

Deter, Detain, Dehumanise

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Deter, Detain, Dehumanise: The Politics of Seeking Asylum

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Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL.

First edition 2024

Editorial matter and selection © 2024 Rachel Sharples and Linda Briskman.
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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83753-225-4 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-83753-224-7 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-83753-226-1 (Epub)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

To those who have spoken out, to those who have been silenced, and to those who have lost their lives under punitive and de-humanising policies and practices.

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About the Editors

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Linda Briskman holds the Margaret Whitlam Chair of Social Work at Western Sydney University. She is co-author of the award-winning book *Human Rights Overboard* (Scribe, 2008). She has published more than 10 books, including the co-authored *Human Rights and Social Work* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), the co-edited *Indigenous Health Ethics: An Appeal to Human Rights* (World Scientific, 2021), the co-edited *Social Work in the Shadow of the Law* (Federation Press, 2018) and *Social Work with Indigenous Communities: A Human Rights Approach* (Federation Press, 2014). She has authored more than 100 academic publications on human rights issues and published in *Arena*, *The Conversation* and written opinion pieces in ABC's *The Drum*, as well as for international media outlets. She has won awards for her writing, research and advocacy.

About the Contributors

Hani Abdile is a writer and spoken word poet based in the country of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, in Sydney. She was forced to leave her home country of Somalia and came to Australia seeking protection in 2014. During her 11 months in immigration detention, she found healing in poetry and developed a love for writing. Her first book of 43 poems, *I Will Rise*, was published by Writing Through Fences in 2016 and explores how the power of our collective voices can help shape the world to be a better place, for the next generation.

Barat Ali Batoor is a multi-award-winning photographer and filmmaker. His photographs were exhibited across the world including the United States, Europe, Asia and Australia. His works have been published in *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian*, *Stern*, *India Today*, *Risk Magazine*, *The Global Mail*, *The Daily Mail*, *The West Australian*, *Strategic Review* and others. His documentary film *Batoor: A Refugee Journey* won an award for the 'Best Director' at the Melbourne Documentary Film Festival. The film was also nominated for the 2021 Walkley Documentary Award.

Behrouz Boochani is a Kurdish-Iranian writer, journalist, scholar, cultural advocate and filmmaker. His book, *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison* won the 2019 Victorian Prize for Literature. He has also won the Special Award at the NSW Premier's Literary Awards, the Australian Book Industry Award for Nonfiction Book of the Year and the National Biography Prize. It has been published in 19 languages in 24 countries and is currently being adapted for both stage and screen. His most recent book is *Freedom, Only Freedom*. He was a political prisoner incarcerated by the Australian government in Papua New Guinea for almost seven years. In November 2019, he escaped to New Zealand and now resides in Wellington.

Kate Coddington is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and Planning at the University at Albany. She is a feminist political geographer whose research examines how the experiences of increasing numbers of forced migrants who fall outside the protections of asylum law illuminate changing dimensions of border enforcement, mobility and sovereignty. Current research involves exploring the role of public information campaigns in border enforcement, the gaps in refugee governance in the Asia-Pacific region and the role of impoverishment and destitution in migration control policies.

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Julie Macken is an Adjunct Fellow in the School of Social Sciences at Western Sydney University. She completed her PhD into the question surrounding Australia's abuse of those who came seeking the state's protection. She has worked as a Documentary Film Writer and Senior Writer with the *Australian Financial Review*; worked as Political and Media Consultant to Federal Labor and NSW Greens and has worked in media for Greenpeace and ActionAid. Her research focussed on the psycho-analytic drivers of Australia's abuse.

Julia Morris is Associate Professor of International Studies at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. She holds a PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology from the University of Oxford, where she was a research student at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society. Her research focusses on the political economy of migration and outsourced asylum regimes, from ethnographic fieldwork in Nauru, Australia and Geneva to research projects in Jordan and Guatemala. She has published widely and is the author of *Asylum and Extraction in the Republic of Nauru* (Cornell University Press, 2023).

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Anthea Vogl is an Associate Lecturer at the University of Technology Sydney Faculty of Law. Her research addresses refugee and immigration law, and racialised forms of regulation of non-citizens and the border. She is currently co-leading an Australian Research Council Discovery Project examining the privatisation of refugee reception and resettlement and she is the author of *Judging Refugees: Narrative and Oral Testimony in Refugee Status Determination* (Cambridge University Press, 2024).

Foreword

Let's start with this image: two tiny islands in the middle of a huge ocean and much further away, another big island, a continent. People who escaped persecution, discrimination and war sought asylum in the big island. But they got rejected and were banished to the tiny islands and jailed there. Politicians in the big island thought that by banishing them, they would be out of sight and out of mind. But years later, refugees in the small islands challenged the big island – mostly through art, writing and collective resistance like hunger strikes and protests which have become visible on public platforms. This is just an abstract of Australia's policy towards refugees in recent years and how refugees challenge it through narrating.

Refugees in Manus Island and Nauru have not only resisted in order to survive but built a knowledge of resistance or 'resistance knowledge'. This knowledge is the way refugees exist, resist and introduce themselves into the world. The knowledge of how refugees have resisted oppressive powers is a good way to analyse and understand Australian politics and society.

It is crucial that when we talk about these refugees, we recognise that they have distanced themselves from simply being victims of cruel refugee policies. Beyond being in a position of bearing witness to and experiencing cruelty, they have also created their own discourse and this is the main part of this resistance knowledge. When I talk of resistance knowledge, I don't just mean refugees, but also those people in and out of Australia who have been standing up for refugee rights and working with refugees, and who are also part of this discourse.

It is a collective resistance and collaboration to introduce a unique and radical perspective towards politics and Australia's political culture. It is an epidemiology of people who have been dehumanised for decades in the public and the prison camps.

Refugees in Australia's detention system have not only exposed the cruelty of this regime but have challenged the dehumanisation process and the idea that refugees are less than other people. Dehumanisation is the most important concept in this context that we should know and be aware of, because only through the process of dehumanisation is it possible to create such a tragedy. Dehumanisation begins in the context of language and fighting against this process still happens in the context of language. Refugees are first criminalised in language. They are introduced as a threat against national security in language first so that it's easier to normalise keeping people in indefinite detention and exile them, while the public accepts it. The concept of 'boat people', 'illegal refugees' and 'offshore processing centre' are keywords entered into the popular language to justify or

normalise Australia's detention system. The established media have also used words like 'rapists', 'drug dealers' and 'potential terrorists' to describe refugees. The refugees in Australia have challenged this language and created their own.

This book is another attempt to challenge this prejudiced language. It tries to understand the differing aspects of Australia's detention system and expose the different layers of it. To understand this system, we need an inter-disciplinary approach, because Manus and Nauru happened in the context of Australia's colonial mentality. In other words, we can say it is the unconscious side of Australia. This book is not only academic but is also a part of collective collaboration and collective resistance knowledge. This is a critical piece of work to analyse the Australian detention industry and expose different layers of it, but at the same time, decolonise the language and narrative about refugees to create a fundamental change.

Behrouz Boochani

Acknowledgements

The idea of this book started with a symposium we organised in October 2020, *The Politicisation of Seeking Asylum: Manus Prison Theory and Australia's Response to Asylum Seekers*. We were looking for a way to build on a significant body of work that already existed around Australia's offshore detention practices and its treatment of asylum seekers. We decided on the broad theme of the politicisation of seeking asylum, because it spoke to the very deliberate and calculated approach governments have taken towards those seeking asylum, not only here in Australia but globally. We believe this issue is a multi-faceted one, that it does, and will, require a multi-pronged approach, and so we brought together speakers from a range of disciplines: political science, geography, law, sociology, social work, criminology, who often work in interdisciplinary ways, to bring their own knowledge to the problem.

Over 500 people attended the online symposium which took place deep into the first year of COVID-19. They came from many countries across the world. We want to thank them for turning up on such an important global issue, at a time when they could easily have claimed fear, uncertainty and exhaustion. We'd also like to thank our partners in that symposium, the Challenging Racism Project and the Diversity and Human Rights Research Centre at Western Sydney University and Academics for Refugees, and the presenters and panellists, who evoked thoughtful, passionate and innovative discussions: Alison Mountz, Behrouz Boochani, Omid Tofghian, Anne McNevin, Andrew Burrridge, Maria Giannacopoulos, Claire Loughnan, Julie Macken, Claudia Tazreiter, Philomena Murray and Anthea Vogl. Many of these presenters have contributed chapters to this book, and we thank them for their commitment and continued support of this work. We'd also like to thank additional contributors who brought unique and powerful insights to the topic: Kate Coddington, Michelle Jasmin Dimasi, Julia Morris and Bosco Opi.

We felt strongly that this book should also include creative pieces from refugees and people seeking asylum. Barat Ali Batoor and Hani Abdile generously gave us their extraordinary written words that captured their experiences and hopes. Lived experience is vitally important to these discussions, but it also takes an incredible personal toll, and we appreciate the generosity with which Batoor and Hani gave their words and their time.

We'd like to thank the School of Social Sciences at Western Sydney University for their ongoing support of our work. This includes institutional, financial and collegial support. In particular, we would like to mention our colleagues and

friends at the Challenging Racism Project, and Kate Huppertz and the School Research Committee.

Cymbeline Buhler and Lucy Fiske offered important editorial reviews and feedback which we thank them for. We'd also like to thank our publisher, Emerald Publishing, and, in particular, Iram Satti, Lauren Kammerdeiner, Daniel Ridge and Brindha Thirunavukkarasu. This was not an easy book to find a home for, and their enthusiasm and commitment to the ideas in this book were evident from day one.

Behrouz Boochani and Omid Tofighian were instrumental to the ideas generated in this book. Their critical thinking around Australia's offshore detention policies and the Australian government's treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum have brought important language and knowledge to this topic. We thank them both for their generosity and intellect and their support of this book. We are particularly fortunate to have Behrouz write the Foreword for this book.

And finally, we would like to acknowledge the many, many people seeking asylum who have suffered under the Australian government's detention policies. Those who have spoken out, those who have been silenced, those who lost their lives under this hardline, punitive and de-humanising policy and practice. Because they dared to hope for something better. Their courage and their humanity must be remembered and celebrated.

Introducing the Politics of Deterrence, Detainment and Dehumanisation

Linda Briskman and Rachel Sharples

Western Sydney University, Australia

The number of displaced people throughout the world steadily increases with the rise in global conflicts, internal oppression, and denial of human rights. Correspondingly, receiving nations are becoming increasingly immune to the contexts of suffering as borders tighten to prevent entry of those seeking sanctuary. Under the pretext of humanitarianism towards refugee flows, the reality is that bordering practices not only prevent people from seeking haven but also inflict cruelty and harm. It is within this global context that this collection of chapters emerges, with the focus on Australia as an unfortunate ‘leader’ in privileging border security over humanitarian considerations. Despite a robust advocacy movement, media exposure of denial of human rights, academic research and refugee voices, successive governments have not relented. There is a continuum of strategies, where government deterrence practices and the growth of the detention industry have sought to strip people seeking asylum of their humanity.

Overview

The chapters in this edited collection arise from an October 2020 global online symposium on the Politics of Seeking Asylum. The symposium and the collection were inspired by the Manus Prison Theory developed by Behrouz Boochani, who was detained on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, and Omid Tofighian. With Manus Prison Theory Boochani and Tofighian articulated a philosophical undertaking with devastating real-world applicability.¹ It is an ideology that

¹Boochani and Tofighian have written extensively on Manus Prison Theory and Australia’s border-industrial complex, together and individually. Their work gives a far more thorough rendering of the theory than we do justice to here. For example, see *No Friend But the Mountains* (2020), *Freedom, Only Freedom* (2023), ‘Manus Prison Theory’ (*The Saturday Paper*, 2018), ‘The Last Days in Manus Prison’ (*Meanjin*, 2018), ‘Behrouz Boochani and the Manus Prison Narratives’ (*Continuum*, 2018) and Boochani’s journalism in *The Guardian*, particularly around the closure of the Manus Regional Processing Centre in 2017.

works to suppress the opportunity ‘to know’ about what was going on inside Australia’s offshore detention facilities and the structural violence that fed it, but also to know the people who were being harmed. It describes a system, carceral by nature, intended to deter, detain and dehumanise through multiple intersecting dominations, submissions and oppressions; Boochani and Tofighian have used the term *kyriarchy* to help describe these functions.¹⁻² Importantly, Manus Prison Theory positions this system as an extension of the Australian colonial-settler state, a stance that is examined by many of the authors in this collection as they seek to connect a contemporary system of politicisation and dehumanisation with foundational practices of violence and oppression.

There is a call to action that can also be found in Boochani’s writing, something we have been mindful of in this edited collection. As Tofighian writes in his reflection at the end of *No Friend But the Mountains*, ‘His [Behrouz]’ intention has always been to hold a mirror up to the system, dismantle it, and produce a historical record to honour those who have been killed and everyone who is still suffering.’² In a small way, this book also intends to hold that mirror up, to expose the system that has underpinned Australia’s border-industrial complex, and to dismantle it, in order to know and to practice a more humane approach to the right to seek asylum.

Most of the chapters in this edited collection are written by academics with a long-standing interest in refugee studies and with a critical approach to practices of deterrence, detention and dehumanisation. They each provide understanding and critical assessment of policies towards people seeking asylum as a series of systems, structures and operations that seek to normalise practices that betray human rights norms and a culture of morality. In this way, they point to a betrayal of what is expected in countries that purport to be liberal democracies and committed to the rule of law. In the Australian political context, the injustices meted out to innocent people who have been detained in the sites of Nauru, Manus and Christmas Island speak volumes to how far a government will go to deny entry into a country that claims to be advanced in supporting refugee settlement.

As we prepare this book for publication in November 2023, the Australian High Court has ruled that Australia’s system of indefinite immigration detention is unlawful, overturning this long-standing practice. The ruling meant that those who have languished in indefinite detention, some for many, many years, without the government’s preferred prospect of relocation to other countries, are mandated for release. The days that followed this ruling saw the media and both the ruling Labor Party and the opposition Liberal Party collude in portraying many of those released as hardened criminals. Stooping to populism, the Labor Government rushed measures through the federal parliament to further dehumanise and criminalise those they had been forced to allow into the community. These included surveillance through wearing ankle bracelets, curfews and strict reporting conditions.

The chapters in this book are not merely academic, but are presented in an accessible form of writing that engages with the politics that underpin the policies and practices of managing asylum. They are intended to pique the interest of

²Boochani, B. (2020). *No friend But the Mountains* (p. 373). Picador.

advocates and others in the community wishing to inform themselves about how the right to seek asylum has been politicised. Although the Australian context is centred, the volume touches upon how the politicisation of asylum has taken hold in other countries. This is an insidious and perhaps predictable outcome of Australia's offshore detention policy. Slogans, practices, policies, laws and government rhetoric get used for manipulation of public sentiment that has shaped Australia's response to people seeking asylum. They have now informed how countries like the United Kingdom, France, the United States, Greece, Italy and Poland are responding to their own refugee flows. The practice of offshoring and pushing responsibility for refugees away from Western states has also gained traction, with poorer source and host countries being drawn into the messy work that obfuscates human rights and accountability. Australia has developed the blueprint for the contemporary systems and operations of immigration detention. The increasingly evident risk we are now seeing is the way this is becoming an established norm in defiance of international obligations to protect human rights.

For a time, it was Western academic writing and the work of activists, not necessarily mutually exclusive, that dominated the asylum seeker space, particularly at the peak of immigration detention in Australia where the voices of those detained were directly silenced. Increasingly, film, art and other creative pieces have entered the public domain as well as academic writing stemming from the Global South. The power of lived experiences supplements the collection. When the writing does not draw on lived experiences, it largely draws on the author's attempts as allies to re-humanise those who have been dehumanised. The dehumanisation of people seeking asylum has become so normalised in the national narrative that it goes unquestioned. Some of the authors draw on refugee narratives to illustrate their arguments, while others who have borne witness to the suffering of those who seek asylum present their conversations and observations. With this in mind, we begin and end with autobiographical refugee stories. The conceptualisation of the book around themes of deterrence, detainment and dehumanisation, while not new, contains illustrative case study chapters that reveal current reflections into the structural framings of asylum. A feature of the interdisciplinarity of the book is that it values different styles of voice from social science disciplines to journalism to law and ethnographic observation. Furthermore, the positioning from a range of disciplines including sociology, geography, law, political science and social work reveals how different lenses converge to provide political analyses of oppressive structures and systems.

Despite the diversity proffered in the collection, consistent themes emerge. The first is a neo-colonial stance that goes hand in hand with the measures adopted by Western governments. Australia stands out as an example of a colonial grip. The trajectory from Indigenous dispossession, invasion and colonisation that set the scene for white Australia has never been totally erased, and the tropes of white Australia have not been eliminated. This has been reproduced in forms of neo-colonialism that result in exploitation in offshore detention where Australia has provided financial incentives to economically challenged countries to do its bidding.

The scourge of racism, a further emergent construct is a powerful force for exclusion. Corresponding with this is fear and panic about those 'not like us' who

are seen as a threat not only to Australia's security but our way of life. Insidiously, racism is an enabler for deaths at sea. How the nation state rhetorically justifies lamenting deaths at sea while instituting harsh measures is a conundrum that the authors grapple with. Nation-states across the globe continue to invest vast sums of money into deterrence that repeats the cycle of drownings rather than providing safe means of passage as a solution. What is perceived as a crisis is in reality a continuum of displacement in an increasingly unequal and troubled world.

A further theme is the power of neoliberalism which has hold on how governments use capitalist ideology to justify the infliction of harms including outsourcing torture through lucrative contracts in the spheres of security, logistics and health. These align with Australia's ideological approach to people seeking asylum. Where there is an array of state and non-state actors, the capacity to pinpoint the sources of harm is obfuscated and commercial-in-confidence provisions disallow transparency and information flows. Within the neoliberal construct, money is no object even though the financial resources poured into deterrence, including detention, do not necessarily achieve the aims of the government or its citizens.

What is apparent from the contributions, each with their own specific research focus, is that although there are shifts in policies and practices and changes in government, the underlying ideologies that result in dehumanisation have been immovable. More broadly, states that portray themselves as bastions of liberal human rights, particularly in the West, are guilty of imposing inhuman practices that deny the humanity of the dehumanised and those rendered rightsless. The photos that accompany many of the narratives illustrate this intransigence.

The Collection

The chapters begin with a refugee story from accomplished writer and photographer, Barat Ali Batoor, whose own experience of seeking asylum inspired his writing. Through Batoor, we are taken into the precarious position of refugees in Indonesia where money changes hands to facilitate a journey to safety. Although filled with hope for a safe future, the fear of those in this limbo setting is palpable, balanced by reflections on what they have fled as an oppressed minority of Hazara in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The roles of those known as 'people smugglers' in assisting passage to safety, precarious as this may be, is in sharp relief to government proclamations of those who move people as solely malevolent. What shines from Batoor's account is a determination to escape his persecution and to reclaim his future.

The following scene-setting chapter by Rachel Sharples and Linda Briskman provides a theoretical, historical and political overview of the racialisation of refugees in the Australian context. It does so through examining racialised bordering and how this intersects with criminalisation through a national security lens. An overarching policy through edicts of successive governments is the exclusion of refugees from the nation state by means of punitive measures that fly in the face of Australia's dominant portrayal to the world as a successful multicultural nation. This chapter also foreshadows chapters that follow by calling out the colonial mindset of the Australian state that originated with racialisation and

brutality towards First Nations peoples, paving the way for excluding non-Anglo migrant groups that fell outside the national narrative of how the nation was constructed. This mindset enters the formal political sphere where politicians will do whatever it takes to buy votes for the purpose of retaining or gaining power, however illogical, untruthful or rights-denying. Within the neoliberal framework, the cost of outsourcing incarceration does not feature as a concern to the government that has also been able to convince other deterrence-minded countries to follow its duplicity through exporting policies that achieve human misery, a theme followed up in later chapters.

Julie Macken's chapter presents a provocation for readers by naming the practice of torturing people seeking asylum. Macken's long-standing experience as a journalist and political consultant, and her disillusionment that once the impact of policies and practices were widely known they would change, led her to examine the problem through an academic lens. Academia, alongside her position as a scholar and activist, allowed Macken to formulate a unique analytical lens. As with the chapter before and those which follow, a colonial mindset and the violence it involves is adopted to demonstrate a torturing nation. For Macken, a psychological framework is explanatory, and she crafts her analysis by drawing on the work of Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein. The chapter's innovation is an endeavour to understand the workings of the nation state psychoanalytically. In this paradigm, the purposes of deterrence are both political and psychological and used to satisfy the unconscious needs of an uncritical electorate.

If deterrence is the goal that harsh policies and indifference to suffering are intended to produce, this is no clearer than in the chapter by Kate Coddington. Coddington exposes the problematic nature of public information campaigns aimed at preventing people from seeking asylum. Her contribution reveals how messaging directly feeds into deterrence measures by exposing and analysing messaging that pervades in Australia and internationally, with racist foundations not far from the surface. In Australia, the 'No Way' campaign was a clever rhetorical trick that aligned with the Stop the Boats refrain, signalling that those who attempt the journey to Australia by boat would not meet their goal of settling here. Messaging uses a variety of mediums, for example, posters and media, and is directed to diverse audiences, for example, would-be arrivals and the general public, but always with the aim of stopping people attempting boat journeys. Research, however, reveals that despite the unconscionable amount of funding poured into such campaigns, they have been largely unheeded by their primary audience. There is an important secondary audience, the Australian public, reinforcing the attempt to have electoral appeal for not only keeping borders 'safe' but craftily signalling fairness and humanitarianism. Although on a global scale, there are differing tactics used, they are commensurate with endeavours to deter boat arrivals and show that those who attempt such crossings will be punished.

The collection moves into the international sphere with the chapter by Bosco Opi. Opi writes from his own lived experience of the refugee camp and throws down the gauntlet to those who write about refugee policies and practices without such intimate knowledge. Writing from an Afrocentric lens, Opi's post-colonial critique takes us through the history of Kenya's encampments, preceding those

of immigrants, that was not only introduced by its former coloniser Britain but has continued in the 'post-colonial' era. In theorising the camp as a site of neo-colonial power administered by Western organisations, his detailed description of conditions, surveillance and control illustrate what he calls borderphobia. The chapter places a critical lens over the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, whose former brief as protector shielded it from culpability in keeping refugees encamped. The EU's complicity in extraterritorial policy is another exposé of power relations. As elsewhere, there is waning hospitality in Kenya that resonates with the impact of outsourcing and is relatable to camps funded by Australia, although at a different context and scale. Again, the ambiguity arises as to the divide in power between state interest and compassion, an unfortunate duality that masks violence in what Opi calls the colonial trap.

Claire Loughnan takes us into the realm of data. Who is counted and who is not. When it comes to counting those who have 'illegally' entered Australian territory, numbers dominate the political and media landscape, which arguably enables the Australian Government to amplify a fearful population. Here neoliberalism appears at play. Under the neoliberal project data and counting matters, but it is selective and protects complicit states by not counting lives lost at sea. This non-counting contrasts with the dehumanising classification and assignment of numbers to detained boat arrivals in immigration detention. The chapter also reveals the role of civil society in counting deaths through innovative and moving projects that refuse to allow the invisibility of those dying in attempts to seek asylum and restore some humanity to those who have lost their lives.

From there we move to the work of Australian writer Michelle Jasmin Dimasi whose extensive travels through troubled zones and experiences with death are portrayed in her aptly titled chapter 'Die Trying'. This chapter represents an ethnographic rather than an academic stance, by showing that when governments fail to act on death, activists can do so through the vigilance of observation and connection. From Afghanistan where she writes, Dimasi hears the howls of one man who lost a family member reminiscent of the grief of the aftermath of the boat crash on Christmas Island, signalling an emotion that was lacking from the official responses in Lampedusa and Christmas Island. Recounting her ethnography on both Lampedusa and Christmas Island she shows how ports of entry create perilous journeys for those who desperately seek freedom. A binding narrative is how residents and humanitarian groups have shown their humanity, often to no avail, as a contrast to what followed for survivors frequently detained and denied the safety and security that they rightfully sought.

In keeping with our undertaking to use creative forms of prose, law academic Anthea Vogl adds to the use of creativity by drawing on two exhibitions that distil events and stories highlighting the politics behind refugee representation. The first exhibition, *All We Can't See*, examines incident reports contained within the Nauru files, and juxtaposes these dispassionate reports with artists' illustrations of the incidents described. The *I Came By Boat* exhibition is somewhat contrasting in the telling of personal stories of those who have made Australia home and overcome the brutality to which they were subjected at the hands of the Australian Government. Ironically this exhibition is celebratory, in contradiction to the

politics of representation in the national story, as shown in other chapters of this collection, which focus on denying entry and the hope of a liveable life. Vogl draws on Manus Prison Theory by seeing art and literature as a form of resistance to dominant tropes and the potential of a counter-genre. For those who have not witnessed the unbearable, there is a call to resist the normalisation of representations of refugees, and in particular the depiction of the dangerous border-crosser that so often accompanies government portrayals of people seeking asylum.

Adopting the concept of racialised assemblages, Julia Morris' chapter argues that outsourced asylum regimes exacerbate the subjection of both Indigenous and migrant communities to toxic practices and discourses. As an extractive process, such outsourcing creates a duality of discourses whereby people seeking asylum become destitute victims and the locals in 'host' countries are portrayed as brutish villains. Where solidarities have emerged between locals and those who are involuntarily housed in Nauru, this does not emerge in either government narratives or those of advocates, with a polarity that emphasises a divide rather than shared humanity. Again, the neoliberal approach of outsourcing dominates, with displacement taking place in sites for an extractive asylum industry. Nauru is a zone where encounters occur between disparate cultures but where shared exploitation is a binding phenomenon. Racialisation emerges here too as discourses of the 'inferior' dangerous refugee are transmuted in depictions of Nauruans as also racially inferior. The chapter details the consequences of the outsourced regime on both the local population and refugees, highlighting the discursive, intersectional and lived realities, and particularly the impact of representations on people seeking asylum. The toxicity of the industry is highlighted through interviews conducted by Morris during her fieldwork which also reveal the impact of racialisation. Morris' chapter serves as a warning to other countries intent on developing an extractive industry with political benefits for the sending country and economic benefits for the hosting country.

The last academic chapter combines looking back with possibilities for the future. As we near the end of the collection it is heartening to envision possibilities for an alternative future. Claudia Tazreiter critically examines what she denotes as carceral archipelagos not only present in Australia but now favoured by the United Kingdom and the European Union. Like many of the other authors in this book, her analysis traverses the themes of colonial practices and racialisation. In mounting her arguments, Tazreiter traces the historical moments that enabled such harsh practices to take hold, including the attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001 and the subsequent anti-Muslim sentiment, and in Australia the notorious *Tampa* affair where the roots of offshoring were propagated. As others in the book have also depicted, resistance is manifest through creative approaches, and particularly those with lived experiences who have made videos, films, written books and used social media. These give rise to an alternative politics to overthrow the rhetorical devices and 'ethical traps' by state actors to keep the population free from threats. The question remains for Tazreiter as to how to overcome the racial capitalist necropolitics whereby creativity and collaborative endeavours can assume to restore the diminishment of a human rights culture.

We finish close to where we began, with Hani Abdile's poem on the challenges of refugee flight to arrival. Complementing Batoor's refugee story, Abdile's work

reinforces the importance of creative outlooks. Through her poetic narrative, we can see that despite the challenges that have been the focus of this collection, the journey's end can be filled with hope, an antidote to displacement and flight. The bonds formed by survivors of the journey, now in a new land, reveal their resilience and readiness to call the new land home. As Abdile poignantly writes, hope is the guiding star.

As editors, we make no apology for being passionate about naming the malice that has been imposed by Australia's offshore detention regime. How this has not only impacted those at the receiving end, but also how we construct the notion of a nation and its citizens. History has, and will, judge nations on how they treat minorities and the most vulnerable who reach their shores. Australia's legacy here will be a damning one.

We can end in despair, but we would rather offer some hope. Rehumanising the process of seeking asylum in well-resourced countries such as Australia has the potential to show the world that we can cease to normalise and legitimise unfounded border security fears and act with dignity and an ethic of care to people who are denied the safety and security to which Australians also aspire and largely experience. We can dismantle the system that has caused unprecedented harm and violence against one of the world's most vulnerable but also resilient populations. The chapters in this collection give an indication of where those efforts need to lie and as Behrouz Boochani states in his Foreword, collective collaboration and collective resistance are crucial.