

MEDIA RELEASE

Date: 25/5/2021 **EMBARGOED UNTIL 31 MAY 2021**

From: *Australian Book Review*

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'The Split State' by Hessom Razavi

In 'The Split State', *ABR* Behrouz Boochani Fellow Hessom Razavi writes compellingly on the current plight of refugees in Australia. The essay – which condemns the Australian government's political handling of those seeking asylum and skewers the notion of a 'good'/'bad' refugee – features interviews with a broad spectrum of figures, such as Kurdish-Iranian journalist Behrouz Boochani; Paul Power, CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia; Julian Burnside QC; and Dr Annie Sparrow, Special Advisor to the Director General of the World Health Organization. It also features the testimony of 'X', a young Hazara person who fled Afghanistan for Australia.

Extract from 'The Split State'

'As a member of a family that fled post-revolutionary Iran in 1983, and as a doctor who has visited the detention centres on Manus Island and Nauru, I have written elsewhere in *ABR* about the who are we? of people who seek asylum. The where are we now? of Australia's responses, with their attendant human and financial costs, are the focus of this article. This is a story about problems, not solutions; the latter will remain shelved for now. Our starting point is the bipartisan support, from Labor and the Coalition, for Australia's five policy pillars on people who have arrived by boat: mandatory and indefinite detention; offshore processing; temporary protection visas; boat turn-backs; and a ban on settling in Australia. This regime is deformed by paradox, oversimplification, and absurdity. This "split state", as I will dub it, has nonetheless been widely lauded; as President Donald Trump told then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in 2017, "You are worse than me."



Hessom Razavi

About Hessom Razavi

Hessom Razavi – a writer and doctor based in Perth – is the *ABR* Behrouz Boochani Fellow. He was born in Iran in 1976. When he was seven, his family fled that country to escape political persecution. He grew up in Pakistan and the United Kingdom before migrating to Australia when he was thirteen. He completed his studies as an ophthalmologist in 2015 and has visited Manus Island and Nauru in a medical capacity. He also writes poetry and essays, and he is currently working on his first collection.

Interviews

Hessom Razavi is available for interview. Please direct requests to Peter Rose at editor@australianbookreview.com.au