extensive knowledge and the ability to innovate new forms of knowledge in any discipline. (Roth 3) One theory surrounding literacy is viewing it in terms of multiple discourses in which language is used to make meaning in a variety of social or cultural settings. Therefore, the addition of an adjective can be used to specify a specific discourse (Roth 4). Based off literacy being present in a sociocultural setting, it can be seen to have certain characteristics: being created through social practices, used to reach social and cultural goals, and having the capability of change. (Perry 5) In these ways, the diversity of the possible applications of the term literacy allows one to use it in applying understanding and innovative skills to a variety of disciplines.

Due to the applicability of literacy to multiple situations, one discourse that an individual can be literate in is the environment. Environmental literacy is the ability to “perceive, appropriately interpret, and value the specific state, dynamics, and potential of the environmental system, as well as to take appropriate action to maintain, restore, or improve these states.” (Scholz et al. xviii). Environmental literacy can be determined through the observation of behaviors such as being knowledgeable about the state of the environment, seeking for ways to improve environmental systems to minimize negative effects, and applying scientific analytical thinking toward human systems to address environmental issues on scales ranging from molecular to international. (Roth 13-14) Thus, one form of literacy is environmental literacy that enables a mindset to appreciate the structural magnitude of a deteriorating environment.

Although environmental literacy allows for understanding and appreciating severity, to better understand the state of the environment, first we must discuss what exactly is environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability can be defined as “maintaining or improving the integrity of the Earth’s life supporting systems.” (Moldan et al. 4-6). In order to conserve environmental systems, the following conditions must be met: removing the correlation between economic growth and environmental concerns, effective control over natural resources to improve energy conservation, a foundation of essential needs such as happiness, independence, and health to allow for the emergence of the desire to satisfy unsatisfied needs and creating environmental policies globally. (Moldan et al. 4-6). Recognizing how far away the world is from environmental sustainability allows one to realize that the deteriorating environment causes climate forced migration. This mindset enables one to overcome prejudice toward climate refugees by adapting an environmental sentimentality.

One example where a nation adapted a sentimentality to overcome prejudice is during the Syrian Refugee Crisis. The Syrian Refugee Crisis started in March 2011 due to governmental resistance toward public demonstrations which escalated to a civil war. According to a United
Nations report, since the beginning of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, “more than 6.6 million Syrians have been forced to flee their country” (“Syrian Refugee Crisis Explained”). In response to numerous refugees, primarily in 2015, countries within Europe in solidarity welcomed the refugees. By overcoming prejudice to form a new sentiment, residents within Europe undertook numerous actions to aid the Syrian refugees such as supplying food, clothes, and other gifts in addition to applauding the refugees as they entered their nation in the cities Vienna and Munich. Austrian rail workers loyally pledged to transport Syrian refugees to safer asylums regardless of receiving payment. (Petersen-Smith) Therefore, Europe’s welcoming of Syrian refugees during the Syrian refugee crisis is one example where new sentiments were used to accept refugees.

Section 6

Europe “read” the Syrian Refugee Crisis well, leading to several nations welcoming the refugees. Conversely put, Europe did not commit “falling victim to can’t”. Falling victim to can’t is when a person accepts a truth, believing that they have sufficient knowledge for making a decision. Those who fall victim to can’t are likely to be attracted to an argumentative style that prioritizes knowledge and rationality which are used for justifying that they have sufficient knowledge (Rorty 392). These foundationalists reveal themselves to be illiterate as they lack awareness of other perspectives. Rorty explains how fictional writing encourages a greater sense of autonomy within the minds of the readers in comparison to philosophical works (Rorty 389). Unlike argumentative writing, novels allow for creative thought processing, as result of these heightened mental possibilities, an individual becomes less reliant on searching for an absolute truth. On the other hand, when information is presented in an argumentative way, it causes readers to presume that the perspective of the writer is an absolute truth causing them to close themselves off to all other perspectives and thus become more likely to fall victim to can’t (Rorty 392). Alternatively, Rorty suggests that decisions should be made with awareness, understanding the point of view of the individual that will be affected by their actions (Rorty 394). Overall, pragmatism serves to demonstrate the growth that readers receive through fictional works that is otherwise sacrificed by argumentative writing.

Applying the above, prejudice toward refugees uses negative emotions toward refugees to incentivize individuals to neglect the refugees’ perspectives and ignore their displacement. Seeking a reason why the refugees were displaced, search for an absolute truth, thus labeling their displacement as voluntary. This notion resembles Rorty’s concept of falling victim to can’t because prejudice is preventative of searching for new knowledge and increasing rationality. On the topic of climate forced migration, falling victim to can’t can also lead to nations believing that they have sufficient knowledge on the topic and therefore have the right to make the decision of whether to welcome the climate refugees (Rorty 392). During the Syrian Refugee Crisis, millions of Syrian refugees were displaced from their homes yet were welcomed by several European nations displaying the act of overcoming prejudice to form a new compassionate sentiment welcoming the refugees. (“Syrian Refugee Crisis Explained”) Similarly, pragmatism aligns with compassionate understanding as it proposes that multiple perspectives should be acknowledged when making a decision, specifically the consequences facing those who will be affected (Rorty 394). Thus, pragmatism aligns with welcoming climate refugees and viewing their displacement as involuntary.
We argue that applying a pragmatic perspective to the issue of climate forced migration leads to an improved outcome. When several European nations welcomed the Syrian war refugees, they welcomed the refugees and underwent numerous actions to ease their journey. (Petersen-Smith). Undergoing these actions aligns with Rorty because welcoming the refugees mirrors acknowledging other perspectives, specifically the solidarity the nations provided in distributing resources to those that were displaced and unable to return home. In order to arrive at the conclusion of welcoming the refugees, these nations also had to recognize that they did not have sufficient knowledge of the situation; therefore, they were able to recognize that the Syrian refugees’ displacement may have been involuntary, leading again to recognizing other perspectives and ultimately welcoming the war refugees— an improved outcome for the Syrians (Rorty 389-392). Thus, applying Rorty to the Syrian Refugee Crisis demonstrates how a pragmatic reading could contribute to improved sentiments like compassionate understanding and solidarity, and an improved set of circumstances experienced by the Syrians.

War has a parallel to natural disasters due to how both scenarios evoke involuntary displacement due to unlivable conditions, showing that the situation of welcoming war refugees can also be applied to climate refugees. While applying pragmatism to climate forced migration in order to achieve the best outcome— compassion and solidarity flourishes— one must be environmentally literate and thereby environmentally knowledgeable. Such a person would understand the severity of natural disasters and thus be more willing to acknowledge climate forced migration as involuntary (Scholz et al. xviii). Although examples demonstrating the welcoming of climate refugees are scarce, a pragmatic approach could be applied to these cases. Progressively global warming has been increasing in severity. During the 2015 Paris climate agreement, “world leaders agreed... to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius... above levels in the late 19th century”, but this threshold is expected to be reached in the 2030s (“Code Red: UN Scientists”). Climate change will continue to worsen and developing countries located in tropical areas will be the most affected (Rosen). To take account for these future circumstances, nations must increase their environmental literacy to have the best response— using Rorty’s pragmatism— when faced with an increase in climate forced migration. Overall, pragmatism can be applied to climate forced migration and used in future circumstances as climate forced migration becomes more prevalent.

Conclusion

We argue that applying a pragmatic lens— as opposed to a foundationalist one— to climate forced migration leads to improved results. In section 1, we define and list the consequences of metaphysical realism while exploring the advantages of pragmatism. In section 2, we discuss the validity of climate change, and how it causes climate forced migration. Section 3 involves the false belief that viewing the climate refugees’ displacement as voluntary contributes to their inhumane treatment. Section 4 shows how climate forced migration aligns with foundationalism and includes an example to demonstrate its consequences. Section 5 explores literacy and how environmental literacy leads to adapting a sentimentality toward the environment. Section 6 discusses the benefits of applying pragmatism to climate forced migration and explores its future applications. Overall, we have highlighted the perpetuating issue of climate change to show that viewing climate forced migration as voluntary which runs parallel to foundationalism leads to treating the climate refugees inhumanely. We then offered
an opposing lens that aligns with adapting a sentimentality to overcome prejudice and welcome the refugees ultimately leading to an improved outcome.
Works Cited


